



Terms of Reference

BASELINE STUDY

PROJECT: CIRCULAR ECONOMY COCOA - “FROM BEAN TO BAR”

1. BACKGROUNDS

The context

Circular economy is increasingly recognized as a way of reducing the environmental footprint of production and consumption, attracting increasing attention from consumers, businesses and policymakers around the world. While the approach is an emerging topic of discussion for government and business in Vietnam, awareness remains low and has not yet triggered a systemic transition from a conventional/linear economy to a more sustainable circular economy. The cocoa sector was selected because it is large and prominent enough to convincingly prove these concepts and achieve meaningful results, but small and cohesive enough to be a pioneering case. Like other agri-food subsectors, challenges exist at the production level (soil degradation and erosion, water pollution, poor product quality), in processing (use of fossil energy, water use, generation of waste), and later in the lifecycle (harmful packaging choices). All of these are driven by a business and policy environment that does not yet recognize or prioritize circular economy models. Cocoa production has the potential to do no environment harm if properly managed, but best practices are not widespread. Regenerative and circular economy approaches are needed to decouple the growth of Vietnam’s cocoa subsector from increases in carbon emissions, soil erosion, and landslides, water pollution, use of hazardous chemicals, and solid waste from environmentally unfriendly packaging. Cocoa enterprises are still not aware of the circular economy but are willing to make the necessary changes if they are shown how it can be done productively and profitably. It is, therefore, essential to have circular economy success cases that convincingly demonstrate how regenerative agriculture and circular economy can be implemented across product lifecycles. A well-documented example, backed by policy, economic and technical research, is a precondition for the adoption of the circular economy by businesses, financial institutions, and policymakers.

The Project

To develop and adopt less polluting and more resource-efficient and circular products, processes, and services by MSMEs allowing their integration to global greener value and supply chains. The Project will deal with numerous issues facing the Vietnamese cocoa and wider agri-food sectors. These include phasing out the use of hazardous chemicals in production, reducing the resource intensiveness of production and processing, introducing environmentally friendly bio-based packaging, and recirculating

cocoa waste products as energy sources and raw material for agricultural inputs and packaging. Digitalization of traceability will also contribute to the growth of efficient, environmentally sound cocoa supply chains.

The expected impact of the Project is that the transition of the cocoa and chocolate subsector to a regenerative and circular economy business model will trigger uptake of circular economy in the wider agri-food sector and policies of Vietnam, leading to equitable economic growth decoupled from harmful environmental impacts.

The specific objectives include:

- Transition the cocoa/chocolate subsector to regenerative and circular economy approaches at key points of the product lifecycle;
- Leverage change in the cocoa subsector to trigger the uptake of circular economy approaches in the wider agri-food sector;
- Prove the feasibility of closed-loop and circular production, providing an example for others to follow and informing supportive policies.

The expected outcomes include:

- Outcome 1: Cocoa producers and supporting businesses increase productivity and reduce negative environmental impacts through integrated, regenerative and closed-loop production, post-harvesting and trade.
- Outcome 2: Cocoa and chocolate processors decrease environmental footprint through reduced waste and more efficient energy and water use, verified by a management system that applies a digitalized traceability system.
- Outcome 3: Cocoa provides a reproduceable model for uptake of circular economy in the Vietnamese agri-food sector and in agri-food policies.

The Project, funded by the European Union and donations, will be implemented by Helvetas Vietnam and the local partner organization CDC (Community Development Center) for a 04 years period from April 2022 to Mar 2026. Tentative geographical areas of the Project cover 06-07 cacao provinces in Central Highlands (Daklak, Daknong, Lamdong, Gialai) and Mekong Delta (Dongnai, Bentre and BRVT).

2. OBJECTIVES

The baseline is intended for project management team, community people, local government and other private sector stakeholders (MSMEs, NGOs, research institutes, etc) to understand the current situation and gaps for improving circular economy and regenerative agriculture approaches in cocoa and other agri-food sectors in Vietnam. The groups and individuals with a major interest in the baseline survey:

Partner's name	Main roles in the Project
The Community Development Center (CDC)	+ Capacity building for cocoa producers & fermenters. + Co-implementing partner of the Outcome 1.
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)	+ Formulate and develop favorable policies for circular economy in agricultural sector.

	+ Support for overall project implementation. The focusing agencies of MARD are National Agriculture Extension Center, Dept. of Crop Production, and Dept. of International Relation.
Provincial DARDs (whereas cocoa production is available)	+ Support for overall project implementation at provincial and farmer level.
Institute of Circular Economy Development (ICED)	+ Service provider of regenerative agriculture and circular economy technical solutions. + Cooperate to promote the circular economy in cacao and other agri-foods sector.
Cocoa & chocolate processing & production companies	+ Support for project implementation at processing and consumption level.
Cacao farmers, cocoa fermenters and other inputs and service providers	+ Project final beneficiaries at upstream level.

The baseline study will be completed at the start of the project, with local stakeholders, to measure the status of all indicators and to understand the starting point of key elements of the work against which later progress will be measured. This will enable project indicators at output and goal/outcome level to be measured and tracked.

The study acts as an accompaniment to the quantitative and qualitative data that is also recommended when implementing a project for the first time at the beginning of the project. This should help to identify any major issues and provide some insights into the opinions of the stakeholders in relation to the circular economy in cacao sector. The baseline results will point to how best the project will be rolled out and set priorities of the project at the sometime providing information that acts as a basis for measuring project success or failure. The study must clearly produce information that will be used to direct and guide the implementation of the project.

The Baseline Study therefore has the following specific objectives:

1. Provide descriptive information and ongoing knowledge and practices of cacao production and processing related to the circular economy concept, which closely links to resource efficiency, waste management, environment effects, climate change adaptation etc.
2. Measure onset status of project outcome and impact indicators mentioned in the project logframe, supporting to the project M&E system as well as Final Evaluation over 04 years of implementation.
3. Provide recommendations and suggestions for the project team and relevant stakeholders on the project approach, intervention strategy and planned activities.

3. SCOPE OF WORKS

The Consultant will conduct activities to deliver outputs that meet the baseline objectives, including:

- Conduct a desk review including an analysis of documents, papers, and reports that have been produced in relation to the project's thematic areas. The project documents and some other relevant reports will be provided by Helvetas Vietnam;
- Develop comprehensive tools for collection of quantitative and qualitative data where necessary. The tools may be focus group discussions, questionnaires, or key informant interviews.
- Conduct field visits and interviews with selected cacao farmers, local cocoa processors, service providers and other relevant stakeholders.
- Prepare the Inception Report (consisting of final tools), analyse data and finalize the Baseline Survey Report (in English) with comments/contributions of involved parties.

Information collected, analysed and reported will be inclusive and based on gender-disaggregated data in order to emphasise the project's transversal focus on gender and social equity.

4. METHODOLOGY

The Consultant is to propose appropriate qualitative and quantitative research methods for the study. The primary data collection is presumed the major data collection method hence the tools should be prepared and discussed intensively with the Project Manager (Helvetas) and piloted at field.

- The target groups: The most important target groups including the cocoa farmers, cocoa fermenters and cocoa/chocolate processors.
- The target provinces: Daklak, Daknong and Dongnai.
- Sampling: No specific requirement for sampling methods or sample size, the Consultant will propose the most appropriate ones.

The Consultant will work in close collaboration with the Project Manager and representatives of project partners including CDC¹, ICED², MARD, MSMEs and other relevant stakeholders. The Consultant could review literature context, conduct interviews and discussions with related stakeholders including project partners, private sector, beneficiaries, relevant donors/NGOs, etc.

5. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The consulting team may be comprised of more than one consultant.

The main responsibilities of the team leader are:

- Develop the methodology for the research based on providing a robust evidence-base, and where appropriate administering a short simple questionnaire, which will be tested and fine-tuned as appropriate.
- Provide overall strategic guidance and be responsible for the overall baseline study process.
- Allocate tasks to the team members, supervise and guide the team members in implementing their tasks and be responsible for the overall quality control of the study.
- Coordinate with project's partners and other stakeholders.

¹ Community Development Center

² Institute for Circular Economy Development

- Write the Baseline Study final report.

The team leader should have the following experience:

- Minimum of a masters' degree qualification from a recognized university in monitoring and evaluation, social studies, development studies, environmental sciences, economics, or any other relevant degree.
- A minimum of 10 years' experience in conducting project monitoring and evaluation studies, including agriculture and/or environmental programmes in Vietnam.
- Excellent experience of designing and evaluating development projects and experience of providing strategic guidance to programmes based on result-based evaluations, especially at national scale.
- In-depth understanding and experience in agri-foods sector, sustainable and environmental policies in Vietnam and the region.
- Understanding in circular economy and regenerative agriculture would be a distinct advantage.
- Experience in cacao production and processing technologies is an added value.
- Very good communication skills and fluent in English (writing, speaking), and Vietnamese.

Other team's members should be:

- A specialist on economics, agricultural/environmental sciences or any other relevant expertises.
- Excellent experience and knowledge on qualitative research, project monitoring and evaluation.
- Deep understanding on cacao production and processing technologies, sustainable development and agricultural policies in Vietnam would be an advantage.
- Very good communication skills and fluent in English and Vietnamese (writing, speaking).

6. SUGGESTED TIME:

The timeframe for this consultancy is between **July 25th to Aug 30th, 2022**. The consultant must ensure the completion of the entire baseline deliverables within this timeframe. The level of effort for this assignment is approximately **20 working days**, broken down as follows.

Suggested workplan:

Activity	Duration	Outputs
Contract signing	-	Signed contract
Desk review and inception report	3 days	Inception report with tools
Field trips for data collection (5 days) and stakeholder consultations (5 days)	10 days	Collected data
Analysis and Reporting	5 days	Draft report
Finalization of report and support updating of the project logframe.	2 days	Final report & updated logframe.
Total working days	20 days	

Note: Travel cost included airfare, airport taxi and ground travel, perdiem and accommodation for field trips will be supported by the Project subjected to EU based cost norm.

7. DELIVERABLES

The Consultant is supposed to deliver ontime and of good quality the following deliverables, in English:

- An Inception Report detailing the design and planned execution of the baseline study.
- 1st draft Baseline Study Report after the 2nd field trip.
- Final Baseline Study Report that give the current values of survey indicators with analysis.
- A presentation (Powerpoint) to summarize key fact findings and recommendations.

Helvetas will use the Baseline Study report and data for various following purposes, among others:

- To develop the project M&E system and organize the M&E periodically activities.
- To set up the achievable targets on logframe indicators.
- To revise or re-design project's interventions, if relevant.
- To use as input data for the project final evaluation.

Candidates, who are interested in this work, please send your CV and technical and financial proposal to: tuan.nguyen@helvetas.org by July 20, 2022.