

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PROGRAM EVALUATION – BUILDING CAPACITY & ACCESS FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PHASE II (VIETNAM, 2018 - 2021)

Background and Justification

Action on Poverty (AOP), previously known as The Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific Limited (AFAP), is an independent, secular, non-governmental Australian organisation, based in Sydney. AOP has been working with local partners to help poor and vulnerable communities make lasting change since 1968, and in Vietnam since 1989. AOP became the first Australian NGO to open a representative office there in 1996. AOP is best known for its pioneering work in developing community-based biological control programs for dengue fever in Vietnam. From this work in health sector, AOP has broadened its thematic focus to include agriculture, water and sanitation, food security, climate change, livelihoods, and governance in remote and marginalised communities across Vietnam.

Since mid-2014, this broadbased development work has been underpinned by the “Building Capacity and Access for Resilient Communities” (BCA) program. Phase 1 of this program was evaluated by a Mid Term Review conducted in June 2018. Phase 2 of this program commenced in January 2018 – June 2021, and has comprised and been complemented by the following projects*:

No.	Project	Duration
1	Building Capacity and Access for Resilient Communities (ANCP-BCA)	July 2018 – June 2021, planned annually
2	Equitable Alliances for Livelihoods (EQUAL) of ethnic minorities	2018 – 2020 (Extended to February 2021)
3	Scaling up of Community based tourism for ethnic minorities in Northwest region of Vietnam (EFF)	2018 – 2020 (Extended to June 2021)
4**	Gender Responsive Opportunities for Women in Community based Tourism (GROW)	2019 – 2021 (with possibility of extension)

*More information of the projects can be found in Annex 1.

**A new, transitional project that is currently subject to its own MTR and will not be the main focus of this evaluation.

All four projects aim to improve the condition and position of vulnerable people, especially ethnic minorities in remote areas via a community-based and asset-based approach.

From 2021, AOP is adopting a new 5-year country and regional strategy, which will see it switch from project to product-based approach. In line with this, and while the GROW project, along with a number of smaller initiatives, is expected to continue beyond mid-2021, the BCA program is drawing to a close and needs to be evaluated. Based on the project's evaluation findings, the evaluation should shed light on the effectiveness on the program and inform the development and implementation the succeeding program under the 2020-25 Strategy.

Objective of Evaluation

The overall **purpose of the evaluation** is to assess the extent to which each listed project has succeeded or failed, in terms of its intended results, and find reasons why this happened. It will also draw conclusions on the relevance and effectiveness of the program approach, and highlight good practices and lessons learned. Finally it will make recommendations for continuity and change which will provide a basis for future programming and approach.

Each project will be assessed individually (with the exception of the GROW project, whose mid-term review (MTR) will be drawn upon as the basis for assessment), and the findings will be consolidated in a synthesis report. The evaluation findings will be used in the following ways:

- Demonstrating partner and AOP accountability
- Understanding how each project has achieved its results (both negative and positive)
- Communicating stories of change to stakeholders and the broader development community
- Informing future projects and approaches moving forward
- Providing baseline data for future design, monitoring, evaluation and learning (DMEL)
- Serving as an input for AOP's product-based approach documentation

The **primary audiences** of this evaluation are: project donors, AOP (Sydney and Vietnam offices), its donors, Project Management Units (PMUs) and CSO partners, local governments, and projects' beneficiaries. Future partners, especially partners from business sectors and wider development community are the secondary audiences of the study.

Scope of Evaluation

Field-work sites:

- Da Bac district, Hoa Binh province
- Tan Son district, Phu Tho province
- Nga Nam town, Soc Trang province
- AOP-VN office, Hanoi

Key informants:

- Households participating in each project
- Project partners, including government, civil society, and business partners
- Enterprises and cooperatives that were established during the project implementation
- Local authorities and mass organisations as needed
- AOP program management team
- Project management units
- Others as needed

Methodology

The project evaluation will assess the BCA program on the OECD evaluation criteria: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability, by reviewing available data and documentation, conducting in-person and remote interviews, and triangulating and verifying information as required. It will also conceptualise and contrast the BCA approach with the approach outlined in the 2020-25 strategy and make recommendations accordingly.

Key research questions:

Project evaluation – to evaluate the projects individually:

1. To what extent has each project achieved its planned objectives? Any positive/negative changes brought by the projects out of plans? Why did those changes happen?
2. How consistent was the project with AOP and donor's strategy? How did the project contribute to AOP and donor's strategic objectives?
3. How have possible collaborations been utilised and how have these contributed to the project results? Recommendations to foster more shared value partnerships in the projects and alike.
4. To what extent, the project activity implementation considered to be cost-efficient, while not compromising quality? What would have been opportunities within projects to create

more value with the available budget or to reduce costs without compromising quality and reach?

5. Analyse the impacts of COVID-19 and natural disasters/climate change and the organisation's responses. What lessons can be brought to the organisation's project management?
6. What is the satisfaction level of project beneficiaries with the interventions and results? Also analyse the feedback of other key stakeholders regarding AOP's project management.
7. How was the quality of organisational and managerial structure of the project? How was the participation of stakeholders during all project phases?
8. How effective are the in place mechanisms to track project implementation of the projects? How has the program responded to recommendations from the BCA MTR? Provide recommendations to build an effective digitalised M&E system at regional level?
9. How effective is AOP's risk management system, especially in managing environment, gender, and child protection risks?
10. To what extent was inclusion considered and achieved in the projects?
11. Are the benefits brought by the project likely to continue after the project has been completed and no more donor funding is available? Identify opportunities for replication and scaling-up of the project. Include examples of replication if any.
12. What are the conclusions in relevance, adaptativeness, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and replicability of each project? Identify lessons to improve the performance and impacts of the projects?

Organisational strategy and management – questions for the synthesis report:

13. To what extent is the transition to the new approach relevant to the development context in Vietnam and Asia? Possible advantages and disadvantages of the two approaches (old and new) to AOP
14. What are the roles of community based tourism and micro finance products in the evaluated projects? To what extent have the products demonstrated its effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability in the projects?
15. What are AOP's strengths and weaknesses in project management?
16. At organisational level, what are the recommendations for better project management and execution of the new strategy?

General approach: The final evaluation will apply a participatory approach, which allows all relevant stakeholders and community members to be engaged in the process. This is to ensure that the evaluation reflects fully the opinions of various partners involved in the project implementation. The selected consultants will apply both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and will study both primary and secondary data sources to increase the evaluation findings' validity. Cross-cutting issues, and especially gender and child protection, must be considered, with gender disaggregated data being collected. Consultants must not violate any of AOP's policies including child protection policy, gender policy, environment policy, etc. throughout all assignment exercises.

The evaluation includes the following proposed phases:

1. Desk study: Review the relevant project documents
2. Mixed evaluation methods: suggested methods include but not limited to:
 - KIIs/ FGDs/ KAP surveys with relevant actors: AOP's program team, local actors (PMUs, local government officers, local VFF officers, CISBs, local people, etc.); national actors;
 - Field observations.

Risk management: It is important to note that delays in evaluation process, particularly its field work due to the Covid pandemic are possible. Therefore, it is recommended to minimise the risk to AOP and beneficiaries by piloting the use of technology in data collection such as

mobile data collection tools, social media analysis, on phone surveys and interviews, focus group discussions via online platforms, etc. Moreover, consultants should develop a back up plan for data collection in case of difficulties to travel.

Output and delivery

The consultant team is expected to provide:

Design phase:

- A proposal with specific and comprehensive tools and methodologies, sample, timeframe and budget in English;
- An inception report with protocols, including tools for collecting information.

Implementation phase:

- A high quality Final Evaluation Report for each report in English, maximum 20 pages each report excluding annexes; with a research summary translated into Vietnamese;
- A high quality synthesis report in English discussing about AOP's approach in general, maximum 20 pages excluding annexes.
- A power point presentation with key findings of evaluation in both English and Vietnamese;
- Two typical case studies in English per project;
- All raw data collected including transcriptions, pictures, records (if any); and analysis results.

Consultants are expected to present in a debriefing session to disseminate the key findings of the evaluation and to discuss recommended follow-up action.

Assessment timeline

The evaluation will be carried out from April 2021 to June 2021 with the following key milestones:

- Design and preparation stage: April to Mid April 2021
- Data collection: Mid April – Mid May 2021
- Preliminary findings: May – Mid May 2021
- Finalised findings: Mid May – June 2021

An indicative timetable for this work is provided below. Noted that this is subject to discuss with the consultants.

Key steps	Tentative timeline	Deliverable	Remark
1. Desk review of AOP documents and data	10/4 – 20/4	Desk study summary	
2. Design protocol, data collection tools, and produce inception report	10/4 – 20/4	Data collection protocol Inception report (with AOP's approval)	
3. Field trip to collect needed data and information, including data collection training and pilot	20/4 – 15/5	All raw data	
4. Develop database and enter collected data	20/4 – 15/5	Valid, clean, and good quality database	Ongoing with data collection in the field

Key steps	Tentative timeline	Deliverable	Remark
5. Analyse collected data and produce preliminary findings	15/5 – 31/5	Preliminary findings to each project Preliminary findings for the synthesis report 1 st draft presentation for validation meetings	
6. Generate final findings and final report	1/6 – 15/6	Final reports: - One report for each project (3 in total) - One synthesis report focusing on AOP's approach - All reports have executive summaries	
7. Publish and disseminate findings	15 – 30/6	Presentation and publications at a debriefing meeting at national level	

Preparation and logistical support

AOP in Vietnam will contract the consultant team in accordance with AOP in Vietnam regulations and guidelines for contracting of consultants. The AOP in Vietnam's program team will assign a staff to coordinate the M&E activities. The staff will take responsible for planning and providing necessary logistical support and will accompany the evaluation team in the field and meetings if necessary.

Terms of payment

Payment will be transferred to consultant's bank account. Terms of payment will be as follows:

- 30% of total contract value will be paid upon AOP in Vietnam's approval for the inception report
- 70% will be paid upon AOP in Vietnam's approval for the final report.

Total budget for the consultancy should not exceed AUD 14,000. Consultancy rates should be no more than the cost norms stipulated by the effective UN-EU guidelines for financing local costs in development cooperation. Other expenses will follow AOP's cost norm policy.

Selection process

AOP in Vietnam would like to seek qualified national consultants to conduct this mission. The candidates should have:

- Post-graduate degree in areas of development studies, statistics and/ or related fields;
- Experienced in research, M&E, impact assessments;
- Demonstrated experiences in using participatory methods, stakeholder analysis, qualitative and quantitative research/study;
- Experience in working as a team leader of development project research/evaluation;
- Understanding of market access approach and experiences in business sector, experience with mobile data collection tools are advantages;
- Working experience with local authorities and ethnic minorities in rural and mountainous areas;
- Good verbal communication and report writing skills, both in Vietnamese and English.

The consultant team should have at least one female member. All consultants in the chosen team must not have been involved in the project implementation in any way.

Submission

Interested individuals or organisations are invited to submit a proposal to AOP in Vietnam by email recruitment@actiononpoverty.org.vn or mailing to AOP in Vietnam office at No 30, Lane 12, Dang Thai Mai Street, Tay Ho District, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Submission deadline: Wednesday 31 March 2021.

The proposal should be written in English and include the following documents:

1. An expression of interest letter signed by all team members, confirming the intention to provide the services in accordance with the provisions of this TOR.
2. A research protocol to elaborate how the assessment and analysis will be conducted to effectively answer to research questions. The protocol should also list all inputs required to deliver the services.
3. At least one report sample produced by the team to demonstrate that the team has experiences with the requirements in the TOR.
4. CVs of all team members (no more than 3 pages each) and profile of the institution (if relevant).
5. Financial proposal in VND and AUD (1AUD = 17,300 VND).

Relevant documents will be provided upon request from applicants of interest.

ANNEX 1 – PROJECT PROFILE

Project name	Building Capacity and Access for Resilient Communities (Vietnam)	Equitable Alliances for Livelihoods (EQUAL) of ethnic minorities	Scaling-up of Community-based Tourism for Ethnic Minorities in Northwest Region of Vietnam	Gender Responsive Opportunities for Women in Community based Tourism (GROW)
Timeframe	July 2018 – June 2021 (Planned annually)	2018 – 2020 (Extended to April 2021)	2018 – 2020 (Extended to June 2021)	2019 – 2021 (With possibility of extension)
Objectives	To improve the socioeconomic conditions for the poor and vulnerable, especially women living in isolated ethnic minority communities.	To reduce the vulnerability of the displaced ethnic minorities by improving economic conditions and increasing their social status	To develop new business opportunities and tourism practices that provide sustainable income and contribute to poverty alleviation for ethnic minority groups in Xuan Son commune, Tan Son district, Phu Tho province.	To economically empower ethnic minority women in Son La through active engagement in community-based tourism.
Major outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased capacity enables farmers especially youth and women to secure incomes and make informed choices on migration 2. Sustainable livelihood alliances secure stable sources of income for local communities 3. Inclusive growth enabled via broadened participation and access to quality public services for local people 4. COVID-19 risk management promoted within and through the project (<i>starting from 2020</i>) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Displaced ethnic minorities, especially women have better capacity and wider access to resources to manage their CBT and fish farming livelihoods efficiently. 2. Alliance based planning and management ensure the sustainability of CBT and fish farming livelihoods. 3. CBT and fish farming alliances are capable to participate in policy dialogues and successfully negotiate changes for community based resource management models. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Locally appropriate model of CBT developed through participatory consultation with stakeholders, and assessment of needs and potential 2. Strengthened community leadership that will manage the initiative and ensure equitable distribution of benefits and mitigation of communal risks 3. Tourism products and services, and business plan designed and developed 4. Homestay owners and community groups/service groups are capable of managing and providing CBT services 5. Local income is increased and diversified through the execution of the tourism initiative, with a focus on engaging women. 6. Increased awareness of the value of local culture and conservation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ethnic minority women have increased income and more job opportunities 2. Benefits are distributed equitably to the community 3. Ethnic minority women participate in decision making for their CBT related livelihood activities 4. Ethnic minority women have wider economic opportunities in CBT through better access to resources 5. Ethnic minority women are able to actively engage and make suggestions in local tourism policy and plan development and implementation
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dien Bien Dong district, Dien Bien province ▪ Da Bac and Tan Lac districts, Hoa Binh province ▪ Muong La district, Son La province ▪ Tan Son district, Phu Tho province ▪ Vu Quang district, Ha Tinh province ▪ Nga Nam district, Soc Trang province 	Da Bac district, Hoa Binh province	Tan Son and Thu Cuc districts, Phu Tho province	Moc Chau and Van Ho districts, Son La province