



## Terms of References

### MID-TERM EVALUATION

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

## 1. BACKGROUND

### The context

HELVETAS is an independent organization for development based in Switzerland with affiliated organizations in Germany and the United States. Helvetas has been active in Vietnam since 1994, working in various areas typically Agriculture, Bio-conservation, Forestry, Eco-Tourism, and Rural Economy.

Under the SWITCH-Asia programme of the European Union, HELVETAS and its local partner – the Community Development Center (CDC) - are implementing the Project “Circular Economy Cocoa: From Bean to Bar” with the main objective of developing circular economy solutions in cocoa and other agri-food sectors, leading to equitable economic growth decoupled from harmful environmental impacts.

### The Project

This Project, 04-years-duration and funded by the European Union and HELVETAS, has been implemented since July 2022 in 06-07 cacao provinces in Central Highlands and Mekong Delta of Vietnam. The overall goal of the Project is to promote the circular economy practices in the agri-food sector and policies of Vietnam leading to equitable economic growth decoupled from harmful environmental impacts. To achieve this, specific objectives are included:

- 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 Project was designed with the following expected outcomes:

- 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 their 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 reproducible model for the uptake of circular economy in the Vietnamese agri-food sector and agri-food policies.

In particular, the Project dealt with numerous issues of 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 solutions, repurposing cocoa waste products as agricultural inputs or clean energy, and enhancing the digitalization & traceability process of the cocoa value chain.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Mid-term Evaluation is to review the performance of the Project, analyze its achievements up to date against the log-frame, and assess the implementation strategy applied by the Project. This evaluation will help to determine whether the project is on track or not, identify any issues or challenges, and provide an opportunity to make necessary adjustments. The study will also generate lessons learned and provide recommendations for future approaches of donors and implementers in cocoa and other agri-food sector, ensuring maximum impacts and sustainability and the way to achieve them.

The Mid-term Evaluation therefore has the following specific objectives:

1. Review the project outputs and outcomes, assess progress against project implementation plans and log-frame, assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the portfolio.
2. Review and assess:
  - The relevance of the project in the concrete development context of the project localities and other enabling factors, including sector situation and participation of relevant stakeholders.
  - The effectiveness and efficiency of the project with respect to its investment, the mechanism to partner with the public and private sector for the delivery of interventions.
  - The impact of the project on the cocoa sub-sector and communities in the light of circular economy approach and application.
  - The sustainability of the project in environmental, social and economic aspects. Assess the potential for further replication of the circular economy approach and business model in Vietnam.
3. Review the strategy applied by Project considering:
  - the current development of circular economy approach and practices in Vietnam.
  - the characteristics of the local cocoa sector and cocoa value chain.



- the partnership and influencing strategy to relevant stakeholders.
4. Lessons and Recommendations: Generate lessons learned and provide clear recommendations for relevant stakeholders for future programmes regarding the green and circular economy.

### 3. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Scope of work

The evaluation team will look at the whole achievement of the project within its 02 years duration, focusing on outputs and outcomes; assess current and future challenges, and propose recommendations and strategies for future interventions among the circular economy concept and cocoa sector. The evaluation team should offer answers to the following key questions although not only restricted to them:

##### Project Achievement

- What are the projects' key outputs/results up to date? How are they related to the project logframe?
- Is the project implementation effective and efficient? How efficient is the project management (accountability and cost-effectiveness)?
- Is the project implementation sufficiently monitored and documented? Are problems identified in due time? Are practical, feasible solutions proposed and applied? Does the steering and decision-making process function appropriately?
- What are the key gaps between the project implementation process and the project-designed outcomes? Is the project still relevant to current contexts? What is the level of effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project?
- What are the achieved impacts to date?

##### Project Strategy

- Are the approaches applied by the project appropriate to the local context and do they address context-specific constraints within the chosen value chains?
- Has the project worked with partners and target groups that could deliver the impacts proposed?
- Are there any significant changes in the context and market during the project implementation? If yes, has the project evolved to respond to the context and market changes during the implementation? If not, what are the measures the projects should take to adapt/adjust in the future?
- What are the key challenges and risks for future intervention and how to mitigate them, considering the market requirements and fluctuations?



Impact and Sustainability: (assess the overall likely impact of the project)

- What are the main positive changes created by the project? What are the main economic, social and environmental impacts created by the project in the short term?
- Can the impacts created by the project be able to self-adapt to grow and strengthen in the long run? If not, what are the key challenges that need to be addressed and what areas should be prioritized for future intervention?
- In the context of circular economy in Vietnam, taking into account the following challenges and characteristics: (1) Awareness of farmers, enterprises, cooperatives, consumers about CE in agriculture is not complete; (2) The connection between actors in circular economic models in agriculture is still weak; (3) Lack of experts/skilled staff in circular economy development; (4) Investment in R&D for circular economic development in agriculture is still limited; and (5) The legal framework and policy framework on circular economic development in agriculture are not complete and interdisciplinary. What else the relevant stakeholders could do to deliver wider market system changes and hence increase the possibilities for the results to be sustained?

Other cross-cutting issues:

- Gender and Social Equity: Access gender equality inclusive engagement with ethnic minority communities. Equity and Inclusion should be accessed at the farm level, entrepreneur level, and in research & policy.
- Private sector engagement: Examine various factors to determine how effectively the private sector is involved and contributing to the project's success.

Recommendations:

- Develop specific recommendations for major stakeholder groups anchored on the conclusions the different stakeholder groups will develop based on their own recommendations and insights. An action plan for major stakeholder groups shall be developed to promote sustainability and long-term impact on the beneficiary communities.
- Given the capacity of project partners and resources available, what are the areas that need further technical assistance to expand project impacts and maintain sustainability?
- Any other recommendations?

### **3.2 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 in field.

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

The review team will work in close collaboration with the project staff and partners, like Community Development Center (CDC), cocoa/chocolate producing companies, cocoa & agri-cooperatives, collectors/fermenters, service providers, R&D institutes, individual experts and other relevant agencies. The detailed methodology and process will be developed by the review mission, but with consideration of the following guidance:

1. The methodology will be developed based on the review of all important documents and literature sent to the evaluators by the project team in advance.
2. The methodology to be applied will be presented to the project in a kick-off meeting to ensure that the methodology is sensitive to the potential concerns of beneficiaries participating in this review.
3. Ensure that all analyses and recommendations are based on available records, evidence and interviews.
4. The project and all involved partners will support the team in organizing all meetings with related stakeholders.

#### **4. TEAM AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The evaluation team may be comprised of more than one consultant. The main responsibilities of the Team Leader are:

- Develop the methodology for the review 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 evaluation process.
- Coordinate with partners and 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 report
- Write the Mid-term Evaluation Report



The Team Leader should have the following experience:

- Excellent experience of evaluating development programmes related to green and circular economy, private sector development, sustainable agriculture, and experience of providing strategic guidance to programmes based on result-based evaluations, especially at the national scale.
- A thorough understanding of the economic behaviour and motivation of the private sector and private businesses in participation in and development of value chains in different industries. Insight knowledge and experience of constraints faced by local enterprises, of various scales, in Vietnam, including both cultural and context issues.
- Considerable experience and knowledge of working within Vietnam on market systems approaches. Experience of agri-business in Vietnam and the region would be a distinct advantage.
- Experienced in project management and implementation and knowledge of a number of the commodity value chains.
- Minimum Master's degree in project monitoring & evaluation/ agricultural economics/ environmental science/ or other relevant sciences.
- Very good communication skills and fluent in English (writing, speaking) and Vietnamese.

Other team members should be:

- A specialist in evaluation of development programmes and an understanding of evidence-based evaluations.
- Experience and deep knowledge of agricultural economy and/or environmental science, in Vietnam.
- Experience in farmer groups, community-based organizations and capacity development at the farm level.
- Experienced in project management and implementation and knowledgeable of several commodity value chains.
- Minimum Master's degree in project monitoring & evaluation/ agricultural economics/ environmental science/ or other relevant sciences.
- Very good communication skills and fluent in English (writing, speaking) and Vietnamese.

## **5. SUGGESTED TIME & DELIVERABLE:**

The total time frame suggested for this evaluation package is expected within 1,5 months, from Sept 01 – October 15th, 2024.

## **6. DELIVERABLES**



- The report structure & outlines, agreed by Helvetas, at the kick-off meeting.
- PowerPoint Presentation of Mid-term Evaluation fact findings and recommendations, after stakeholder interviews, field data collection and data analysis.
- The first draft of final report in English submitted to Helvetas for comments.
- Final report in English, including executive summary with critical and analytical views and clear recommendations submitted to Helvetas.

## 7. TECHNICAL & FINANCIAL PROPOSALS

Interested candidates should send their Profiles, Technical and Financial Proposal to Helvetas Vietnam at [tuan.nguyen@helvetas.org](mailto:tuan.nguyen@helvetas.org) and [helvetas.vietnam@helvetas.org](mailto:helvetas.vietnam@helvetas.org) for the attention of the EU Circular Economy Project.

- Technical Proposal: Clear indication of team composition, historical records, approach and methodology, detailed work plan with timeline, and other supporting documents if necessary.
- Financial Proposal: Total and break-downed costs based on the number of actual working days, consultant rate for each member, field-travel-related expenses, and other additional costs, if any. All the costs proposed should not be over the EU Cost Norms.

Deadline of submission: **August 25, 2024**