



TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR FINAL EVALUATION

PROJECT “USAID BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION”

STRATEGIC APPROACH 1 - PROMOTE CONSERVATION-FRIENDLY ENTERPRISES IN FOREST DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

1 INTRODUCTION

The "USAID Biodiversity Conservation" project, initiated in July 2020 and scheduled to conclude in June 2025, aims to preserve and enhance forest quality while safeguarding wildlife populations in Vietnam's high conservation value provinces: Ha Tinh, Ninh Binh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, Quang Nam, and Lam Dong. The project focuses on fourteen special-use forests (SUFs) and seven protection forests (PFs), facilitating landscape-level forest management to maintain cover and connectivity crucial for protecting Vietnam's endemic and threatened species. The project is implemented by WWF in partnership with Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV), Flora and Fauna International (FFI) Vietnam, Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Vietnam, Leibniz-Institute for Zoo and Wildlife (IZW), and in collaboration with Vietnam's Management Board for Forestry Projects under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

To address existing issues in biodiversity conservation and forest protection in targeted areas, the Project offers a systemic solution by leveraging four strategic approaches (SA):

- SA1: Promote Conservation-Friendly Enterprises in Forest Dependent Communities;
- SA2: Strengthen Management of Special-use and Protection Forests;
- SA3: Increase Functionality of Law Enforcement Systems for Forest and Wildlife Crimes;
- SA4: Reduce Local Demand Through Behavior Change Methodologies.

SA 1 aims to provide income opportunities to forest-dependent communities, enabling them to transition from unsustainable natural resource use to conservation-friendly and sustainable income streams. Through active participation in biodiversity conservation-friendly value chains of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), high-value agricultural products, community-based ecotourism, conservation-friendly livelihood models, and other alternative employment opportunities, forest-dependent communities are expected to reduce their dependency on forest resources, thereby contributing to the protection of forests and wildlife.

The Project was approved by the Government of Vietnam (GVN) in April 2021 but faced delays due to COVID-19 restrictions. Field activities commenced in November 2021, with initial interventions beginning in May 2022.

As the project nears completion, a final evaluation is essential to capture lessons learned and assess the nature, extent, and potential impact and sustainability of SA1 interventions. The evaluation will focus on reviewing implemented activities under SA1 as per the agreement with the donor and their contribution to achieving project objectives. Recommendations are expected to inform improvements in the design and implementation of future projects.



2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The final evaluation aims to assess the developmental effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, and sustainability of SA1 “Promote Conservation-Friendly Enterprises in Forest Dependent Communities” within the “USAID Biodiversity Conservation” project.

Specifically, the evaluation will focus on the following:

- Evaluate the implementation of activities under SA1 as per the agreement with the donor.
- Evaluate the contribution of SA1 activities towards achieving the project's overarching biodiversity conservation goals.
- Examine the effectiveness of SA1 interventions in promoting conservation-friendly enterprises and sustainable income streams in forest-dependent communities.
- Analyze the outcomes and impacts of SA1 interventions on reducing dependency on forest resources and protecting forests and wildlife.
- Assess the outcomes of SA1 in terms of social and environmental aspects.
- Assess the implications and risks arising from not achieving planned indicators and the project's sustainability due to the limited intervention timeframe caused by COVID-19 and premature termination of field interventions due to budget cuts.
- Identify strengths, weaknesses, lessons learned, and challenges encountered during the implementation of SA1 activities.
- Provide recommendations for improving the future design and implementation of similar projects.

3 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques, including but not limited to:

- Perform desk study and review project documents, reports, and relevant literature.
- Key informant interviews with project staff, stakeholders, beneficiaries, and partners.
- Focus group discussions with community members and local leaders.
- Site visits to selected project intervention areas.
- Data analysis to assess the achievement of project indicators and outcomes.

4 TASKS

Step 1: Preparation

The consultants will collaborate closely with the Team Lead and other team members to prepare for the mission, leveraging on the baseline data and case study documentation provided by the SA1. The following tasks are foreseen but not limited to:

- Study project documents, reports, and relevant literature.
- Agree on the methodology and techniques used to implement the evaluation (including desk study, field visits, interviews, etc.)
- Propose a feasible and effective implementation plan with clear timelines and outputs.

Step 2: Implement the needed field surveys to collect data.

Step 3: Develop the first draft of the evaluation report.



Step 4: Update and complete the final evaluation report.

5 DELIVERABLES

The consultant(s) will deliver the following outputs:

- Inception Report outlining the evaluation methodology and work plan.
- Draft Evaluation Report presenting findings, analysis, conclusions, and recommendations.
- A well-structured and -written final evaluation report incorporating feedback on the draft report and including an executive summary, methodology, findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and actionable recommendations.

6 TIME FRAME

The final evaluation is expected to be completed by December 20, 2024.

7 LOCATION

Fieldwork will be carried out in the project sites across the four provinces including Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, and Quang Nam.

8 QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENT

The evaluation team should possess the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience in conducting evaluations related to biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and community development projects.
- Familiarity with USAID or similar donor-funded projects.
- Expertise in both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.
- Understanding of the socio-economic context and environmental issues in Vietnam, particularly in forest-dependent communities.
- Excellent written and communication skills in English and Vietnamese.

9 HOW TO SUBMIT THE PROPOSAL

Documents to be submitted: Technical and Financial Proposals and the consultant's CV in English.

Deadline: 15 November 2024.

Address: helvetas.vietnam@helvetas.org and lua.hoang@helvetas.org.

Subject of the letter: Final Evaluation SA1-BCA.