

Call for Consultancy Services

Title of Consultancy: Evaluating the positive externalities of large-scale transition to flood friendly crops in the upper Mekong Delta

Project name: Viet Nam Nature-based Solutions for Adaptation in Agriculture through Private Sector Transformation (VN-ADAPT)

Reference to Project activity: Activity 1. 1. D

Organization: IUCN

Internal Reference (if any): IUCN-26-03-P04596-3

Type of Consultancy: ☐ Individual consultant
☒ Group of consultants
☒ Consulting firm

Source: ☒ National
☐ International

Duration	4 months	As of the date of contract signing (Anticipated: September 15, 2026)
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1. Background

About the VN-ADAPT project

Viet Nam Nature-based Solutions for Adaptation in Agriculture through Private Sector Transformation (VN-ADAPT) is a national programme in Viet Nam to be implemented to 2028, with potential to extend to mid-2029. The programme is funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN). The Project has been approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) in January 2026.

VN-ADAPT focusses on two key climate-vulnerable landscapes in Viet Nam – the Central Highlands and Mekong Delta. The project aims to improve institutional capacity and strengthen partnerships to channel private innovation and investment towards accelerated adoption of nature-based solutions in the agriculture sector with a focus on these two regions of Vietnam.

This will be realised through four inter-related work packages, namely:

- i) Developing coordination mechanism among relevant stakeholders to promote Nature-based Solutions for adaptation (NbSA) in Agriculture.
- ii) Developing Draft Guidelines on NbSA in Agriculture.
- iii) Promote Innovation of Agricultural Enterprises and Cooperatives and

- Mobilize Investment in NbSA in Agriculture.
- iv) Communications, Knowledge Management and M&E.

VN-ADAPT is implemented by a consortium of the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV, as the consortium lead), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the ICEM Vietnam Company Ltd. with coordination and support from the Agricultural Projects Management Board (APMB) as the Project owner.

About IUCN:

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature is a global membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private, and non-governmental entities with the tools and knowledge needed to advance sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. IUCN combines the latest science with traditional knowledge and stakeholder engagement to support effective and equitable environmental governance.

More information: www.iucn.org

2. Objectives/Description of the assignment

This consultancy aims to deliver the following outcomes:

- a. This assignment will involve analysing existing spatial and statistical data to model the positive economic externalities of converting, say, 200,000 hectares of triple rice in the upper delta to flood-friendly crops. The economic modelling would be supplemented by site visits and farmer and local government consultations.
- b. The evaluation will also assess production efficiency and consider the long-term adaptive capacity of these flood-friendly crops to local ecological conditions and accelerating climate change impacts. The analysis will clarify the scientific and practical rationale for selecting specific transition models tailored to the unique biophysical and socio-economic conditions of each sub-region.
- c. The purpose of this assignment is to provide the economic analyses, strategic alignments, and localized transition criteria and it serve as important input for development and upscaling and accelerating this transition.

In the upper Mekong Delta, the key NbS is to transition out of the third rice crop into crops that are adapted to the Mekong flood pulse. The legal basis for this transition was established by Government Resolution 120 issued in 2017, which is now supported by several national and internationally supported projects. The challenge now is to monitor this transition and document the environmental benefits of transitioning out of intensive rice to a more natural, higher value crop mix.

IUCN and other organisations are supporting the transition from a third rice crop in the upper Mekong Delta (i.e., former provinces of Kien Giang, An Giang, Dong Thap, and Long An) to flood-friendly crops. Because the third rice crop matures in November when the Mekong reaches its peak elevation, it required the construction of ring dikes to prevent the crop being flooded.

Because the diked land is cut off from the seasonal inflow of water-borne sediment and nutrients, farmers must compensate by using large volumes of agricultural chemicals, causing serious water pollution and human health impacts.

In response, the government issued Resolution 120 in 2017, which provides the legal basis for transitioning out of intensive rice into a more diverse, higher value crop mix. And in 2023, the government announced a 1-million-hectare clean rice target as part of its food systems transformation in the Mekong Delta.

The transition out of intensive rice into floating rice and other flood-friendly crops faces an economic barrier. Research shows that floating rice may be marginally more profitable than a third rice crop, but that this depends on market demand for floating rice and a third rice crop, cost of inputs, and other factors that can fluctuate from year to year. In other words, if the economic case for floating rice is only done at the farm scale, it may not be possible to scale up because the profit to the farmer is too variable.

However, if we consider the positive externalities from floating rice, the economic case becomes much stronger. Large-scale adoption of floating rice would reduce flood and drought risk by storing water during the flood season, restore fish stocks, reduce water pollution, and trap sediment.

It is possible to quantify these benefits. For example:

- The price of fish has increased as the area of floating rice has shrunk, and intensive rice has expanded. If we can establish a relationship between the area of floating rice and fish price, a more accurate economic value of an additional hectare of floating rice can be calculated.
- Intensive rice has weakened the delta's sponge effect whereby wetland absorb water in the wet season and release it in the dry. As a result, downstream towns like Can Tho have had to build expensive flood protection systems.
- Increased water pollution has increased dependence unsustainable groundwater pumping that is causing land subsidence 10 times faster than global sea level rise. Water pollution also threatens businesses that produce high value organic fruit juice.

The negative externalities of intensive rice production are felt downstream and are typically ignored in project-specific planning and investment decisions. Conversely, the same decision-making process typically ignores the positive externalities that could be generated by large-scale transition out of intensive rice into flood-friendly crops.

3. Scope of work and key activities

IUCN wishes to hire two national consultants, an agricultural economist and a GIS analyst, to quantify the positive externalities of large-scale transition to flood friendly crops in the upper Mekong Delta. These positive externalities include but are not restricted to improved capture fisheries, improved water quality, reduced flood risk, and increased aquifer recharge.

IUCN can provide GIS data on rice cropping intensity across the upper delta for 2023 and on the 1-million-hectare clean rice target.

- **Title and responsibilities:**

- Agroeconomist – Team leader (75%)
 - Overall coordination of the assignment;
 - Economic valuation methodology development;
 - Analysis of ecosystem service values and positive externalities;
 - Evaluation of production efficiency, low-emission agriculture indicators, the long-term adaptive capacity of these flood-friendly crops, and circular economy potential of proposed transition models;
 - Formulation of the localized rationale and criteria for selecting sub-region-specific crop transitions;
 - Preparation of reports and presentations.
- GIS expert (25%)
 - Spatial analysis of land-use and cropping systems;
 - Mapping current and future transition scenarios differentiated by sub-regional ecological conditions and considering climate change risk;
 - Estimation of areas affected under alternative scenarios;
 - Preparation of GIS datasets and maps.

- **Payment modality:** Delivery-based (against accepted deliverables)

The consultants will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Prepare an inception report outlining in detail the methodology and work plan for collecting and analysing spatial and statistical data in line with the objectives of the consultancy assignment. This includes developing a matrix of indicator sets to measure production efficiency, climate resilience, adaptive capacity, and circular economy potential for the proposed crop transitions.
- Collect spatial and statistical data, including (but not limited to) in-depth interviews, consultation meetings, focus group discussions, and secondary data sources on current farming practices and related issues relevant to the consultancy objectives in the upstream Mekong Delta area (including the former provinces of Kien Giang, An Giang, Dong Thap, and Long An). Data collection must specifically capture metrics related to low-emission practices, biomass recycling (circular economy), and sub-regional ecological boundaries.
- Analyse GIS and statistical data collected from field activities and prepare a draft report aligned with the objectives of the consultancy assignment. The report must clearly justify the selection of transition models based on sub-regional suitability and detail how these models complement MARD's 1-million-hectare high-quality, low-emission rice program.
- Prepare presentation materials, participate in consultation workshops, and finalize the report to meet the objectives of the assignment.
- **Integration of outputs of the Agroeconomist and GIS expert**

The GIS Analyst will generate spatial datasets and scenario maps that quantify the potential extent of flood-friendly crop transitions. These spatial outputs will be used by the Agroeconomist to estimate the economic value of associated ecosystem services and positive externalities. The Team Leader will integrate all analytical outputs into the final valuation report.

4. Deliverables and Timeframe

All final deliverables must be available in both English and Vietnamese.

Output	Deliverables and description	Deadline
#1	Inception report including detailed methodology and work plan	Within 2 weeks of contract signing
#2	Draft economic valuation report including GIS analysis (geodatabase; SHP files; TIF files; metadata; analytical workflow) and preliminary findings. The draft must include dedicated sections on localized adaptation rationale, production efficiency, and alignment with MAE's low-emission and circular economy strategies.	Within 10 weeks of contract signing
#3	Consultation workshop package (PowerPoint presentation; summary of stakeholder comments; and revised analytical framework) and workshop summary report.	Within 14 weeks of contract signing
#4	Final economic valuation report including all maps, datasets, calculations, and recommendations, which incorporates workshop feedback. The final report will deliver a feasible plan for flood-friendly crop transitions that serves as a direct, actionable supplement to the implementation of the 1-million-hectare high-quality, low-emission rice project.	Within 16 weeks of contract signing

Duration and Level of Effort

The assignment will be completed within 14 weeks (15 September 2026 to 15 January 2027) with 100 working days

- Agricultural economist/team leader: 75 days
- GIS analyst: 25 days

5. Qualifications and Experience

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

Agricultural economist/team leader

- Master's degree or higher in economics, agricultural economics, environmental economics, natural resource economics, environmental sciences, or related fields.
- At least 10 years of professional experience in economic analysis and valuation of ecosystem services, natural capital, or environmental externalities.
- Track record in economic valuations of ecosystem goods and services.
- Strong knowledge of the Mekong Delta's ecological and socio-economic context.
- Experience working with spatial data or GIS outputs in economic analysis and modelling of externalities
- Fluency in English.

GIS analyst

- Bachelor's degree or higher in GIS, remote sensing, geography, spatial analysis, environmental sciences, or related fields.
- At least 5 years of professional experience in GIS, mapping, remote sensing, and spatial analysis.
- Demonstrated experience in agricultural land-use mapping and remote sensing applications.
- Experience working with farmers and local governments in the Mekong Delta.
- Experience supporting environmental, agricultural, or climate adaptation projects in Viet Nam.
- Experience in GIS-based analytical work (not only mapping), including land-use change analysis or scenario modelling
- Ability to work with raster and vector datasets for spatial analysis and modelling
- Fluency in English.

6. Additional information

Duty Station

Home-based assignment with regular travel to sites in the Mekong Delta

Travel Requirements

Travel to project field sites within the Mekong Delta is required. All travel costs will be reimbursed according to IUCN's travel policy.

Application Process

Applicants must:

- Be free of any conflict of interest.
- Be compliant with all applicable tax obligations.
- Not have been found guilty of environmental, financial, or ethical misconduct.
- Not be involved in any pending bankruptcy or legal proceedings.

Required Documents:

Applicants must submit the following documents:

- Letter of Expression of Interest (EOI), including proposed daily rate (inclusive of all applicable taxes) (in Word or PDF format).
- Description of technical approach and methodology (in Word or PDF format).
- CVs (in Word or PDF format).
- Copy of PIT/VAT Registration.
- Budgets (Excel)

Submission Details:

- Submission Deadline: 17:00 on 26 August 2026
- Email Address: toai.nguyenvan@iucn.org and nhung.phamhong@iucn.org
- Do not use file-sharing links or platforms for submission.

Additional Information

- IUCN reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications without providing any reason.
- Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for further steps.