



Terms of References

FINAL EVALUATION

PROJECT: SCALING UP OF ETHICAL BIOTRADE INITIATIVES WITHIN PHYTO-PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY IN VIETNAM

1. BACKGROUNDS

The context

Vietnam has a large natural resource of ingredients with more than 40,000 species which can be used as raw materials for phyto-pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and food industry. 95% of Vietnamese remedies, including over 1,760 medicinal products, rely on natural resource base. Vietnam also produces up to 40,000 tons of raw medicinal materials annually. Additionally significant amount of natural resource ingredients is being imported from overseas, China and India, most of them illegally and of low quality, though many of those plant species are available in Vietnam.

In reality, the supply of natural ingredients in Vietnam is declining due to (a) ineffective management of natural resources, (b) lack of incentives to encourage smallholders to harvest products sustainably, and (c) weak linkages between players on both of upstream and downstream of the value chain that uses natural ingredients. On the other hand, the demand for natural ingredients in national and international market is increasing, amplifying the trend towards decreasing resource base.

BioTrade Initiative refers to those activities of collection, production, transformation, and commercialization of goods and services derived from native biodiversity under the criteria of environmental, social and economic sustainability. Launched since 1996 by UNCTAD, the BioTrade Initiative has been promoting sustainable BioTrade in support of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Initiative has developed a unique portfolio of regional and country programmes.

Since 2016, Helvetas Germany had been running the Project of 'Scaling up of Ethical BioTrade Initiatives within Phyto-pharmaceutical Sector in Vietnam' to promote Biotrade initiatives in phyto-pharmaceutical sector in Vietnam. With this project, Helvetas Germany wants to upscale the sustainable Ethical Biotrade (EBT) business model to the natural ingredient sector of Vietnam so that the country becomes an internationally recognized supplier of natural ingredients to phyto-pharmaceutical, cosmetic and food supplement industries.

The Project

The Project is funded by European Union, implemented by Helvetas Vietnam and Center for Rural Economy Development (CRED) – within 4.5 years (April 2016 - September 2020) on four following components:

- Component 1: Promote the application of production practices that comply with ethical Biotrade standards. These standards are seen as a fundamental ground for sustainable production and exploitation of materials from natural resources;
- Component 2: Increase consumers' awareness as to the need for, and the value of, products that have been made as per ethical Biotrade standards;
- Component 3: Support for performance improvement of value chains that uses natural ingredients as raw materials;
- Component 4: Facilitate for improvement of enabling policy environment.

The project area depends on the particular areas of resources, from which the participating companies source input supplies.

The project performance:

The project was expected to complete in September 2020, including an extension period of 6 months. It has established a portfolio of multiple private business partners, building up various value chains of different products that are compliant with Biotrade principles. In addition, communication activities have brought about significant impact of consumers' awareness as to Biotrade values, and that selected local governments have been supported to improve enabling policies conducive to Biotrade production and consumption. However, being a relatively new concept, the effort to build up a Biotrade natural ingredient sector remains challenging. An evaluation to assess the project's performance and achievements vis-à-vis the project's overall objectives and impacts generated on various sub-national level beneficiaries is required, this is also the purpose of this final evaluation consultancy.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Final Evaluation is to review the performance of the Project, analyse the achievement up to now, against the log-frame and assess the implementation strategy applied by projects. The Final Evaluation will generate lessons learnt and provide recommendations for future approaches of donors and implementers in EBT sector to ensure maximum impacts and sustainability and the way to achieve them.

The Final Evaluation therefore has the following specific objectives:

1. Review the project outputs and outcomes, assess progress against project implementation plans and log frames, assess effectiveness and efficiency of the portfolio.
2. Review and assess:
 - The relevance of the project in the concrete development context of the project localities and other enabling factors, including market situation and participation by international players;
 - The effectiveness and efficiency of project in respect to its investment, the mechanism to partner with local governments for delivery of interventions;
 - The impact of the project on the sector and communities in the lights of Biotrade value and standards;

- The sustainability of the project in terms of production and consumption. Assess the potential for further replication of Biotrade natural ingredient production model in Vietnam.
- 3. Review the strategy applied by project including (i) the market development aspects (including market linkages); (ii) partnership and influencing strategy to related stakeholders (such as government authority, the private sector and civil society);
- 4. Lessons and Recommendations: Generate lessons learnt and provide clear recommendations for relevant stakeholders for future development projects with regards to Ethical Biotrade.

3. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Scope

The evaluation team will look at the whole achievement of the project within its duration, focusing on outputs and outcomes; assess current and future challenges, and propose recommendations and strategies for future interventions among Ethical BioTrade sector.

To achieve the above objectives, the Final Evaluation should offer answers to the following key questions although not only restricted on them:

Project achievement

- What are the projects' key outputs/results up-to date? How are they related to the project logframe?
- Is the project implementation effective and efficient? How efficient is the project management (accountability and cost effectiveness)? Is the project implementation sufficiently monitored and documented? Are problems identified in due time? Are practical, feasible solutions proposed and applied? Does the steering and decision-making process function appropriately?

What are key gaps between the project implementation process and the project designed outcomes? If the project is still relevant to current contexts? What are the level of effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project? What are the achieved impacts to date?

Project strategy

- Are the approaches applied by project appropriate to the local context and do they address context specific constraints within the chosen value chains?
- Has the project worked with partners and target groups that could deliver the impacts proposed?
- Are there any significant changes in the context and market during the project implementation? If yes, has the project evolved to respond to the context and market changes during the implementation? If not, what are the measures the projects should take to adapt/adjust in the future?
- What are the key challenges and risks for the future intervention and how to mitigate them, taking into account the market requirements and fluctuations?

Impact and Sustainability: (assess the overall likely impact of the project)

- What are the main positive changes created by the project? What are the main economic, social and environment impacts created by the project in the short term?
- Can the impacts created by the project be able to self-adapt to grow and strengthen in the long run? If not, what are the key challenges need to be addressed and what areas should be prioritized for future intervention?
- In the context of Biotrade value chains, taking into account the following challenges and characteristics: (i) Biotrade concept is relatively new in natural ingredient sector in Vietnam; (ii) private companies in Vietnam often have limited capacity and resource to implement Biotrade model and (iii) local consumers' behaviours are changing towards demanding for more values; What else the BioTrade practitioners or other relevant stakeholders could do to deliver wider market system changes and hence increase the possibilities for the results to sustain?

Gender and inequality:

- Assess the roles, capacity of and benefit brought to female beneficiaries of the project.
- Access briefly the benefit sharing between actors in the project value chains.

Recommendations:

- Develop specific recommendations for major stakeholder groups anchored on the conclusions the different stakeholder groups will develop based on their own recommendations and insights. An action plan for major stakeholder groups shall be developed to promote sustainability and long-term impact to the beneficiary communities.
- Given the capacity of project partners and resources available, what are the areas that need further technical assistance to expand project impacts and maintain the sustainability?
- Any other recommendations.

4. METHODOLOGY

The review team will work in close collaboration with the project staff and partners, like EBT companies, CRED, Vietnam Organic Agriculture Association and other agencies. The team will need to review literature context, conduct interviews and discussion with related stakeholders including project partners, private sector, beneficiaries, relevant donors/NGOs, etc. The detailed methodology and process will be developed by the review mission, but with consideration of the following guidance:

1. The methodology will be developed based on the review of all important documents and literature sent to the Final Evaluation members by the project team in advance.
2. The methodology to be applied will be presented to the project in a kick-off meeting to ensure that the methodology is sensitive to the potential concerns of beneficiaries participating in this review.
3. Ensure that all analysis and recommendations are based on available records, evidence and interviews.
4. The project and all involved partners will support the team in organizing all meetings with related stakeholders.

5. TEAM AND QUALIFICATIONS

The evaluation may be comprised of more than one consultant.

The main responsibilities of the team leader are:

- Develop the methodology for the review based on providing a robust evidence-base, and where appropriate administering a short simple questionnaire, which will be tested and fine-tuned as appropriate.
- Provide overall strategic guidance and be responsible for the overall Final Evaluation process
- Allocate tasks to the team members
- Supervise and guide the team members in implementing their tasks and be responsible for the overall quality control of the report
- Coordinate with partners
- Write the Final Evaluation final report

The team leader should have the following experience:

- Excellent experience of evaluating private sector development programmes and experience of providing strategic guidance to programmes based on result-based evaluations, especially at national scale;
- Considerable and proven experience in both implementing and evaluating value chains and in the implementation of making market works for the poor approach and methodology;
- Real-life experience in directly working with the private sector businesses of all scales.
- In-depth understanding and experience in brand development, product development, high standard management system and procedure development for private companies, of various scales.
- Thorough understanding the economic behaviour and motivation of the private sector and private businesses in participation in and development of value chains in different industries. Insight knowledge and experience of constraints faced by local enterprises, of various scales, in Vietnam, including both cultural and context issues.
- Knowledge of a number of the commodity value chains.
- Considerable experience and knowledge of working within Vietnam on market systems approaches.
- Experienced on project management and implementation.
- Experience of agribusiness in Vietnam and the region would be a distinct advantage.
- Very good communication skills.
- Capable to work in a multi-cultural environment, especially with ethnic minority groups.
- Fluent in English (writing, speaking) and Vietnamese.

Other team's members should be:

- A specialist on evaluation of development programmes and an understanding of evidence based evaluations.

- Experience and deep knowledge on agriculture, market development and small agribusiness in Vietnam.
- Experience in farmer groups, community based organizations and capacity development at the farm level.
- Experienced on project management and implementation.
- Knowledge of a number of the commodity value chains.
- Fluent in English and Vietnamese (writing, speaking)
- Very good communication skills.

6. SUGGESTED TIME:

Total time frame suggested for this evaluation package is 01 month (from Sept 1-30th 2020) for all following tasks:

- Contract signing;
- Review of project documents and current situation;
- Discuss with project officer to agree on work schedule & inputs;
- Desk review (Project design documents, Progress Reports, baseline studies, market researches, technical documents, socio-economic reports) to collect primary data/information;
- Evaluation design & finalization (tools, check-list, detail plan in fields, agenda).
- Field work.
- Data Analysis & Power Point Presentation.
- Report writing and submission of first draft.
- Revise reporting addressing comments of Helvetas.
- Finalization and Submission of the final version.

7. DELIVERABLES

- 1 debriefing meeting after the first field trip to the selected partners
- Presentation of Final Evaluation findings and recommendations (after the field trip)
- A draft report in English submitted to Helvetas
- A final report in English and Vietnamese (max. 40 pages, excluding annexes) including executive summary (max 3 pages) with critical and analytical views and clear recommendations submitted to Helvetas.
- The Final Evaluation report should be concise and self-explanatory. The report structure should be agreed at the kick off meeting.

Candidates, who are interested in this work, please send your CV and technical/financial proposal to: tuan.nguyen@helvetas.org by Sept 1, 2020.