

Terms of Reference

Provision of training on farm inspection and inspection reporting skills for ICS staff in certified cocoa in Tien Giang and Ben Tre Provinces

1. Introduction

Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation (Helvetas), formerly called the Swiss Association for International Cooperation, started a five-year programme to develop Organic and Fair-Trade Cocoa in Vietnam in 2009. The program aims to increase the living standard of the rural population in the southern regions of Vietnam via improved social, economic and environmental conditions related to agriculture. The program is coordinated by Helvetas and implemented by three project partners: the Nong Lam University (NLU), Ben Tre Province's Agricultural Extension Center (PEAC) and Tien Giang Province's Department of Science and Technology (DOST). The primary target groups for the project are the small-scale cocoa farmers in the two selected provinces.

For achieving the set objectives, since 2009 Helvetas has collaborated with the three partners to promote organic and fairtrade cocoa in the area via setting up 21 demonstration plots and conducting important research on black pod disease, cocoa mirids and compost making. Also, Helvetas in collaboration with the partners has prepared a number of technical guidelines for that purpose such as a guide for on-farm compost making, a manual for setting up and running internal control system (ICS) and materials for sustainable soil management. In addition, the program has organised a number of training courses for local staff and farmers, including training on gender mainstreaming in organic cocoa production, organic agriculture, compost making, sustainable soil management and requirements of the certifications. The experience over the past months has proved that organic cocoa is technically feasible under the local context. Farmers are able to apply recommended organic cocoa farming techniques such as composting and using ants to control cocoa mirids instead of using agrochemicals. The yields of the conversion farms vary depending on the farming techniques practiced before conversions and farmers' ability to make compost during the conversion period.

However, unsecured markets for organic premium have adversely affected the efforts made by the program in promotion of organic cocoa production at a larger scale. It is very likely that under the current high price levels for conventional cocoa (3,500USD/ton), the premium of 20% for organic cocoa is not realistic. Without such a premium, there are concerns about farmer participation. In response to this market situation, the program has decided to promote a certified cocoa production system that can accommodate different certification schemes including UTZ, Organic, and Fair-Trade. The combination of three certifications aims at offering farmers the opportunity of a stepwise conversion to different levels of certified cocoa production (UTZ, FLO, organic) according to their individual means and needs. For this purpose, the project aims at developing one Internal Control System which allows the integration of different certification schemes within the same organizational structure. The tools and learning from this process will be fed into the international standard harmonization discussion guided by the Sustainable Commodity Assistance Network (SCAN).

With the new strategy, the program will focus on achievement of 4 outcomes: (1) *sustainable certified cocoa production system*; (2) *strengthened processing and quality management of certified cocoa*; (3) *improved value chain facilitation and market access* and (4) *Internal control system for different standard compliance*. Accordingly, the program aims to contribute to the increase of living standards of the rural population in Southern Vietnam through the development of high quality and sustainable cocoa production and marketing, enabling a

significant number of farmers in two provinces to improve their livelihoods by adopting sustainability standards and by selling their produce via traceable value chains to the European chocolate sector. Until 2014, some 4000 farming households (1200 ha) will directly benefit. In a follow up phase, a total of 7000 farmers (2100 ha) can be reached.

For the certified cocoa to be recognized in the international market, the cocoa produced in the program area must be certified by internationally recognized organizations. This is due to the fact that certification gives the buyers the confidence that an organic product has been produced and processed in accordance to the organic requirements and standards. Since farmers in the Mekong Delta are small scale farmers, group certification is equally important as it is financially impossible for small scale Mekong farmers to be certified individually. For group certifications, farmers need to organise themselves in clubs and all of the clubs are managed under an umbrella organization which acts as certificate holders. For ensuring full compliance of certification regulations and standards by participating farmers and traceability along the value chains, the certificate holders must set up an internal control system (ICS). The ICS can be defined as a documented quality management system under which ICS staff need to advise and coach the participating farmers for standard compliance. In other words, ICS is a required component of a certified cocoa production. These staff have to inspect all of the registered farms at least once a year and document all the information on farming activities. Therefore, inspection, coaching and reporting skills of ICS staff is a key to the success of certified cocoa.

Since 2010, Helvetas in collaboration with local partners has established and run about 40 farmer clubs. The certificate holder in Tien Giang Province is a local cocoa cooperative and in Ben Tre Province are two private companies. These certificate holders have started to set up ICS for certification purposes. However, their capacities in farmer coaching, farm inspection and inspection reporting are still very limited as certified cocoa is very new to them. Therefore, Helvetas has decided to recruit a national qualified consultant to provide training on farm inspection and inspection reporting skills for ICS staff in certified cocoa in Tien Giang and Ben Tre Provinces to ensure successful promotion of certified cocoa in the local context.

2. Objective of the mission

The overall objective of the mission is to develop and deliver training programs to improve farm inspection and inspection reporting skills for ICS staff to ensure successful certified cocoa production in the local context.

Specifically speaking, after the training, ICS staff will be able to:

- *Explain the roles and criteria of a ICS staff in local certified cocoa production*
- *Conduct internal inspection all registered farms in a cost effective manner*
- *Prepare internal inspection reports to meet the requirements of certifications*
- *Work and report to external certifiers*

3. Expected Results

- A training material is developed. The training materials should cover the topics in relation to roles and criteria of a good ICS staff, ICS forms, internal inspection skills and methods, internal inspection reporting skills and the way of working with external certifiers
- A training course is delivered in a way that the participants can understand and apply in the local context (adult learning approaches)
- A training report is prepared specifying training activities, evaluation and recommendations for improvements in the future

4. Specific tasks of the consultancy

- Review program documents to have a sound understanding of the program philosophy and objectives
- Prepare and discuss with the program staff the training materials and revise them if necessary
- Conduct the indoor training using adult learning approaches and facilitate field inspection for the participants
- Prepare and submit the training report to Helvetas and revise it if needed

5. Methodology

The training program is designed in accordance to the level of the trainees' understandings.

Interactions between the trainer and trainees are expected. The learner centred teaching and participatory methods are applied throughout the training.

The training is balanced between the theory and practical contents. The practical part (discussion and practice) should be 60% at the minimum of the whole training program.

The trainer makes daily reviews in order to adjust the training program if necessary.

6. Composition of the study team

The team is composed of following people:

Consultant:

- One national consultant

Resource persons:

- Program manager and officer of certified cocoa program
- Staff of provincial cocoa project management board

7. Time frame

| No. of Days | Activity |
|------------------|---|
| 4 | Review program documents and prepare the training materials |
| 1 | Discuss the training materials with Helvetas staff and revise them if needed |
| 11 | Conduct the indoor training and field practices (including travelling): two 5-day courses, one in each province |
| 1 | Prepare and submit the report to Helvetas |
| 17 days in total | |

8. Training venue

My Tho City, Tien Giang Province and Ben Tre City, Ben Tre Province

9. Reporting

A brief report (maximum 5 pages) on the results of the training against the expected results will be sent to Helvetas one week after the training. Lessons learnt and follow up recommendations are made. All the hand outs of the training are attached to the report as annexes.

10. Qualification of national consultant

The consultant is expected to have:

- Hands on experience in setting up and running ICS for farmer organizations in certified agricultural production in Vietnam
- Hands on experience in conducting internal inspection for certifications
- Experience in adult training using learner centered approaches
- Having experience in cocoa production in Vietnam
- Knowledge about UTZ, organic and Fairtrade standards
- Experience in training report writing
- Ability to communicate in English
- Experience in working with local people in the Mekong Delta will be an advantage

Interested candidates should send the following documents:

- Curriculum Vitae, 3 pages maximum, with at least 2 letters of reference from prior places of employment or contact names and details of your referees
- Two samples of training reports that he/she has conducted

These required documents should be submitted electronically before 15th April 2011 to the following persons: Ms Nguyen Lam Giang at lam.giang@helvetas.org and/or Mr Vo Van Phong at vo.phong@helvetas.org