

TERM OF REFERENCE

Position: Forest Land Allocation Review (Individual Consultant - National)

1.0 Background

The USAID *Vietnam Forest and Deltas Program* is embarking upon a five-year effort that will support four provinces to accelerate their transition to climate resilient, low emissions development through investments in reducing net emissions from forests, and enhancing resiliency of people, places, and livelihoods in the delta regions to short and long-term climate impacts. In collaboration with MARD, the Program will support sustainable forests management and strategies to increase sustainability and climate change resilience, improve livelihoods, and reduced pressure upon forest ecosystems, or to manage them in a more equitable and sustainable manner.

Forest land allocation is a key step towards reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation, maintaining and enhancing existing forest stocks through improved management and increasing community ownership of forest resources. The improved management should have positive impact on co-benefits including maintaining and enhancing carbon stocks, water resources, biodiversity and services of nature.

2.0 Objectives

The consultancy will contribute towards an evaluation of the methodologies for increasing participation and governance within forests land allocation, it will include an analysis of the methodologies and make recommendations for increased participation of communities, using traditional ecological knowledge and traditional boundaries, and enhanced use of local knowledge and mapping processes, supported by GPS data collection. Specifically the tasks will (1) analyse and document the current activities and steps in Forest Land Allocation; (2) joint identification with stakeholders "lessons learned" from Forest Land Allocation (3) identify improved methodologies for increasing participation of local communities in mapping, understanding and owning the forest land allocation; (4) in cooperation with the major stakeholders, identification and recommendations to improve methodologies especially to streamline the process and involve local knowledge in the mapping process, (5) to work with stakeholders to develop a plan for integrating improved methods into existing government forests land allocation, (6) to produce a training manual (based on existing manuals); (7) The consultant will also work with Social Inclusion Advisor to look at potential positive and negative impacts of Forest Land Allocation on community land use, including impacts on stabilising swidden agriculture and ownership of land in areas of deforestation and degradation.

3.0 Tasks

The assignment is to analyse the forests land allocation process in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An

provinces through undertaking the following tasks:

Write a report on the forest land allocation process in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An through examining documents, stakeholder interviews which shall include the following:

- Identify, list and visualise (institutional landscape) all relevant stakeholders in Forest Land Allocation for all administrative levels;
- Assess and document the benefits and constraints of Forest Land Allocation as perceived by major stakeholders, particular attention should be paid to its role in stabilising unproductive land cultivation systems, and identify any negative impacts on communities, or disadvantaged groups;
- Assess and document the transparency of the Forest Land Allocation as perceived by major stakeholders;
- Provide an overview of the steps taken so far by the authorities regarding Forest Land Allocation
- Identify, according to defined criteria, "lessons learned" (technical as well as institutional) and jointly elaborate recommendations to further develop promising approaches and/or overcome experienced constraints.

Undertake an analysis of current methodologies proposed by government, research agencies and NGO's to undertake, and improve the forest land allocation process to ensure that it addresses, social, environmental and climate change issues, which should examine the following:

- Methods and instruments to guarantee and increase community participation;
- Methods to integrate traditional ecological knowledge into the forests land allocation process;
- Methods to assess environmental, social and climate change issues into the forests land allocation process;
- Methods to use participatory mapping techniques and use of GPS recording to assist in the forest allocation process;

Jointly identify with decision-makers next steps for forest land allocation, needs, government contributions, and preferred means of information exchange and appropriate information products;

Prepare and conduct presentations of findings and recommendations for provincial and district groups.

4. Deliverables

- Inception report on key issues, work plan, agreed deliverables to be submitted at the start of the contract (3-4 pages);

- Report on review of Forest Land Allocation in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa, including a review of methodologies, current constraints and strengths, analysis of provincial plans and budgets; integration of Social, Environmental and climate change issues into the Forest Land Allocation process (Outline to be discussed with successful candidate);
- Manual on Participatory Methods in Forest Land Allocation;
- Data collected on efficacy of current practices and methods used in land allocation in provinces;
- Workshop with stakeholders to present results, gain feedback, and discuss next steps;

5. Qualifications, Experiences of Consultant

- 5.1 Master or Doctorate degree in forestry, natural resource management or related field;
- 5.2 Experience on forests land allocation, land use planning, community development;
- 5.3 Demonstrated experience in land use planning and forests land allocation implementation;
- 5.4 Expertise in using local traditional knowledge for forest land allocation and land use planning with local communities;
- 5.5 Expert understanding of ethnic groups, upland communities, swidden agriculture and community forest governance;
- 5.6 Evidence of contributions to reports on forest land allocation, land use planning or relevant activities;
- 5.7 Proficient in English.

6. Duration

Duration is expected to be initially for a period of one to two months.