

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Research on Child Sexual Abuse in semi/boarding schools in Ha Giang, Quang Tri and Kon Tum

I. Background

Plan International is a child rights, girls focused organisation working with communities in many countries to alleviate child poverty so that children can realise their full potential. In Vietnam, Plan International has been established since 1993. To date, we are working to improve the lives of more than 200,000 children, their families and communities in over 90 communes in 9 provinces across the country. Working in partnership with local people, organisations and government bodies at all levels is our core approach to build a better future for children in Vietnam. Our goal up to 2025 is to take action so that 2 million girls in Vietnam can learn, lead, decide, and thrive.

To protect children, especially girls and the most vulnerable groups from all forms of Gender-based-violence (GBV), Plan International Vietnam aims to strengthen “gender – transformative child protection system which seeks to challenge gender dynamics, and actively confronts gender norms and unequal gender relations that drive violence against children and hinder effective response systems”¹. There are core two phases of gender-transformative child protection which is to understand the gaps in current prevention of and response to gender-based violence against children, and particularly against girls and to improve the quality, accountability and availability of child protection services of gender-transformative child protection systems.

From 2022 - 2025, Plan International Vietnam and its partners are implementing the project “Gender-Responsive child protection at schools in 5 provinces Ha Giang, Lai Chau, Quang Binh, Quang Tri and Kon Tum. The overall goal of the project is “Girls and boys at the aged 6-15, especially ethnic minority children at boarding schools in 5 provinces of Ha Giang, Lai Chau, Quang Binh, Quang Tri and Kon Tum have access to a safe and secured learning environment to be free from all forms of gender-based violence (GBV)”. This project is based on the success of the scaling-up model of gender responsive schools in 5 provinces from year 2018 to 2022 of Plan International Viet Nam, the project will be maintained and strengthened key areas of child protection at schools and communities which aims to focus on responding to GBV, especially child sexual abuse, include:

- Provide technical support for provincial DOET to replicate the model of gender responsive schools
- Strengthening continuously agency of children in terms of early prevention and active responding to child abuse;
- Unpacking the role parents, teachers and community members as a response to violence against children;
- Improving conditions of ethnic minority children and
- Making child support services more child- and gender-friendly through enhanced cooperation among community-based child protection and school-based child protection mechanisms.

In Viet Nam, with support from DGD and PIB Plan International Vietnam (PIV) is working with partners to

¹ Plan International, 2018: Gender-transformative Child Protection: An Annotated Bibliography

implement the 5-year programme in Quang Tri and Kon Tum provinces, namely DGD program 2022 - 2026, with the total budget of about 1.8 million euro. Its three key partners are Kon Tum Women's Union, Quang Tri Women's Union and Research Institute on Management and Sustainable Development (MSD).

The outcome of this programme is for adolescent and young people, especially ethnic minority adolescent girls and young women (11-24), to be economically and socially empowered to learn and thrive in a protective environment and live free from violence including in school and professional environment.

To achieve this outcome, project relies on four outputs:

- i. Ethnic minority adolescent's girls and boys age 11 to 18 benefit from an enabling educational environment and are empowered to make positive choices in a gender equal and protective school environment.
- ii. Ethnic minority young people, especially young women aged 18-24 have agency to pursue decent work opportunities of their choosing, whether wage employment or self-employed.
- iii. Ethnic minority adolescent girls and young women aged 11 to 18 thrive in an enabling and protective environment and live free from violence, at home and in their communities.
- iv. Capacity building of partners are strengthened and collaborations with Rikolto and VVOB are put in place.

Within these two projects' framework, Plan International Vietnam is looking for a group of consultants, or a local consulting company to work with MSD to conduct a research on Child Sexual Abuse in semi/boarding schools in 03 project provinces including Ha Giang, Quang Tri and Kon Tum.

II. Purpose of the Research

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the research on Child Sexual Abuse in semi/boarding schools are informed by the fact-finding needs and priorities to fill gaps in terms of promoting availability and accessibility of child protection services at all levels.

Specific objectives of the research include:

- i. Identify the situation of child sexual abuse at semi/boarding schools (understanding about the issues, fact-findings and root cause /risk factors in Child Protection System)
- ii. Assess availability and accessibility of essential support services for children faced by GBV and their family, specially survivors of CSA
- iii. Identify challenges and opportunities for promoting quality of child protection services at all levels and propose recommendations for program interventions

2.2 Research questions

In light of the above objectives, the research will help answer the following:

- a. What is a real picture of CSA issue at semi/boarding schools?

- b. How it impacts children development and their education (emotional and physical health, education and long-term impact on children development)?
- c. What are the root causes and risk factors contributing CSA at semi/boarding schools?
- d. What are the existing essential services for survivors of CSEA in communities?
- e. How these services are run, quality assessment and working cooperation among stakeholders?
- f. What are challenges that all stakeholders (duty bearers and right's holders) deal with in terms of accessing these services and improving the quality of services? (inter-sectoral analysis and gender-responsive approach)
- g. What are opportunities for promoting availability and accessibility of these services? (inter-sectoral analysis and gender-responsive approach)

2.3 Target groups to be covered

This research will cover representations of project stakeholders, government authorities, social service workers, community members, women and men, boys and girls in Ha Giang, Quang Tri and Kon Tum province, including:

- Children aged 6-18 in non-semi primary and secondary boarding schools, particularly girls and vulnerable groups (representation of different ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities...), and/or potential survivors or children experiencing Child Sexual Abuse in semi/boarding schools.
- Parents/ caregivers who are both project participants in their role as duty and/or parents who have children staying at boarding schools.
- School Management Board, key teachers, school counsellors;
- Child protection stakeholders at provincial, district and community level, and public services providers (Police, Health Care, Legal Aids, social protection Center...) effectively participate to the model and referral system as per their mandate.

2.4 Users of the research:

The primary users of the research are the programme teams and partners implementing the projects, who will be incorporating the findings of the research in their programme to meet their fact-finding needs and priorities to design intervention to fill gaps in terms of promoting availability and accessibility of child protection services at all levels.

The research will also be of interest to PIV, PIB and partners to strengthen future programming and influencing initiatives in Ha Giang, Quang Tri and Kon Tum provinces.

III. Methodology and Responsibilities

3.1 Methods for Data Collection and Analysis

The consultants/ experts are expected to be responsible for describing the overall research design, data sources to be used (including sampling), methodology and data collection tools that are best suited to the assignment and local context. The consultants/ experts are recommended to use different data collecting methods, such as:

- Desk review (external literature, key project documents): review the relevant documents, including the project proposal, resources and results framework, documentation, reports, and other relevant research.
- Direct observation
- Key informant interviews (KII)
- Questionnaires
- Focus group discussions (FGD)

The research design and methodology will be discussed and agreed with PIV project team and with the implementing partners at the beginning of the consultancy. The consultants/ experts are also expected to provide friendly and simple methods so that children, vulnerable people can participate. Child participation methods are required to guide and support youth and adolescents to implement child-led survey.

3.2 Geographical research areas

The research will be conducted in Ha Giang, Quang Tri and Kon Tum province.

3.3 Sample

The consultants/ experts will be expected to propose an appropriate sampling methodology and size that is statistically valid and cost-effective, based on information provided by the project team to ensure that necessary information can be collected. All data, qualitative and quantitative collected through the study must be disaggregated by sex and age groups (under 11 and 11-18) in non/semi primary and secondary boarding schools, and vulnerable groups (such as representation of different ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities, children living in domestic violence, parents have to go away to work ...). Both the sample size and revised tools will be discussed and agreed with PIV project team before implementing the data collection.

The consultants/experts are expected to develop and suggest a sampling strategy including a description of:

- Sample size (or expectations of the consultant(s) in calculating it).
- Necessary respondents' disaggregation
- Number and type of locations
- Sampling approach

* Sample size submitted to PIV should follow table format below:

Data collection methods	Sample	Total
Questionnaires	With men, women With adolescent girls and boys, other sex With people with disabilities (if applicable)	
FGDs	With girls	

	With boys With people with disabilities (if applicable) Local government staff, service providers from communes, district and province	
KII with partners and stakeholders	Leaders of project partners and representative of key services providers	
Case study		

IV. Ethics and Child Protection

PIV is committed to ensuring that the rights of those participating in data collection or analysis are respected and protected, in accordance with Ethical MERL Framework and our Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People. All applicants should include details in their proposal on how they will ensure ethics and child protection in the data collection process. Specifically, the consultant(s) shall explain how appropriate, safe, non-discriminatory participation of all stakeholders will be ensured and how special attention will be paid to the needs of children and other vulnerable groups. The consultant(s) shall also explain how confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be guaranteed.

A risk assessment will be conducted by the safeguarding focal points and the consultant team before implementing the baseline survey to mitigate foreseen risks for children, youths and participants in the survey.

Level of Contact with Children:

High level: *Interaction with children in consultations is required. The consultants must comply with Plan’s child protection policy and standards throughout the research process*

Note: Before implementing data collection, the consultants must get Ethics Approval by a recognized university or a national ethics committee or PLAN-Ethics Review Team (Feedback from ERT will be provided within 2-3 weeks' timeframe from submission. For sensitive applications initial feedback may take longer, and there may be multiple rounds of feedback (with adequate time needed to action and review feedback/ revisions)).

V. Key Deliverables

The consultants/ experts are expected to provide the following key deliverables:

a. Research Proposal (in Vietnamese)

The consultants shall submit a proposal after signing of the agreement detailing the survey methods, tools and work plan. It should include:

- an updated timeline;
- detailed methodology, including draft sampling methodology and size;
- draft data collection tools;
- ethical considerations;

- consent forms for any primary data collection;
 - (draft) methods for data analysis;
 - brief justification of the methods and techniques used (including relevant underlying values and assumptions/ theories) with a justification of the selections made (e.g. of persons interviewed).
- b. Draft Research Report (in Vietnamese)
 - c. Final Report (including Executive Summary) in English and Vietnamese
 - d. Final Sampling methodology (including unit of sampling and sampling frame) and size
 - e. Final Data Collection Tools
 - f. Cleaned Data (including data files (e.g. Excel, SPSS), transcripts of qualitative data, syntax/ code books etc.)
 - g. Completed Consent Forms (including for children and their caregivers and adults)
 - h. Other Communication Products for Dissemination

VI. Timeline

The consultancy is estimated to be undertaken beginning May 2023 and to be completed by the end of November 2023.

A detailed timeline will be worked out jointly with the consultants after recruitment but a preliminary timeline for the key deliverables is:

Output delivery/Activity	Deadline	Responsibility
Agreed research proposal	May 2023	PIV Consultants
Briefing by PIV on PI policies, standards, tools, etc Attend a training “Plan Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People”.	May 2023	PIV Consultants
Documents and tools for the assignment are received	May 2023	PIV Consultants
Get ethical approval Translation tools, forms and protocols Pretest the tool	June - July	Consultants
Data Collection Data Entry and Cleaning Data Analysis	August – September 2023	Consultants
First draft of report submitted to Plan for comment, feedback and verification	October 2023	Consultants
Finalize the report with feedback from Plan and partners	November 2023	Consultants

VII. Budget

The consultant is required to propose the detailed budget (including VAT applicable for Company/Business or PIT applicable for individuals) for the consultancy together with the proposal, and submit to Plan Vietnam for review and approval. The budget should include number of days and daily rate for the lead consultant(s) and in-country research team members.

VIII. Management

Consultant(s) will conduct the research based on the workplan and methodology agreed with PIV.

Project Coordinators in PIV Country Office will be the focal person to coordinate the consultant hire, work plan, methodology and review reports to ensure the report meets criteria.

Project Officers of relevant projects, under the assignment and general management of Provincial Partnership Managers (PPMs) at Ha Giang, Quang Tri and Kon Tum Program Units, are focal persons and responsible to coordinate and arrange the field work, meetings, invite key relevant stakeholders for interviews, FGDs ... during field data collection as well as input comment during finalization of the reports.

IX. Qualifications and Experience of the Consultants

PIV is looking for a consultant/expert (or a group of experts) with strong records in conducting research, evaluation related to community development and empowerment, participatory development and methodologies, asset-based community development, gender-based violence (online sexual violence, exploitation, abuse against children), youth activism, particularly in Vietnamese and mountainous, ethnic minority community's context. The consultants/ experts will need respect and credibility within the field, excellent knowledge of monitoring and evaluation in theory and practice, and a good understanding of policy work.

Required Competencies:

- Demonstrable expertise (5 to 10 years) on community participatory development and empowerment, asset-based community development, community engagement and policy advocacy, GBV with gender sensitizing.
- Demonstrable experience (5 to 10 years) in designing and conducting quantitative and qualitative research/evaluation of complex programs and ability to conduct high quality research, meet deadlines and respond to requests and feedback provided timely and appropriately;
- Strong analytical skills and previous experience in data entry using statistical analysis software;
- Experience in undertaking participatory research and consultations
- Knowledge of Vietnam governance and cultural context.
- Knowledge of women's and children's rights: previous experience conducting research with children and vulnerable groups would be considered an asset;

- Excellent and demonstrated understanding of Child Protection and ethical issues in research.
- Excellent written and verbal communication and reporting skills in English.
- Mixed-gender team of female and male research assistants (as female respondents should be interviewed by a female enumerator).

X. How To Apply?

Applicants should prepare and submit an application package **by 14 May 2023 via email** to Plan International in Vietnam.

Kindly submit the following application documents:

- Expression of interest should not exceed (04 pages), outlining how the Consultant(s) meets the selection criteria and how their research proposal meets these TOR and the proposed research methodology
- Financial proposal detailing consultant(s) itemized fees, data collection, and administrative costs
- Ethics and child safeguarding approaches, including any identified risks and associated mitigation strategies
- Example of previous work
- Copy of CV of the consultant(s) who will undertake the evaluation

Consultants/ experts who are interested in taking this consultancy, please submit the proposal package in English via email to: VNM.Procurement1@plan-international.org