



Term of Reference

Mid-term Review of the Making Aquaculture Cooperatives in MRD Inclusive and Bankable (MACIB Mekong Project)

(Period March 15, 2024, to March 15, 2025)

1. Background

1.1 Combi-Track Initiative

The Combi-Track Initiative is a pioneering Vietnam-Netherlands collaboration driving sustainable aquaculture transformation in the Mekong Delta through climate-smart solutions, technological innovation, and policy alignment. Rooted in Strategic Partnership Arrangements (SPA) on Sustainable Agriculture (2014) and Water Management (2010), it leverages public-private-producer partnerships (4P model) to address climate resilience, resource management, and market accessibility.

The initiative promotes nature-based solutions like mangrove-based aquaculture, climate-smart techniques, and reduced antibiotic use and water pollution. It integrates IoT monitoring systems and blockchain-enabled traceability, fostering research collaborations between Can Tho University and Dutch partners. Key projects include:

- **MACIB Project (Making Aquaculture Cooperatives Inclusive & Bankable)**
- **DeltaVax Project (Improving pangasius farming via vaccination & technology)**
- **Mangrove-Based Aquaculture (Balancing shrimp farming & conservation)**
- **Net Zero Transition for Shrimp (Low-carbon farming practices)**
- **Mekong Delta Youth Engagement (Empowering future aquaculture leaders)**

By engaging government agencies, industry leaders, and smallholder cooperatives, Combi-Track enhances financial accessibility, governance, and farmer training. Aligned with Vietnam's National Fisheries Development Strategy, it drives policy improvements, supports long-term economic growth, environmental protection, and food security, positioning the Mekong Delta as a global model for sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient aquaculture.

1.2 MACIB Project Overview

The **MACIB Project** is a transformative initiative, funded by the Dutch government and led by Agriterra, designed to professionalize aquaculture cooperatives in Vietnam's Mekong Delta. It enhances cooperative governance, financial literacy, and climate-smart practices, equipping smallholder shrimp and pangasius farmers with the tools to secure concessional loans, meet international quality standards, and access high-value markets.

Progress and Key Results from the First Year During its first year of implementation, the MACIB project has achieved several foundational milestones:

- **Cooperative Scoping and Assessment:** The project assessed 14 cooperatives and selected seven shrimp cooperatives based on governance strength, financial viability, and market potential.
- **Business Planning and Financial Management:** Six cooperatives developed strategic business plans for 2025–2029, enhancing financial transparency and investment readiness.
- **Private Sector Engagement:** Eight Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed with industry leaders such as Skretting Vietnam, Lenger Seafoods, Minh Phu Seafood Corporation, and TipTopp Aquaculture to facilitate market access, concessional financing, and technical collaboration.

- **Market Linkage Development:** Cooperatives established direct partnerships with key buyers and suppliers, unlocking access to premium inputs, advanced aquaculture technology, and sustainable production models.
- **Financial Sustainability Support:** Initial groundwork was laid to help cooperatives access concessional loans, improve financial literacy, and strengthen business models for long-term sustainability.

The MACIB project continues to focus on scaling up these interventions, improving cooperative governance, expanding financial inclusion, and integrating sustainable aquaculture practices to enhance the resilience and bankability of Vietnam’s aquaculture sector.

2. Objective of the Assignment

The primary goal of the mid-term review (MTR) is to evaluate the project’s effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, outcome, and sustainability. The review will inform strategic adjustments to optimize project delivery and ensure long-term success.

Specific objectives include:

- Assessing progress against key performance indicators and milestones.
- Identifying challenges, risks, and mitigation strategies.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of capacity-building efforts and cooperative business models.
- Reviewing financial sustainability and resource utilization.
- Gathering lessons learned and best practices for future scaling.
- Providing actionable recommendations for project refinement.

The assignment will serve as a critical evaluation to assess progress, identify challenges, and refine strategies for scaling impact. It will measure project effectiveness against key indicators, address bottlenecks in cooperative development, financial access, and sustainability, and make necessary adjustments to enhance efficiency and alignment with project goals. Agriterria and RVO will use the findings to update or restructure activities as needed. This internal review will be followed by a final external evaluation to assess overall impact, extract lessons learned and inform future initiatives.

3. Implementation Methodology

The review will employ a mixed-methods approach, including:

- **Desk review** of project documents (proposal, reports, financial statements. etc.).
- **Key informant interviews (KIIs)** with stakeholders, including cooperative leaders, government officials, EKN representatives, and private sector partners.
- **Focus group discussions (FGDs)** with cooperative members, emphasizing women and youth.
- **Field visits** to selected cooperatives in Tra Vinh, Soc Trang and Ca Mau.
- **Quantitative data analysis** of key project indicators and financial performance.

4. Key Review Questions

The review will focus on the following areas:

Project Achievement vs. Plan:

- What progress has been made towards achieving project milestones?
- Are the cooperatives demonstrating improved governance and business planning independence?
- What percentage of cooperatives have adopted sustainable aquaculture practices?
- How has the project enhanced access to market linkages?

Relevance and Effectiveness:

- How does the MACIB project align with the objectives and priorities of the Combi-Track Initiative?
- To what extent does the project support the relevant priorities of RVO and the Dutch government in Vietnam?
- How well does MACIB contribute to the Vietnamese government's priorities for sustainable aquaculture development in the Mekong River Delta?
- How effective have training and capacity-building efforts been in improving cooperative performance?
- What are the key factors enabling or hindering project effectiveness?

Efficiency:

- Have project resources been used efficiently to achieve intended outcomes?
- Are there areas where efficiency can be improved, such as implementation processes and financial management?

Outcome:

- What tangible benefits have cooperative members gained from the project?
- How has the project contributed to early-stage climate-smart aquaculture adoption?
- What role has the project played in improving women and youth participation in cooperative leadership?

Sustainability and Scale-up Potential:

- What measures are in place to ensure long-term sustainability of project outcomes?
- How can the project's successful interventions be replicated or scaled?

5. Expected Deliverables

The consultant(s) will provide the following outputs:

1. **Inception Report** – due within two weeks of contract signing.
2. **Preliminary Findings Presentation** – after field visits.
3. **Draft Mid-Term Review Report** – due by June 1st, 2025.
4. **Final Mid-Term Review Report** – due by June 15th, 2025.

6. Consultant Qualifications

The consultant team will report to Agriterra lead advisor in charge and work closely with the MTR team (Agriterra and MPI). The consultants should:

- **Hold a relevant background** in one of the following majors: social sciences, agriculture, or economics. A master's degree in the field is preferred.
- **Evaluation Methodologies:** Proficiency in evaluation methodologies and tools is necessary for assessing the program's outcomes and impacts. The consultant should be familiar with quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods, data collection techniques, and sampling approaches relevant to cooperative development and rural programs.
- **Data Analysis and Interpretation:** Strong analytical skills are vital for analyzing project data, interpreting findings, and drawing meaningful conclusions. The ability to use statistical software, conduct data triangulation, and apply appropriate analytical techniques will enhance the accuracy and reliability of the midterm review.
- **Report Writing and Communication:** Strong written and verbal communication skills in English and Vietnamese. Ability to produce clear, concise, and well-structured reports, presenting findings and recommendations in a practical, results-oriented manner.

- **Evaluation and Impact Assessment:** Experience in conducting mid-term and final evaluations for donor-funded projects, particularly in cooperative development, agribusiness, or sustainable aquaculture. Proficiency in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methodologies, data collection, and participatory assessment techniques.
- **Be committed to and able to meet the deadline,** with strong analytical and documentation skills.

7. Duration and location of the assignment:

The MTR will be conducted over a **three-month period**, from April 15th, 2025, to June 30th, 2025. A detailed work plan will be agreed upon with Agriterra Vietnam and RVO.

Location: 03 provinces: **Tra Vinh, Soc Trang and Ca Mau**

8. Consultancy Arrangements:

- Number of consultancy days for this MTR is 30 working days.
- Fees: following Agriterra standard cost norms for consultant fee and reimbursable costs.
- Type of contract: An umbrella contract will be signed with the lead consultant, on behalf of the whole team. The contract will include PIT number of each team member. Agriterra will pay individuals, based on the consultancy days specified in the agreed timetable.

9. Reporting and Coordination

The consultant(s) will work closely with Agriterra Vietnam and relevant stakeholders. Regular check-ins will be scheduled to discuss progress and preliminary findings.

10. Proposal submission

Proposal should include:

- Introduction of the Consultant team's members profile and related experience.
- A short technical proposal in achieving all expected objectives within mentioned timeframe.
- Sample(s) of an MTR report for similar tasks.
- An application, CVS and proposal should be submitted in English by email with subject mentioning "**Midterm Review of the MACIB Project**" to vietnam@agriterra.org

[The closing date for application: 17.00pm, April 10, 2025.](#)

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