GEF/UNDP/ASEAN PROJECT ON REDUCING POLLUTION AND PRESERVING ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS IN THE EAST ASIAN SEAS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT (IRBM) IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

VA/LAO PDR-IRBM/2026-011

Title	**CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NAM THA RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN (2026-2030)**
Type	**National / River Basin Level**
Duration	November 2026 to April 2027
Closing Date	November 15, 2026

*The Consultancy is open to Lao PDR nationals or entities only.

BACKGROUND

The GEF/UNDP/ASEAN Project on Reducing Pollution and Preserving Environmental Flows in the East Asian Seas through the Implementation of Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) in the ASEAN Countries is a 5-year project (2023-2027) with the goal of establishing functional IRBM mechanisms in seven priority river basins/sub-basins/watershed in the six ASEAN Member States (AMS), i.e., Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines and Viet Nam, to reduce pollution, sustain freshwater environmental flows and adapt to climate change vulnerabilities.

The Project is designed to improve governance and management arrangements in IRBM and accelerate the required changes in the six AMS in support of national priorities, objectives and commitments to global sustainable development targets using the Source to Sea framework. Component 2 of the IRBM Project supports the review and preparation of river basin strategies and action plans, and facilitate consensus building in the review, approval and endorsement of the strategies and action plans for adoption by the relevant authorities.

In Lao PDR, the Project's priority river basin is the Nam Tha River Basin (NTRB) located in the northern part of the country and encompasses the provinces of Bokeo, Luang Namtha and Oudomxay. In line with the implementation of the 2017 Law on Water and Water Resources and the 2021 Decree on Watershed and Reservoir Management, the NTRB Management Plan 2021-2025 was developed and approved in December 2022 to guide the effective management of water use and water resources in the NTRB by applying the principles of integrated water resources management.

This Terms of Reference require Consultants/Consulting Firm or consortia with expertise and experience in strategic and action planning to develop the Nam Tha River Basin Management Plan for the period 2026-2030.

SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

Scope of Work

Under the direct supervision and guidance of the Department of Water Resources of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (DWR/MAE), Lao PDR with technical guidance from the Regional Project Management Unit, the Consultant/Consulting Firm will:

1) Develop a concept note detailing the methodology and work plan for developing the NTRB Management Plan (2026-2030) building on the results of the implementation of the NTRB Management Plan 2021-2025.

2) Based on the approved methodology and work plan, undertake the following:

    a. Review the results of implementation of the following six programs outlined in the NTRB Management Plan 2021-2025 in terms of their effectiveness and adequacy in addressing the identified issues and concerns in Nam Tha River Basin, including gaps and constraints and opportunities, and consolidate the results for consideration in the preparation of the NTRB Management Plan 2026-2030:
        i. To establish a management and participatory mechanism for the management of the River Basin with three (3) expected outcomes and 15 activities;
        ii. To manage water use and water resources with four (4) expected outcomes and 15 activities;
        iii. To manage data and information about water and water resources with two (2) expected outcomes and seven activities;
        iv. To protect and rehabilitate water and water resources with three (3) expected outcomes and 11 activities;
        v. To mitigate impacts of flood, drought and climate change with two (2) expected outcomes and nine activities; and
        vi. To manage forest land and environment with four (4) expected outcomes and 16 activities.

    b. Develop a framework and annotated table of contents (TOC) for the NTRB Management Plan 2026-2030.

    c. Conduct consultation meetings with DWR, PONRE's of Bokeo, Luang Namtha and Oudomxay and RPMU to discuss and refine the framework and TOC.

    d. Based on the approved framework and TOC, consolidate the results and recommendations from item a above and gather and review available data/information and materials for the preparation of the Management Plan, which includes the following components:
        i. Vision and mission;
        ii. Goals and objectives;
        iii. Strategies and action programs;
        iv. Targets and indicators of progress and means of verification;
        v. Roles and responsibilities;

vi. Capacities needs for implementation;
vii. Indicative budget and financing for each action program, including potential partnership arrangements, and
viii. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanism to assess progress and achievements in implementing the Management Plan.

3) Prepare the draft NTRB Management Plan 2026-2030 consolidating the information from item 2d, i-viii above.
4) In coordination with DWR, conduct stakeholder consultation workshops to present the draft NTRB Management Plan (2026-2030).
5) Refine the NTRB Management Plan incorporating the feedback from the consultation workshops.
6) Build consensus and seek endorsement of the refined NTRB Management Plan from the Provincial and National Project Steering Committees;
7) Develop a practical assessment guideline that can be applied to comparable river basins.
8) Organizing training sessions on accurate data analysis and technical report writing, in accordance with established guidelines, for staff from the Department of Water Resources and Provincial Department of Agriculture and Environment.
9) Finalize the NTRB Management Plan (2026-2030) for submission to the Government for approval and adoption.

Expected Outputs and Deliverables

- Concept note detailing the methodology and work plan for the preparation of the NTRB Management Plan 2026-2030
- Framework and annotated Table of Contents of the NTRB Management Plan 2026-2030
- Draft and Final NTRB Management Plan 2026-2030 incorporating the results from the consultations
- Guidelines for conducting assessment and reporting
- Summary reports of the consultation workshops to review and finalize the NTRB Management Plan 2026-2030

WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Institutional Arrangement

RPMU through DWR/MAE Lao PDR will provide access to available materials and documents to the Consultant/Consulting Firm, including facilitating arrangements for consultations and meetings with key partners and stakeholders in Nam Tha River Basin. The Consultant/Consulting Firm will be coordinating regularly with DWR/MAE.

Duration of the Work

The expected duration of the work is from October 2026 to March 2027.

Duty Station

The Consultants/Consulting Firms will be home-based with regular coordination with DWR/MAE.

Travel Plan

Local travel cost to render services, as required in the TOR, are expected to be included in the financial proposal.

Qualifications of the Consultants/Consulting Firm

- Post Graduate Degree in relevant disciplines (e.g., environmental sciences, water resources management, water and sanitation, waste management, legal, economics, finance and investments and related disciplines).
- Good working knowledge of international, regional, national and local best practices on integrated river basin management (IRBM), integrated water resources management (IWRM), integrated coastal management (ICM) and other area-based management approaches that complement the Source-to Sea approach, including sound understanding of sustainable development.
- At least 10 years working experience in ecological protection, watershed/river basin governance and management.
- Relevant experience on river basin governance and management encompassing coordination of water, land and the coastal and marine areas and resource use, including data integrated and decision support systems, stakeholder engagement, policy coherence, use of technical tools and understanding of complex social and political factors, such as decentralization, dispute resolution and management of ecosystem services to maximize economic, social and environmental benefits in support of sustainable development goals and targets.
- Relevant experience in action plan development and creating strategic roadmaps involving a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials and policymakers, water resource planners, community representatives, members of water user, environmental and conservation organizations, river basin committees, technical experts and international and regional organizations.
- Relevant experience in leading multidisciplinary teams and dialoguing with a diverse range of stakeholders for the preparation and/or implementation of IRBM/IWRM/ICM projects and programs and action plans.
- Fluency in written and spoken Lao and English is an advantage.

Financial Proposal

Bidders/applicants should detail the budget plan based on expected outputs, clearly showing logical framework or activity plan to achieve the outputs.

Submission of Tender/Application

Applicants are requested to submit:

1. Duly accomplished **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability**;
2. **Detailed Curriculum Vitae**, indicating all past experience from similar projects, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the team leader and members.
3. **Brief description** of why the organization/consultant is considered as the most suitable for the assignment.
4. A description of the **methodology**, on how they will approach and complete the assignment.
5. **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by a breakdown of costs.

Applicants are requested to submit the tender and requirements via email to recruitment@pemsea.org. Kindly indicate the vacancy reference number and title of requirement when applying (in the subject line) by email.

Additional Considerations

Bid applications received after the closing date will not be considered. Only those candidates that are shortlisted will be notified.

For more information on IRBM, please visit www.pemsea.org

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