

**TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)
CONSULTANCY SERVICE CALL FOR MID-TERM REVIEW**

of the project “Biomass Gasification Technology – Sustainable Energy Solution for Agri-Food Processing and Waste Management in Rural Areas of Vietnam” (short title: BEST)

1. BACKGROUND

Oxfam is a global movement of people who are fighting inequality to end poverty and injustice. There are currently 21 member organizations working in 87 countries. We have a vision of a just and sustainable world. A world where people and the planet are at the center of our economy. Where women and girls live free from violence and discrimination. Where the climate crisis is contained. And where governance systems are inclusive and allow for those in power to be held to account.

Oxfam in Vietnam believes that a reduction in poverty, injustice, and inequality will occur through the interaction between active citizens, accountable states and responsible private sector and that it is fundamental to Vietnam’s development. Oxfam in Vietnam aims to influence the current growth-based development model to shift to a Human Economy Development Model, putting people and the planet before profits.

In Vietnam, agri-food processing practised by micro and small enterprises (MSEs) is not sustainable due to their inefficient burning of coal and firewood for drying agricultural products, which is both costly for fuel and polluting for the production sites and the surrounding environment. There is an urgent need for agri-MSEs to shift to a cleaner and cheaper source of energy. Meanwhile, the huge agricultural residue resource in Vietnam is being dumped and burned as wastes, causing environmental pollution. According to calculations by the Vietnam Institute of Energy, the total biomass source is about 118 million tons/year, including about 40 million tons of rice straw, 8 million tons of rice husk, 6 million tons of bagasse and over 50 million tons of coffee husks and shells, beans, wood waste... Although several biomass energy equipment models have been introduced to the Vietnam market, none of them have been widely adopted by businesses. Though the government has policies to encourage investments in biomass energy, they have not achieved strong buy-in from investors.

In this context, Oxfam in Vietnam in partnership with the Center for Creativity and Sustainability Study and Consultancy (CCS) has been implementing the 4-year project titled “**Biomass Gasification Technology – Sustainable Energy Solution for Agri-Food Processing and Waste Management in Rural Areas of Vietnam**” (short title: BEST), funded by the European Union in 04 provinces of Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang, Yen Bai and Lao Cai for the period 2020 – 2024.

The Overall Objective of the project is **to promote sustainable agri-food processing and contribute to enhancing waste management in Vietnam by facilitating the adoption of volumetric continuous biomass gasification (VCBG) technology as renewable energy among agri-MSEs**. The project aims to achieve the following impacts:

- 50% agri-food processing MSEs in Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang, Yen Bai and Lao Cai provinces report improved business viability due to their deployment of VCBG.
- 1.4 million tonnes of biomass are used as fuel for VCBG in the four provinces.
- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the four provinces are reduced by 2 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent due to deployment of VCBG among local MSEs.

Target groups and final beneficiaries: The **target groups** of this project consist of 2,500 agri-MSMEs, 100 mechanical enterprises and 400 biomass suppliers in the four provinces of Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang, Lao Cai and Yen Bai. Around **1.2 million people** (50% women) in the four provinces are the **final beneficiaries** of this project.

The BEST project has been being implemented half way of the project cycle. It is time to evaluate the project implementation progress against the set targets, revisit log-frame, approaches, and assess the challenges and contextual changes for necessary and strategic adjustments in implementation and management. Therefore, Oxfam in Vietnam is looking for a **team of national consultants to work with Oxfam MEL specialist to conduct a mid-term review (MTR) for the BEST project**. The purpose of the MTR is to assess significance of progress attained and formulate recommendations on how to further strategize and most optimally attain the

objectives, including necessary adjustment and supplementary interventions in the remaining period of the project.

2. OBJECTIVES OF CONSULTANCY AND AUDIENCE

The primary aim of the mid-term review is to assess the progress to date, provide lessons learnt and strategic recommendations to inform interventions and practical approaches towards achievement of the project set objectives as well as sustaining of the project impact.

The specific objectives of the MTR are to:

- Assess the project progress to date towards targets of specific objectives, results, outputs, and its overall objective (after the 2.5-year period of project implementation);
- Identify unexpected or unplanned factors that may prevent the project from achieving its objectives as well as opportunities to promote and speed up the achievement of project’s positive outcomes and impacts;
- Provide lessons learnt to date and specific recommendations on how to inform future implementation and improve project delivery/approaches and partnerships, including necessary adjustment and supplementary interventions in the remaining period of the project;
- Review and revise project’s M&E system including its indicators and plan for accountability and learning purposes, particularly, the impact indicators should be carefully reviewed against the updated and actual context of the project.

Audience: The primary audience of the MTR is the project implementing organizations. The MTR report will also be shared with the donor, relevant stakeholders, partners, and the project benefiting communities.

3. KEY STUDY QUESTIONS

The MTR will conduct critical analysis of the following aspects:

| Categories | Suggested Questions |
|---|---|
| Achievement of project implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify the mid-term values of project’s specific objectives and results, including both quantitative and qualitative indicators and assess in the relation to the project set targets. • Describe the current status of relevant actors sharing benefits in the VCBG ecosystem – agri-processing MSMEs, mechanical and biomass service providers - which should include but not limited to profiling the key actors’ role, capacity, power, benefit and their motivation/willingness to participate in the inclusive and sustainable value chain/ecosystem development. • What are the major factors influencing the achievement or under - achievement of outcomes/specific objectives and results? What can we learn from this? • What areas of weakness are there in the project? How should we address them? |
| Relevance of the project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How compatible is the project design and strategy with local development policies and priorities? • How the project's intervention logic and approach fit the actual needs and context of the target groups: local context (agri-processing, biomass), beneficiaries' needs (actual needs of VCBG), capacity (to adopt), investment ability (finance), local partners' capacity in coordination among the ecosystem actors? |
| Efficiency of the project implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the implementation mechanisms been adequate to achieve the expected results? What should be adjusted to improve the implementation of the project? • Are results being delivered in an economic and timely way? |
| Effectiveness of produced outputs and outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the linkage between produced outputs with specific objectives and expected result? What works and what may not work? • What is the level of contribution of projects results towards objectives at different levels? • Whether produced outputs are sufficient to produce expected results? And whether the produced results would contribute to the achievement of expected objectives? |
| Impact | What change (positive or negative, direct/indirect, intended/non - intended), if any, has happened as a result of BEST project? |



| Categories | Suggested Questions |
|----------------------------|---|
| Sustainability | What should the project do (stop, start, continue doing) to maximize the chances of the project sustainability (positive results, increased capacity in others, etc.)? |
| Cross-cutting issue | Are gender equality, human rights, fragility, climate change and environmental issues adequately addressed as per proposed in the project document? |
| Recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on MTR findings, is any adjustment of interventions/strategies required as compared to the approved project document, any improvements of the project MEL system? • Is there a need to reformulate project targets to fit with development, promotion and actual scaling up of the VCBG ecosystem and the available resources of project? • What further improvement in the design, implementation deliver, and resourcing of the project to increase effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and impact in the coming phase of implementation? |

4. METHODOLOGIES AND METHODS

The consultant is expected to employ a participatory approach of evaluation using a range of both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection where appropriate. This may include, but are not limited to, field visits to project provinces (Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang, Yen Bai, Lao Cai); meetings with project teams, partners and related stakeholders, in addition to a desk review of project documents and reports.

The MTR process should incorporate the perspectives of different stakeholders, including but not limited to, small-scale producers, collectors/middleman, processors, MSMEs, financial institutions, local government institutions, local/national partners. Collected data and findings should be disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, disability and key actors in the ecosystem – agri-processing MSMEs, mechanical and biomass service provider.

The consultant(s) is expected to carry out the following work:

(i) Document reviews and design review scope of work:

- Brief meeting with project team to get deep understanding on the project;
- Analysis/review of existing and relevant documents such as the BEST project documents (Proposal, Log-frame, annual report), baseline reports and other project survey/study reports. This desk review will identify data gaps and inform the scope of the field work;
- Agree on workplan with Oxfam including detailed methods (qualitative/quantitative, number of working days, budget and plan etc.);
- Design MTR protocol including: sampling strategy, the survey approaches and method, data collection tools, detailed fieldwork plan, analytical framework, and quality control measures;

(ii) Conduct primary data collection in the field with support from BEST project team. It is expected to collect both quantitative & qualitative data that might include:

- In-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders, including project implementation partners from central to local levels;
- MSMEs interview/surveys; using structural questionnaires and analytical frameworks for key actor of the VCBG ecosystem.
- Focus Group Discussion;
- Stakeholders consultation meeting;

(iii) Data analysis and report writing

- Analyze data and review field notes;
- Write the draft mid-term review report;
- Conduct consultation meeting with project teams and key partners on the key findings and to consolidate comments/inputs for report finalization;
- Finalize the mid-term review reports (in both English and Vietnamese).

5. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES

| # | Deliverables | Tentative timeline |
|-----|---|--------------------|
| (1) | A review proposal/design that provide methodology, methods, evaluation schedule and tools | 10 – 18 Jul. 2023 |



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|-----|---|-----------------------|
| (2) | Data collection tools and set of raw data set | 19 Jul – 06 Aug. 2023 |
| (3) | First draft report of the review | 07 - 17 Aug. 2023 |
| (4) | One face-to-face debriefing representing key findings of MTR for further consultation with project staff and local partners in the VCBG ecosystem | 18 – 23 Aug. 2023 |
| (5) | The 2 nd version of revised MTR report and PowerPoint presentation | 24 – 30 Aug. 2023 |
| (6) | The final MTR report with an executive summary of the MTR report highlighting key findings and recommendations (in English and Vietnamese). | 15 Sep. 2023 |

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSULTANT

The consultant team will report to Oxfam BEST staff in charge and work closely with the project team (Oxfam and partners). The consultants should:

- Possess relevant background in one of the following majors: social sciences, food industry, forestry, aquaculture, environment, natural resource management, economics. Master’s degree in the field is preferred.
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of result-based approach and tools;
- Possess proven experience (at least 10 years) in MEL work for NGO’s development projects, preferably including issues of value chain development, rural economic development, social issues in aquaculture and agricultural sectors. A proven track record in designing and managing M&E system for development is an advantage;
- Have skills and experiences in conducting M&E/ project evaluation activities, assessments, and be familiar with forestry and aquaculture/clam production sectors in Vietnam. This will include strong skills in both quantitative and qualitative, methods.
- Have knowledge on inclusive and sustainable value chain development, social issues in forestry in the Central region and aquaculture production in the Mekong delta region of Vietnam.
- Demonstrate commitment to inclusiveness and gender equality with experience in integrating gender and diversity issues into project MEL system.
- Be committed to and able to meet the deadline, strong analytical skills, and documentation skills.
- Have excellent Vietnamese and writing skills of English.

7. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposal should include:

- Introduction of the Consultant team’s members profile and related experience;
- Technical proposal in achieving all expected objectives within mentioned timeframe (including survey methodology, framework, sampling strategy, data collection tools, detailed workplan for field survey and quality insurance, team structure, etc ...);
- Financial proposal that specifies number of working days required and consultancy rate;
- Sample(s) of a MTR report for similar tasks.

How to Apply: An application, CVS and proposal should be submitted in English by email with subject mentioning “BEST project Midterm Review” to HR.Vietnam@oxfam.org.

The closing date for application: 17.00pm, 28th June 2023.

Only short-listed applicants will be contacted for an interview.

All our work is led by three core values: Empowerment, Accountability, Inclusiveness. To read more about our values please click here. Oxfam is committed to preventing any type of unwanted behavior at work including sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, lack of integrity and financial misconduct; and committed to promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults. Oxfam expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment through our code of conduct. We place a high priority on ensuring that only those who share and demonstrate our values are recruited to work for us.

