



U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR
INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Short Term Assignment

Smart Infrastructure for the Mekong

Mekong River Fish Biology Research Gap Analysis

Laos

Late 2014-2015

OPPORTUNITY: The U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) is seeking a total of 6 experts with strong professional backgrounds in riverine fish biology, ecology, habitat use, migration, and/or genetics—see “Application Requirements” for a complete list. Three teams, each comprised of 2 experts, will travel to Laos to evaluate the current state of knowledge and research activity on Mekong River and tributary fish genetics, fish ecology, and fish migration, and will recommend a comprehensive research agenda.

BACKGROUND: DOI-ITAP provides assistance to developing countries on subjects of Departmental expertise on a reimbursable basis. The program is currently operating across the globe with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the State Department, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. DOI-ITAP has managed short- and long-term multi-partner projects in over 50 countries since 1995.

The U.S. Agency for International Development has engaged DOI-ITAP to provide technical support under the Smart Infrastructure for the Mekong (SIM) program. SIM is an implementation tool of the long-term Lower Mekong Initiative, which encompasses the Lower Mekong Basin countries of Thailand, Burma, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia. The SIM overarching objective is to promote sound social and environmental safeguards relative to the development and operation of hydropower related infrastructure and associated activities and other land use projects that may impact the general Mekong River environment. Projects/studies in support of SIM can occur in any of the Lower Mekong countries.

The Laos Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Living Aquatic Resources Research Center (LLARRC) conducts fishery research throughout Laos, with a primary focus on aquaculture. In recognition of the likely construction of multiple hydroelectric dams on the Mekong River main stream and tributaries in the coming decade, as well as the uncertain impacts of the dams on aquatic resources, LLARRC has requested SIM assistance to assess the existing state of knowledge related to Mekong River fish life history and ecology, population genetics, and migratory behavior; identify knowledge gaps, and craft a long term research agenda to better inform future sustainable hydropower development, fish passage threshold development, and sustainable fish harvest. This project complements a SIM barotrauma study designed to address some of these same issues.

ASSIGNMENT: Each team will conduct a Lao-based investigation of the state of knowledge of one of three subject areas: riverine fish genetics, ecology, or migration. Experts will review literature and interview specialists in national ministries, provincial offices, universities, and non-governmental organizations to evaluate existing scientific capacity and the scale, content, and quality of past, ongoing, and proposed research activities in their area of expertise. Prior to departure for Laos, the experts will be expected to conduct an appropriate amount of Web research to also evaluate any research activities undertaken or proposed by non-Lao individuals or institutions. The 6 experts will develop and use a single template summary report to report back to Lao officials. This report will highlight existing scientific knowledge in each subject area, draft detailed and practical research agendas that maximize LLARRC's limited funding capacity, and identify training and equipment needs. This assignment is expected to set the stage for future SIM activities.

SCHEDULE: These assignments are expected to cover a 2 week period in late 2014 or early 2015. Only one team of 2 experts will be in Lao at any one time in order to minimize associated coordination workload for Ministry officials. The technical assistance will be provided in Vientiane, Laos, and other Lao cities.

PRE- AND POST-TRIP DUTIES: All travel and in-country logistics will be handled by DOI-ITAP and/or our in-country counterpart. Background material and briefings will be provided to the selected individuals prior to departure. The selected individuals will be expected to work in collaboration with DOI-ITAP project managers and U.S. Embassy staff on the preparation and follow-up over phone and email to discuss technical aspects of the project.

Within three weeks of the completion of the trip, the individual will provide the DOI-ITAP managers a brief draft trip report of the trip events, evaluations made, and recommendations for future actions. NPS travelers will also submit this report to their Office of International Affairs.

COSTS: DOI-ITAP will cover all travel costs associated with this assignment (round-trip airfare, lodging, meals, medical insurance, immunizations, per diem, etc.). The **salaries of the team members, however, will be paid by their employing DOI agency** for the duration of the international assignment, including pre- and post-trip obligation. Stipends, or other forms of compensation, are **not** available for retiree candidates. Please note that travel expenses will **not** count against Bureau travel ceilings.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Competitive applicants for this assignment will:

- Be a current or retired employee of DOI;
- Have an MS (PhD preferred) and demonstrated mastery in one of the following disciplines: Riverine fisheries ecology and management, freshwater fish genetics, or migratory fish behavior and ecology.
- Have demonstrated experience in natural resource program evaluation.
- Have extensive experience in research program design, staffing, and budgeting.
- Have demonstrated ability to work with and adapt to the needs and abilities of agencies and professionals of different ethnic or cultural groups;
- Previous international experience is desirable, particularly experience with tropical and semi-tropical river systems.

Upon selection, candidates must submit a current physician-signed letter or medical review form indicating fitness for duty.

HOW TO APPLY

Persons interested in being considered for this international assignment must:

- Send a resume and cover letter summarizing direct, relevant work experience, related to the skills listed under application requirements. Please submit electronically to Drew Levey, Drew_Levey@ios.doi.gov; office: (202) 208-1480 with one of the following subjects: Lao: Fish Genetics, Lao: Fish Ecology, or Lao: Fish Migration.
 - Cover letter and resume should be send as one document (preferably a PDF) with the file name "LAST NAME FIRST NAME_BUREAU_JOB TITLE"
- If your supervisor has already given approval, please indicate this.
- All applications should be submitted as soon as possible but no later than **July 29**. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

Questions can be directed to Project Manager Jason Riley Jason_riley@ios.doi.gov, (805) 225-1161) or Asia Program Manager Marc Weitzel (marc_weitzel@ios.doi.gov; 805/671-9746).

All applicants must secure approval from their supervisors to apply for an ITAP assignment. Supervisors will then adhere to their Bureau requirements for any further approvals required by the Bureau. For Bureau requirements, applicants should contact their appropriate Bureau International Affairs Point of Contact. A complete list of those POCs follows. All NPS, BOR and BLM applicants must copy their International Affairs POCs when they submit their applications to ITAP.

Bureau	Contact	Email	Telephone
BIA	Eric Wilson, International Affairs Coordinator	Eric.wilson@bia.gov	202-501-5944
BLM	Olivia Sierra, International Affairs Specialist	Olivia_sierra@blm.gov	202-513-0710
BOR	Richard H. Ives, Director of Native American and International Affairs	rives@usbr.gov	202-513-0550
FWS	Gloria Bell, Deputy Assistant Director for International Affairs	Gloria_Bell@fws.gov	202-208-6394
BSEE	Julie Fleming, Acting Chief, Office of International Program	julie.fleming@bsee.gov	703-787-1681
NPS	Stephen A. Morris, Chief, Office of International Affairs	Stephen_morris@nps.gov	202-354-1803
OSM	Jay Bautista, Director of International Programs	jbautista@osmre.gov	202-208-2868
USGS	Vic Labson, Director of International Programs	vlabson@usgs.gov	703-648-6206
ONRR	Jennifer Goldblatt, Chief of Staff, Office of Natural Resources and Revenues	Jennifer.goldblatt@onrr.gov	202-513-0604

Please note that ITAP travel does not require the use of a field office credit card and travel will not count towards ‘travel caps’.

Application Process

The entire selection process may take several weeks. A short list of candidates will be interviewed by telephone. All candidates will be notified of the results of the selection process. **The position is open to all applicants that meet the stated requirements. If you do not receive an email acknowledgement of receipt of your application, please inquire with the Project Managers listed above.**