



Terms of Reference for Consulting Service

Development of ISG Work Plan 2004 - 2006

A. Context

The International support Group (ISG) of the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MARD) has been in operational in accordance with Decision No. 541 NN/TCCB-QD on 9th April 1997 with advisory function in the effective use of ODA resources. An ISG Steering Board was established under the chairmanship of MARD Minister and representatives from MARD, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Finance, and international donors. An ISG Secretariat and an ISG Trust Fund were also formed under the management of ICD to facilitate ISG process. Currently, a core donor group (AusAID, DANIDA, Netherlands Embassy, and SIDA) is contributing their financial assistance to ISG Trust Fund.

In order to support MARD and international donors in ODA coordination and policy dialogue, ISG has formed Thematic Ad-Hoc Groups on International Agro-economic Integration and Policy (TAG1), Hydraulic Works development, disaster control and rural water supply (TAG2), and Support Implementation of the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS) in Agriculture and Rural Areas (TAG3). The present hierarchical composition of the four ISG bodies is: ISG Plenary, ISG Steering Board, Thematic Ad-hoc Groups (TAGs) and ISG Secretariat.

ISG has since establishment provided significant support to MARD generally and ICD specifically. Efforts have been geared towards; (i) dissemination of information, (ii) coordination with donors and within MARD, (iii) policy dialogue and (iv) preparation of workshops, seminars and (v) other activities.

Given new policies, priorities and strategies to address present development challenges, opportunities and constraints faced by the agricultural and rural development sector in Vietnam, a review was undertaken (April/May 2003) to up-date and revise the ToRs for the ISG and its TAGs, which were then approved at the ISG Steering Board Meeting 17th June 2003. This review concluded that the ISG had achieved commended results and that ISG's scope of work being further widened to meet the current needs and challenges. It was in particular found that ISG should assist MARD, ICD with coordination and policy dialogue at horizontal and vertical levels during all levels of the project cycle: identification through to impact evaluation and dissemination of lessons learned.

As agreed by the Core Donor Group meeting 13th August in preparation of a Memorandum of Agreement on funding to ISG process 2004 – 2006 that a local based international consultant is needed to translate the objectives of ISG and its TAGs into a specific and feasible Work

Plan with a relevant Monitoring and Evaluation frame- work for the period from 2004 to 2006.

This TOR is for the local based international consultant who will be retained to assist the International Cooperation Department of MARD, in cooperation with the ISG, to develop the Work Plan 2004 – 2006 and the Monitoring and Evaluation framework with measurable indicators and relevant means of verifications from goal to activity level of ISG and TAGs. A proposed work plan and schedule for the consultant is shown in Section G below.

B. Objectives

The objectives of the mission are as followed:

1. To strengthen capacity of ISG mechanisms (the Secretariat, Thematic Adhoc Groups and Steering Board) in carrying out their mandated objectives by developing a strategic and feasible Work-Plan for the period 2004 – 2006,
2. To enable MARD leader, MARD/ICD and other members of ISG Steering Board to monitor and evaluate the implementation of ISG Work Plan by developing a Monitoring and Evaluation framework with effective and measurable set of indicators from goal to activity level and relevant means of verification.

C. Scope of Service

The international consultant, in consultation with ISG Secretariat and ICD-MARD, will :

1. Conduct the desk reviews (list of documents to be reviewed detailed in Section E of this TOR);
2. Discuss with officials of MARD / ICD, ISG Secretariat, and TAGs;
3. Discuss with officials of other Government ministries and donor agencies;
4. *(Meetings will be arranged by ISG Secretariat);*
5. Present the initial findings and outlines of the Work Plan and the Monitoring and Evaluation frame-work to ISG Steering Board;
6. Produce an analysis report on situation of ISG process and recommendations for a better performance of the process;
7. Develop an ISG Work Plan 2004 – 2006 including specific narrative description and required budget for activities based on the ISG and TAGs Terms of Reference and other documents;
8. Develop Monitoring and Evaluation frame-work with a set of effective and measurable indicators and relevant means of verifications to monitor and evaluate the implementation process of the ISG Work Plan 2004 – 2006;
9. Get and integrate comments on the analysis report, the Work Plan and the Monitoring and Evaluation frame-work from MARD\ICD, ISG Secretariat and members from ISG Steering Board;
10. Present the report, the ISG Work Plan 2004 – 2006 and the Monitoring and Evaluation framework at ISG Steering Board Meeting at the end of 2003 and finalize the

documents based on comments/suggestions of the Board and submit to its member for final approval.

D. Important Considerations

In carrying out the duties mentioned in Section A, the consultant will take into account the following important considerations.

1. Coordination between the three TAGs in order to maximize their effectiveness in advising ISG. Also, consideration will be given to the possible formation of new TAGs in important areas of MARD / donor coordination;
2. Coordination of the ISG process with other major MARD – donor partnerships such as the “Forest Sector Support Program Partnership” and the “Natural Disaster Mitigation Partnership”;
3. The need for sectoral approaches in which a broad and strategic perspective is taken and the role of other ministries, agencies and provinces recognized and coordination with them promoted. To a possible extent, coordination with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in the area of water resources management will also be taken into account;
4. The need for capacity building in MARD ICD and other cooperating departments and agencies;
5. The need for a clear and strategic approach in which broad objectives and TORs are effectively linked to specific annual work plans, with monitoring and reporting of results achieved. Recommendations for improving the coordination of MARD departments with donor activities should also be prepared.

E. Key Documents

The consultants will study the following documents:

1. Terms of Reference for ISG, 2003 – 2005
2. Terms of Reference for TAG1
3. Terms of Reference for TAG2
4. Terms of Reference for TAG3
5. ISG Action Programme 2003 – 2005, Discussion Draft
6. TAGs Action Program 2002 – 2003, Discussion Draft.
7. Minutes of ISG Steering Board, Plenary and TAGs.

The consultants will also refer to the following documents, among others:

1. Decision No. 132/1999/QD-BNN-HTQT dated 22nd September 1999 by the Minister of MARD on the Promulgation of Regulation on Management of Programs and Projects Using External Fund Sources and Belonging to Responsibility of of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.
2. Decision No. 120/TCCB-NN-2000 dated 24th November 2000 by the Minister of MARD on the Establishment of the ISG Steering Board with the participation of 10 donors, Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Ministry of Finance (MoF),

- several relevant Departments under MARD, and with Vice Minister of MARD being the Chairman of the Board.
3. Decision No. 121/TCCB-NN-2000 dated 24th November 2000 by the Minister of MARD on the Establishment of ISG Secretariat as an assistant unit to the Board, with its clearly-defined functions, tasks and organizational arrangements.
 4. Decision No. 1167/CP-QHQT dated 18th December 2000 by the Prime Minister on the establishment of the Trust Fund under MARD management to receive the grant offered by the donor community in support of the implementation of the ToR of the ISG process.
 5. Decree No. 17/200192ND-CP dated 4th May 2001 by the Prime Minister on the Issuance of the Regulation on the Management and Use of Official Development Assistance.
 6. Decision No. 2204/QD/BNN/TCKT dated 24th May 2001 by the Minister of MARD on the issuance of the Guidelines on the Management and Utilization of the Trust Fund of the ISG process.
 7. Regulation on the Code System for the Management of Agriculture and Rural Development Related Projects / Programmes Using Development Support Sources Funded by Countries and International Organizations attached to Decision No. 95/2001/QD-BNN dated 21st September 2001 by the Minister of MARD.
 8. Memorandum of Agreement on "Natural Disaster Mitigation Partnership for Central Vietnam" 1 June 2001.
 9. Memorandum of Agreement on the Preparation of a Partnership Support Program, "5 Million Hectare Reforestation Program."

F. Qualifications

The International Consultant with the following qualifications will be contracted to carry out the TORs described above:

1. Experience with Development Program and Project design and management with a strong focus on Monitoring and Evaluation process
2. Experience in capacity building or institutional strengthening in Vietnam
3. Good knowledge of the following:
 - i) Government of Vietnam institutions,
 - ii) Coordination and liaison mechanisms,
 - iii) public sector organization, management and institutional strengthening.
4. Abilities in:
 - i) organizing and undertaking complex, sensitive and strategic planning,
 - ii) consulting with senior Government and donor agency officials,
 - iii) working efficiently under a short timeframe,
 - iv) preparing clear and concise reports in English.

G. Inputs

The international consultant will be contracted for 15 working days, spreading over around a one-month period from October 22, 2003 to November 21, 2003.

Budget

The estimated budget for this activity is:

International Consultant	15 days @ USD 466 (agreed by Consultant and ISG Secretariat) inclusive of fees and personal subsistence	USD 6990
National Transportation and miscellaneous (in Hanoi)	Traveling (Reimbursable)	USD 200
Total		USD 7190

Reporting

The International Consultant will report to Dr. Le Van Minh, Director General, ICD, MARD.

ISG Secretariat and ICD MARD Participation

ISG Secretariat will avail itself to collaborate with the consultant during the mission. It will also ensure all the logistic arrangements such as provision of necessary documents, organization of meetings, translation and interpretation.

ICD MARD will assign three experts who are the technical coordinators of the TAGs to work together with the consultants and ISG Secretariat to make sure the TAGs Workplans is incorporated.

Working arrangement

Office space, personal computer, telephone, photocopier and fax will be provided by the ISG Secretariat.

H. Working Schedule

Day 1 to Day 5 (21 November to 27th 2003)	Review documents and meet with officials of MARD, ICD, ISG Secretariat, TAGs, donors, other ministries
Day 6 (28th November 2003)	Present the initial findings and outlines of the Work Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation frame-work
Day 7 to Day 9 (1st to 3rd December 2003)	Prepare draft report and ISG Work Plan 2004 – 2006 and circulate to ISG Steering Board members and TAG members for comments
Day 9 (3rd December 2003)	Send the drafts to ISG Steering Board for comments
Day 10 (4th December 2003)	Integrate comments in the report, ISG Work Plan 2004 – 2006 and the Monitoring and Evaluation frame-work
Day 11 (5th December 2003)	Present drafts to ISG Steering Board for final comments
Day 12 to Day 14 (8th December to 10th December 2003)	Finalize the report, Work Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation frame-work
Day 15 (11th December 2003)	Present documents to ISG Steering Board for approval (ISG Steering Board Meeting)