



INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT SCOPE OF WORK

Consultant Name: (Last, First)		Position Title:	Consultant 5- Financial expert
Project Name:	USAID Sustainable Forest Management		
Billing Code:	5.1.5.3 & 5.1.5.6	Contract No:	72044020F00002
Period of Performance:	July 2024 to September 2025		
Total Level of Effort:	43		
Evaluator:	TBD		

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

The USAID Sustainable Forest Management Project (the Project) will work with the Government of Vietnam (GVN) to reduce carbon emissions associated with deforestation, the degradation of natural forests, and poor plantation management. The Project will implement a “Green Prosperity” approach that strengthens local communities’ ability to protect their natural resource base and reduce emissions while building a strong foundation for sustainable livelihoods and equitable economic growth.

The Project will work in seven provinces (Lao Cai, Son La, Hoa Binh, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Quang Tri, Quang Nam) and focus on five objectives:

1. Improve and expand community forest management
2. Increase conservation-friendly enterprises in forest-dependent communities
3. Increase functionality of law enforcement system for forest crimes
4. Improve production forest management practices
5. Mobilize domestic resources for forest management and protection

The Project will be implemented during the period 2020-2025 by DAI in collaboration with RECOFTC and Preferred by Nature as partners, with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) as the counterpart and the Management Board of Forestry Projects (MBFP) as project owner.

B. BACKGROUND

As a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, Vietnam has an obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Vietnam's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) has defined emission reductions by sectors: energy, agriculture, forestry and land use, waste and industrial processes. At the meeting of the parties to the 26th United Nations Framework Convention (COP 26), Vietnam and the international community strongly committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Accordingly, the three (3) major commitments declared by Vietnam include:

- (1) Strive to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050;
- (2) Participate in efforts to reduce methane emissions by 30%; and
- (3) Join the Glasgow Declaration on Forests and Land Use, with the aim of reversing deforestation and forest degradation.

The greenhouse gas emission reduction target was announced by Viet Nam in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) submitted to UNFCCC in 2022. Accordingly, in the period to 2030, Vietnam commits to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15.8% (equivalent to 146 million tons of CO₂eq) with national resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 43.5% (403 million tons of CO₂eq) with international support.



In order to implement commitments on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, a number of mechanisms and policies have been issued, including:

- The 2020 Law on Environmental Protection regulates issues on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and developing the domestic carbon market. Accordingly, Decree No. 06/2022/ND-CP issued on January 7, 2022 provides detailed regulations on mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and protecting the ozone layer. Decree 06/2022/ND-CP also stipulates emission reductions up to 2030 for sectors and sectors, of which the agriculture and rural development sector (mainly from the sub-sector of agriculture; forestry and land use) is 129.8 million tons of CO₂e. The domestic carbon market is under construction and is expected to officially operate from 2028.
- Decision No. 1693/QĐ-BNN-KHCN dated 28/04/2023 approving the plan to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions (including the plan to reduce methane emissions) in agriculture and rural development until 2030, with orientation to 2050.
- Circular No. 23/2023/TT-BNNPTNT dated December 15, 2023 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development stipulating the measurement, reporting and appraisal of greenhouse gas emission mitigation results and greenhouse gas inventory in the forestry sector.

The forestry sector plays an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, making an important contribution to the country's emission reduction target. Currently (in 2020), Vietnam has 14.6 million hectares of forest, of which 10.3 million hectares are natural forests. Carbon reserves stored in forest ecosystems today are about 612 million tons C (equivalent to 2.2 billion tons of CO₂e), of which 80% of carbon is stored in natural forests. The bamboo forest currently has about 220,000 hectares and the bamboo mixed forest is 1.3 million hectares. The amount of carbon stored in these 2 types of forests accounts for about 12% of the total forest carbon nationwide. In the period 2010-2020, GHG emissions and carbon sequestration have changed significantly compared to the previous period (1995-2010). The average annual net emissions for 2010-2020 were -39 million tonnes of CO₂ (emitting 30.5 million tonnes of CO₂e and absorbing -69.8 million tonnes of CO₂e) and were the only sector with negative net emissions. Activities to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions in forestry are generated from the following activities:

- Increase carbon sequestration through new afforestation, promotion of regeneration, additional planting of enriched forests, improvement of productivity and carbon reserves of large timber plantations, sustainable forest management, increase of woody crops in agricultural cultivation, especially on sloped soils (agroforestry).
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through effective control of the conversion of forests to other land; encroachment on forest land; control forest degradation;

Carbon trading (reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon sequestration) is an important tool in achieving national greenhouse gas emission reduction targets through voluntary or mandatory carbon markets. Vietnam is piloting voluntary carbon trading such as transferring greenhouse gas reduction results in the North Central region to the Forestry Carbon Partnership (FCPF) and is preparing to transfer emissions reduction results in the South Central and Central Highlands regions under the LEAF program. At the same time, the Government of Vietnam is also developing a carbon credit offset exchange mechanism (including forest carbon credits) in the domestic compulsory carbon market, which is expected to officially operate in 2028.

One of the important requirements in determining the results of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing carbon sequestration from mitigation activities to be able to trade carbon, determining the contribution to NDC implementation is the carbon standards applicable to mitigation activities. Currently, carbon trading in the voluntary carbon market is applying different carbon standards, such as VCS, TREES, Golden, Climate, Community and Biodiversity (CCB) standards. These standards usually detail the following:



(1) Subjects and scope of application; (2) Conformity requirements; (3) Determine the reference level; (4) Determination of complementarity; (5) ensuring environmental and social safeguard; (6) Monitoring, measurement, and reporting; (7) Data transparency; (8) Implementation plan and benefit sharing plan; (9) Mechanism for resolving whistleblower complaints (10) Internal review; (11) Appraisal and verification of results; and (2) Recognition of results. (Credit-granting)

To date, Vietnam has not developed carbon standards for NDC implementation and carbon trade for forestry and land use for compulsory markets in Vietnam. Therefore, this task is proposed to be implemented, providing scientific and practical foundations for guiding the development of institutional and technical policies, namely the development and operation of carbon standard management systems for projects and mitigation activities in the forestry sector to help contribute to a financially viable carbon trading mechanism and resources for the forest carbon market in Vietnam. To accomplish this task, VFBC Project needs to recruit 1 consulting team of 6 experts including:

- **Forest expert team leader**, forest certification and forest carbon sequestration potential assessment
- **MRV consultant**: calculating measurements, results of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and forest carbon sequestration, investigating and monitoring forest developments.
- **Forestry Policy consultant**
- **Environmental and social consultant** with experience in construction to ensure social and environmental safeguard
- **Forestry consultant** review regulations, national standards and technical guidelines on forest management, protection and development and identify technical requirements for interventions in the implementation of measures to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions;
- **Financial Consultant**

C. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the task is to develop a technical report on policy, institutional and technical orientations for trading in forest carbon credits and a preliminary draft of carbon standards for greenhouse gas emission mitigation activities in the forestry sector (referred to as forest carbon standards) for NDC implementation which also meet minimum requirement of IPCC and carbon trading in Vietnam time as a basis for explaining the draft forest carbon standard, MRV for carbon standards and domestic forest carbon credits trading and as a basis for a dossier of request for verification of domestic standards for forest carbon in the future.

D. SCOPE OF WORK

Activities to perform tasks include:

1. Develop implementation plans, report outlines

Consultant group will be carried out from the development of technical reports, draft carbon standards until the dossier of publication of the draft carbon standard is completed, so the consulting team needs to develop a plan to implement and draft the outline of the report to ensure that the technical report can be used for verification dossiers, appraisal and publication of carbon standards later.

2. Develop technical reports

The technical report will be used as a basis for explaining the draft forest carbon standard and as a dossier basis for requesting verification of domestic standards for forest carbon, so the report should ensure the following contents:

2.1. Synthesis, analysis and evaluation of carbon standards

Synthesize, analyze and evaluate the management and operation system of carbon standards applied in the international voluntary carbon market and carbon standards of some mandatory (domestic) markets in some



countries around the world related to green gas house mitigation and increased carbon sequestration in the forestry sector. The aggregation, analysis and evaluation include, but are not limited to, the following:

Financial Requirements: Analysis of possibilities and opportunities to participate in international carbon markets in accordance with Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. Review the types of costs and financial obligations required of voluntary and compulsory market carbon standards to serve as a basis for developing appropriate financial norms for standards to be applied in Vietnam. Analysis of financial regulations related to the cost of building, registering and issuing carbon credits stipulated by current carbon standards applicable in voluntary and compulsory carbon markets. Analysis of financial regulations related to direct and indirect costs of implementing, developing, registering and issuing carbon credits stipulated in current carbon standards applicable in voluntary and compulsory carbon markets.

2.2. Synthesis and analysis of carbon trading projects

Synthesize and analyze the implementation of carbon trading projects in forestry in the international voluntary carbon market and compulsory domestic market in a few countries, including:

Analysis of costs related to the implementation of carbon trading projects as a basis for proposing financial regulations in transactions and trading on forest carbon only, such as registration fees, appraisal fees, carbon credit issuance fees in Vietnam;

2.3. Synthesize and analyze carbon credit management requirements

Propose financial regulations in trading and trading for forest carbon only, such as registration fees, appraisal fees, and carbon credit issuance fees.

Analyze compulsory carbon market development and propose profit assurance mechanisms for forest carbon credit projects.

2.4. Analysis of finances and trading orientation on the exchange

Review and analyze financial needs and value credits on the exchange to ensure profits for forest carbon credit projects.

3. Draft carbon standards and forms

Develop draft carbon standards for mitigation activities identified in the NDC Implementation Plan under Decision No. 1693/QĐ-BNN-KHCN and other activities (if appropriate). The draft includes, but is not limited to, the following main contents:

- Subjects and scope of application;
- Conformity requirements;
- Methods of measuring and calculating to determine reference levels; reporting on carbon emissions and absorption: technical requirements on methods for calculating emissions and absorption for each type of mitigation activities
- Determination of complementarity;
- ensuring safeguard and society;
- Contingency requirements for emission reduction results;
- Monitoring, measuring and reporting;
- Implementation plan and benefit sharing
- Mechanism for settling complaints and denunciations
- Data transparency;
- Internal audit;
- Appraisal and verification of results; and

- Recognition of results.
- Revoke, cancel certified forest carbon credits

4. Participate in technical meetings, seminars

Prepare and present draft technical reports and draft carbon standards at national regional consultation workshops and technical meetings of assessment boards organized by the Department of Forestry or meetings of the drafting committee of carbon credits.

5. Explain comments and complete the report:

Summarize and explain comments for the draft report on the development of carbon standards, including:

- Provide explanations for comments on financial regulations in forest carbon credit transactions and trading
- Provide explanations for comments on methods for calculating emissions, absorption, and assessing uncertainty
- Provide complete amendments to other comments to complete the dossier submitted for verification, appraisal and publication.

6. Finalize the draft consolidated report

Synthesize and complete the draft technical report and draft carbon standards for mitigation activities under Vietnam's NDC and MRV for carbon standards and domestic forest carbon trading in Vietnam. Finalize the Technical Report on the basis of comments from consultation workshops and the Evaluation Committee.

7. Technical support to complete dossiers of verification, appraisal and publication of standards

After completing the technical report and draft carbon standard, the consulting team should join the drafting team to finalize after receiving comments from the Department of Forestry, MARD, Ministry of Science and Technology on the dossier of verification, appraisal and publication of carbon standards. Together with the drafting team, complete the draft standard and dossier for submission to verification, appraisal and publication of the standard.

E. LEVEL OF EFFORTS AND DELIVERIES

The estimated LOE for this assignment is 43 person-days and the assignment will be implemented from July 2024 to September 2025. All products must be Vietnamese and accepted by the Department of Forestry and Projects.

The consultant agreement will be signed through and cover activities till May 2025. Activities from June to September 2025 will be included in an annex to the agreement subject to the availability of funds.

The specific deliverables and timeframe are listed in the table below:

No.	Activity	Deliverables	LOE	Handover time	Payment schedule
1	1	Implementation plan, report outline	2	2 weeks after signing the contract	1 st payment
2	2	Draft technical report	16	6 months after signing the contract (12/2024)	2 nd payment
3	3	Preliminary draft carbon standards	13	7 months after signing the contract (1/2025)	

4	4,5	Reception and explanation of opinions from the consultation workshop, Council	4	1 week after each consultation workshop, Council (4/2025)	3 rd payment
5	6	Complete technical report	5	4/2025	
6	7	Dossier of draft standards for completion submitted to the Ministry of Science and Technology	3	9/2025	Last payment
		Total	43		

F. QUALIFICATIONS

- Doctor's degree in forestry economics or environmental economics or related field
- Have at least 15 years of experience in forestry economics, environmental economics and carbon trading projects
- Have well understanding of the Paris Agreement
- Have well understanding of international carbon standards, financial requirements, fees/tax to pay;
- Have well understanding of carbon trading especially forest carbon trading
- Experience working with MONRE is an advantage.
- Proficient use of Microsoft software applications;
- Be skilled in teamwork, coordinating activities with multiple stakeholders;
- Be able to write reports, presentations and documents for meetings and seminars;
- Be able to use English to work directly with stakeholders is an advantage

G. HOW TO APPLY AND REQUESTED DOCUMENTS

Individual interested candidates are requested to submit:

- A CV in English and Vietnamese
- A cover letter in English and Vietnamese indicating why they are suitable for this position current contact details of at least three referees
- Scanned copy of related degrees

via email to our recruitment email at **VietnamSFM@dai.com**. Please quote the position title in the subject line: "CANDIDATE'S FULL NAME_C5_ Forest carbon standards"

Deadline for application: 5.00 p.m. (Hanoi time), June 19, 2024