

Term of Reference

Development of Sangthong Climate Change Strategy and its Five-year Action Plan

1. Background and rationale

CARE International has been operating in Lao PDR since 1992, working to reduce poverty and strengthen the resilience of women, vulnerable populations, and marginalized communities to the impacts of climate change. Over the past three decades, CARE has partnered with rural and urban communities, particularly ethnic minority groups, to promote inclusive and sustainable development outcomes. Through collaborative engagement with government institutions, civil society organizations, community-based groups, and private sector actors, CARE supports locally led solutions that advance gender equality, climate resilience, and sustainable livelihoods. CARE currently implements programs across seven provinces: Vientiane Capital, Phongsaly, Luang Namtha, Luang Prabang, Salavan, Champasack, and Sekong.

As part of its long-term commitment to climate change adaptation and sustainable natural resource management, CARE Laos is implementing the four-year project, “Sangthong Green District Model,” funded by the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Biodiversity of Luxembourg. The project aims to support Sangthong District in becoming a model green district through the development and institutionalization of a district-level climate change strategy and five-year action plan. The intervention promotes integrated and climate-resilient development approaches, with a focus on sustainable forest management, ecosystem restoration, climate-smart agriculture, agroforestry systems, and environmentally sustainable livelihood opportunities, including recycled handicraft enterprises.

The project implementation is focusing on three key outcome areas:

1. Strengthened sustainable forest management and restoration.
2. Enhanced climate-resilient livelihoods, sustainable income generation, and community capacity for climate change adaptation.
3. Establishment of a demonstration site in Sangthong District to serve as a scalable and replicable green district model for other districts in Lao PDR.

Through these interconnected outcomes, the project seeks to strengthen the adaptive capacity of local communities and district authorities to sustainably manage natural resources and respond effectively to climate-related challenges.

2. Objective of this consultancy service

The objective of this consultancy is to facilitate the development of a comprehensive Climate Change Strategy and Five-Year Action Plan for Sangthong District that strengthens the district’s climate resilience and supports sustainable, inclusive, and low-carbon development pathways.

The consultant will lead a participatory and stakeholder-driven planning process to ensure that the strategy is fully aligned with relevant national policies and frameworks,

including the National Climate Change Strategy, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), sectoral climate and environmental policies, and the National, Vientiane Capital, and Sangthong District Socio-Economic Development Plans (SEDPs). The strategy should integrate climate change adaptation, mitigation, sustainable natural resource management, ecosystem restoration, and climate-resilient livelihood development priorities.

In addition, the Climate Change Strategy and Five-Year Action Plan must be designed as a fundable and resource-mobilization-oriented framework, with clearly prioritized interventions, investment opportunities, implementation arrangements, and financing mechanisms. This will enable Sangthong District to leverage financial and technical support from government, development partners, climate finance mechanisms, the private sector, and other external stakeholders beyond the scope of the current project, thereby enhancing the long-term sustainability and scalability of the Green District Model.

3. Scope of Work

The scope of work will include, but not be limited to, the following tasks:

3.1 Desk review and situation analysis

- Conduct a comprehensive review of relevant national, provincial, and district-level policies, strategies, plans, and regulatory frameworks related to climate change adaptation and mitigation, natural resource management, environmental protection, disaster risk reduction, and socio-economic development.
- Review and analyze relevant frameworks, models, and best practices on green district development, climate-resilient planning, sustainable natural resource management, and locally led adaptation applicable to the Lao PDR context.
- Assess the current climate, environmental, socio-economic, and institutional context of Sangthong District, including key climate risks, vulnerabilities, development challenges, and opportunities.

3.2 Stakeholder Consultation and Participatory Assessment

- Design and facilitate a series of inclusive and participatory consultations with key stakeholders at national, Vientiane Capital, district, and community levels.
- Conduct consultations and focus group discussions in the five target villages to identify climate-related challenges, local priorities, existing adaptation practices, and opportunities for green and resilient development.
- Engage relevant government departments, community representatives, women's groups, ethnic communities, civil society organizations, private sector actors, and development partners to ensure broad ownership and alignment of the strategy.
- Analyze stakeholder inputs to identify strategic priorities, investment opportunities, institutional capacities, and implementation challenges for the Green District Model.

3.3 Development of the Climate Change Strategy and Five-Year Action Plan

- Develop a comprehensive, gender-responsive, and climate-resilient Climate Change Strategy and action plan for Sangthong District that aligns with national climate policies, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and national, capital, and district Socio-Economic Development Plans (SEDPs).
- Formulate a clear vision, strategic objectives, outcomes, and priority intervention areas to support Sangthong District's transition toward becoming a Green District Model.
- Develop a costed Five-Year Action Plan that identifies priority adaptation, mitigation, sustainable natural resource management, ecosystem restoration, climate-smart agriculture, and green livelihood interventions.
- Identify potential financing and resource mobilization opportunities, including government budgets, development partners, climate finance mechanisms, and private-sector investments to support implementation beyond the duration of the project.
- Define implementation arrangements, including the roles and responsibilities of relevant government agencies and key stakeholders.
- Develop a results framework, including indicators, monitoring, evaluation, learning, and reporting mechanisms to track progress and support adaptive management.

3.4 Strategy Validation and Finalization

- Facilitate a district-level validation workshop with relevant government departments and key stakeholders to present and validate the draft Climate Change Strategy and Five-Year Action Plan.
- Incorporate feedback and recommendations from stakeholders into the final documents.
- Produce and submit the final Climate Change Strategy and Five-Year Action Plan, along with a summary presentation of key findings, priorities, and recommendations.

4. Propose timeline

This assignment is expected to be implemented between October to November 2026. The Consultant shall undertake the tasks outlined below and allocate sufficient time for stakeholder engagement, technical analysis, validation, and finalization of the Climate Change Strategy and Five-Year Action Plan.

Activities	Deliverables	Duration
Desk review and situation analysis		5 days
Stakeholder Consultation and Participatory Assessment		10 days
Development of the Climate Change Strategy and Five-Year Action Plan		5 days
Strategy Validation and Finalization		5 days
	Total	25 days

5. Essential Deliverables

1. Inception report detailing the workplan, methodology, and tools
2. Brief presentation to CARE and its partners team
3. District climate change strategy and its five-year action plan is endorsed and finalized.

6. Reporting

The consultant will report directly to CARE Laos, working close coordination with its partners, especially the Faculty of Forestry Science, District of Agriculture and Environment Office of Sangthong district, Sangthong district governor office and other relevant district government counterparts.

7. Required Qualifications

- Advanced university degree in Climate Change, Environmental Management, Natural Resource Management, Forestry, Sustainable Development, Agriculture, Rural Development, Development Planning, Public Policy, or a related field.
- Demonstrate outstanding relevant professional experience in climate change adaptation and mitigation, environmental management, natural resource management, sustainable development, or related fields.
- Demonstrated experience in developing climate change strategies, action plans, environmental policies, green growth strategies, or local development plans for government agencies, development partners, or international organizations.
- Strong understanding of climate change policies and frameworks in Lao PDR, including the National Climate Change Strategy, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plan (NAP), National Green Growth Strategy, the Socio-Economic Development Planning (SEDP) system, and the green district criteria.
- Proven experience in integrating climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, ecosystem-based adaptation, sustainable forest management, climate-smart agriculture, and sustainable livelihood approaches into development plans and strategies.
- Experience in developing results frameworks, monitoring and evaluation systems, implementation arrangements, and investment or financing frameworks.
- Proven experience in designing and facilitating multi-stakeholder consultations, participatory planning processes, and validation workshops with government agencies, communities, civil society organizations, development partners, and private-sector stakeholders.
- Experience working with local authorities and communities, including women, ethnic groups, and vulnerable populations, using participatory and inclusive approaches.

- Strong understanding of gender equality, social inclusion, and locally led adaptation principles.
- Proven ability to prepare high-quality technical reports, policy documents, strategies, and action plans in a clear and concise manner.
- Demonstrated experience in developing costed implementation plans and investment-ready development frameworks.

8. Selection Criteria (Suggested)

The consultant/firm will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant education and qualifications (15%)
- Technical experience in climate change and strategic planning (35%)
- Experience in Lao PDR and knowledge of government planning systems (20%)
- Experience in participatory facilitation and stakeholder engagement (15%)
- Quality of proposed methodology and workplan (15%)

9. Application Submission Requirements

Interested consultants should submit their applications to Lao.contracts@care.org by 19th September 2026. Please indicate “Consultant – Develop the Climate Change Strategy and its action plan of the Sangthong district” as the subject heading.