

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultant for NTFP sustainable harvesting, value chain analysis, and sustainable livelihoods study

Period: January 1, 2025, to March 31, 2025

Location: Kon Tum Province

Reporting to: Country Director, Country Programme Manager, Project Manager

I. BACKGROUND

Fauna & Flora, in partnership with SNV and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is implementing a seven-year biodiversity conservation landscape project entitled the BLF Lower Mekong Landscape Project. The project aims to conserve and enhance biodiversity in an area covering more than one million hectares of the Annamite Mountains, incorporating three large forest complexes in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam. Funded by the Biodiverse Landscapes Fund (BLF), the overarching aim of this programme is to reduce poverty and create sustainable economic opportunities for those communities, through the delivery of lasting landscape protection, sustainable management, and restoration, safeguarding biodiversity, and maintaining and improving ecosystem quality. The project is funded by the UK Government's Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

The programme is being implemented through a consortium of highly experienced INGOs, led by Fauna & Flora, and includes SNV, and IUCN, working in close collaboration with local partners and Indigenous peoples and local communities (IP&LCs), to ensure activities respond to locally identified and prioritised needs. The programme will take an integrated focus on people, nature, and climate, recognising that benefitting one at the expense of the others is inherently unsustainable. This position provides the opportunity to take a leading role in driving forward this transboundary programme of work and bringing this vision to fruition. The overall impact of this program is to reduce poverty and create sustainable economic development for communities living in, and dependent upon, environmentally critical landscapes through delivering lasting landscape protection, sustainable management and restoration, safeguarding biodiversity, maintaining and improving ecosystem quality. The program outputs have been designed using an integrated approach focusing on people, nature, and climate. To achieve the programme outputs, the programme will be delivered through six components. Components 1-5 are output-focused and align to their corresponding output. They are supported by Component 6 MEL and Programme Management, that enables delivery of the others through excellent monitoring, evaluation, learning and programme management mechanisms, and maintains firm focus on future up-scaling across the region. In Vietnam, BLF's support will focus on three landscapes: Pu Mat National Park in Northern Central region (Nghe An) and Chu Mom Ray National Park and Ngoc Linh Natural Reserve in Northern Central Highland region.

Scoping studies of the area revealed that several commercial non timber forest product (NTFP) value chains are exploited for harvesting and sale by the local population. The scoping also revealed that biodiversity threat is the unsustainable harvesting of some NTFPs, especially the cutting of Malva trees to facilitate the harvesting of the Malva Nut. NTFP collection can also be accompanied by other unsustainable practices such as snaring. The project intends to provide sustainable livelihoods and improve NTFP practices to support local communities.

The study, through participatory works with local authorities and communities, identified four promising NTFP products: Che day (*Ampelopsis cantoniensis*), Ganoderma mushroom (*Ganoderma lingzhi*), Malva nuts (*Scaphium affine*), and bamboo. The potential income generation by these products is high, amounting to hundreds of dollars seasonally per family. Interviews with the local authorities and farmers indicated constraints in the sustainable harvesting and production. Products might be overharvested, negatively affecting the future resource base. The NTFP products are normally traded through informal value chains with low value added, prices are fluctuating, and villagers must accept prices dictated by traders and the Vietnam market linkage. We need to understand the potential for further value chain upgrading and development that provide better income for local communities and embed sustainable harvesting firmly in the supply chain.

To address these climate and productivity issues, a detailed value chain analysis on NTFPs is necessary. This analysis will help identify opportunities for interventions that can strengthen NTFPs harvest, production and to develop the value chain in project areas in Kon Tum province. Fauna & Flora are looking for a capable national consultant to perform the study.

II. OBJECTIVE

Under the supervision and in frequent consultation with BLF Project Manager and project staff, the recruited consultants will do the mapping and assessment of three NTFPs value chains and production systems and provide recommendations for improvements, value chain upgrading, sustainable harvesting, and improved governance. The research will combine a value chain analysis including production/harvesting technical analysis consisting of supply chain assessment, production area mapping, and participatory methods (interviews and focus groups). Secondary data gathering and analysis is important and includes understanding the successes/failures of previous project interventions if applicable. The data collected will be cross-checked with different sources for accuracy and validated through a workshop with key informants. The data and information collected will be systematically documented for baseline information and potential future projects.

Detailed methodology and plan to be proposed by the selected consultant and reviewed by the BLF partner organisations.

III. METHODOLOGY

Detailed methodology and research plan will be proposed by the selected consultant and approved by BLF partner organisations. Materials and reports should be presented in both Vietnamese and English.

IV. SCOPE

The scope of the study is to cover value chains of Che day, Ganoderma mushroom, Malva nuts, and bamboo. The research will focus on villages selected by BLF partner organisations. For the trade and market linkage/business connections part of the value chain research including traders, processors, sellers, interviews should be done with these identified players in Nghe An and neighbouring provinces.

V. CONTENT AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS

Value Chain description

- Describe and elaborate value chain map and diagrams of all functions in the value chain and product flows (production, transport, processing, sales, wholesale, and end markets).
- Identify all actors and stakeholders (including names, location, contact details, etc.).

Mapping and assessment of supply source and harvesting/production

- Overview of areas with Che day, Ganoderma mushrooms, Malva nuts and bamboo present including a geographical map of main harvesting areas, presence, and regulations on collection by area.
- Identification of potential areas with estimations of the raw material reserves of major species and an overview of annual production estimating resource quantity/reserves and distribution.
- Assessment of harvesting frequency, amounts harvested and natural regrowth. Assess sustainability of harvesting, who harvests, time of harvest, timeframe and resources required, sustainability and efficiency of harvesting.
- Gender analysis of the production/harvesting part and household decision making on sales, spending, etc.
- Conduct community interviews and group discussions to understand why people are not harvesting sustainably (i.e., reasons for cutting Malva trees).
- Explore and provide recommendations for communities to adopt sustainable harvesting and production practices. This could include developing a management plan for NTFP collection areas.
- Explore and assess whether snaring, hunting and other illegal activities can be reduced by improving local livelihoods through supply chain development of NTFPs and what behaviour change would be needed and how.
- Identify options for assisted natural reproduction, seedling replanting, forest enrichment, backyard planting, and agroforestry intercropping/production. Analyse pros/cons of these options and how long it takes before maturity/harvest. Assess available areas and potential quantities.

Market and financial analysis

- A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the current value chain of the four products locally and provincially, annual supply volume, processing and consumption volume, type of products, and dynamics of demand and supply (within the provinces and export to outside).
- Overview of domestic and export market potentials and market trends for their related products based on analysis of the market in recent years.
- Identification of potential business linkage among harvesters, local traders, and processing SMEs in the project areas with (sub) suppliers in and outside Kon Tum provinces.
- An analysis of prices per kg of product along the value chain, and price fluctuations (between months and years), identify the price addition for each step in the value chain, and the gross margin for each actor.
- Analysis of costs of each process, capital needs, minimum volumes and return to labour calculation for households of current practices and compare with returns in agriculture or off-farm labour.

Value chain governance, Enabling environment and regulation

- Description of current value chain governance, resource access, and control.
- Analysis of permissions of harvesting and resource exploitation, including enforcement and formal and informal costs.
- Analysis of participatory/communal/household resource allocation and exclusive user rights, and how this influences resource sustainability.
- Gender analysis in access and control of resources.

- An in-depth SWOT analysis of the value chain to identify the challenges and potential of value addition, value chain upgrading, improved market linkages, strategic value chain alliances, and enhanced resource sustainability.

Recommendations for intervention in the value chain (feasibility analysis)

- Confirm willingness and priorities of local populations to match the identified value chains.
- Profit analysis and payback period of proposed sustainable interventions.
- Provide recommendations regarding sustainable exploitation of the resource and production.
- Recommend safe harvesting methods and their feasibility/capital required, especially for ensuring Malva trees are not cut and the behaviour change process.
- Recommend options of value chain value addition locally, the required skills, organisational structure, and capital required (micro enterprises, collective actions) for aggregation, quality selection, drying, and semi processing. Show feasibility of these options with good return on labour and required efforts to change.
- Feasibility analysis to upgrade the value chain including improved business linkages and strategic alliances with players downstream in the value chain.
- Recommendations options for enhancing the resource base through natural regeneration, forest enrichment, agroforestry, homestead/backyard planting, climate resilience, and production or other and its feasibility based on social willingness to co-invest, cost/benefits, and required support/ subsidies.
- Recommend improvements for the enabling environment for NTFPs development.
- Propose areas and models for piloting, a tentative implementation plan/timeline, scaling pathways for the recommendations, and the required project costs/estimated level of effort.
- Identify risks, expected challenges, and assumptions for the proposed interventions.
- Identify opportunities to explicitly link NTFPs value chain support to community agreements to, for example, stop snaring or encourage other conservation measures.
- Propose interventions and activities to enhance gender-responsive inclusion in the NTFP value chain.
- List of potential agribusinesses interested to collaborate with the project through contractual arrangements and their contact details including useful policy advice for their involvement at any level of the value chain.

VI. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONSULTANT

- Designing: Taking the lead with assistance from the BLF staff in developing a detailed value chain analysis workplan/timeline and its research instruments/toolkits
- Desk study: Collecting relevant data and information from reports, documentation, statistical publications, and online resources, and analysing data and information.
- Coordination: Consultant is expected to lead coordination with stakeholders, have frequent update meetings with Fauna & Flora/BLF (incorporated into the workplan), and coordinate with field teams in Vietnam for data collection, data exchange, and regular joint analysis.
- Field study: Conduct interviews with supply chain players, local functional departments at the provincial and district levels, and other important informants while working with staff from Fauna & Flora/BLF. Focus groups discussions, key informant interviews, participatory mapping/transects/spatial tools/power analysis, flow diagrams, Venn diagrams, analysis of the information, and data gathered.
- Consultation: Regular meetings with BLF staff to discuss updates on the study's findings with the project team and key consultancy milestones.

- Reporting & presentation: Prepare a proposed table of contents. Write up analysed information in a draft value chain evaluation report in English. Present summary findings to stakeholders in a district/provincial meeting. Incorporate feedback into a final draft with improved editing. Include drawings, diagrams, field research pictures, and maps into the report.
- Due diligence and safeguards: Comply with Fauna & Flora’s policies on safeguarding and General Data Protection Regulations (EU), and other related project policies. E.g., Ensure consent of people to take pictures to use for publication purposes through signed consent forms.

VII. DELIVERABLES OF THE CONSULTANT

The consultant is expected to deliver the following listed deliverables:

- Inception report (digital copy) of the assignment, and presentation. The inception report should cover the revised methodologies, work plan, and milestones.
- Draft report and presentation: Commodity Cluster Report covering four NTFP commodities value chain report detailing out backward and forward linkages with margins of all the actors in the value chain with recommendations mentioning the bottlenecks, opportunities and key leverage points where the project can intervene for maximizing the returns to producers.
- Final report incorporating the comments of each value chains, and presentation.

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

The study is proposed to be completed by March 15, 2025:

No	Content	Due date	Deliverables
1	Designing	January 1-15, 2025	Inception report approved by F&F
2	Desk study	January 15-30, 2025	A package of collected data, information, relevant reports, documentations
3	Field study	Flexible	Field study conducted
4	Draft NTFP value chain analysis report & presentation.	March 15, 2025	Draft report and PowerPoint presentation of summary findings
5	Final Report	March 31, 2025	Final approved report

Level of effort: 50-70 days

IX. BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Detailed budget for implementation will be developed based on consultant proposal that indicated consultant’s rate and the level of effort. The consultant fee is based on contracted/actual working days contracted unit price with approved timesheets.

- For travel and accommodation, Fauna & Flora/BLF policy for consultant will be applied. Reimbursable: based on actual expenses with Fauna & Flora/BLF cost norms and accepted invoices.

X. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The consultant is expected to possess complementary qualifications and experiences, which cover at least the following areas:

- Master's degree in business, Development Economics, Forestry, Sustainable natural resource use or related fields.
- Minimum 10 years of experience in value chain analysis, market development and related fields of NTFP products.
- Good understanding of and experience in NTFP sectors in Vietnam is a must, experience with Che day, Ganoderma Mushroom, Malva Nuts and bamboos is desired.
- Proven experience in leading similar studies.
- Excellent verbal and written fluency in both English and Vietnamese sufficient to write robust reports and communicate with national and international staff.

XI. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Fauna & Flora will provide consultant with the following support:

- Access to Fauna & Flora's previous reports, papers, and background information related to study sites;
- Administrative support and procedures to work in the field and with local partners;
- Expenses for the conference and training following Fauna & Flora's cost norms.

XII. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Applicant's profile (CVs)
- Technical Proposal: Approach and methodology for data collection and analysis, work plan and timeline, and team composition and qualifications.
- Financial Proposal: Detailed man-days breakdown

XIII. CONTACT INFORMATION AND HOW TO APPLY

For inquiries and submission of proposals, please contact:

Le Hong Viet, HR Officer, Fauna & Flora by email to viet.hong.le@fauna-flora.org

Note: Fauna & Flora International reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received and to negotiate separately with any consulting firm. The selection of the consultant will be based on the firm's qualifications, experience, proposed methodology, and cost-effectiveness.

The closing date for the submission of technical proposal is **26 Dec 2024**.