

## Terms of Reference

<b>Title</b>	<b>Policy Dialogue for Sustainable Aquaculture Cooperative Development</b>
	<b>MACIB Project</b>
<b>Client</b>	<b>Phuoc Binh, Toan Thang and Hoa Nho, Hoa De, Tan Phat Loi, Tai Thinh Phat Farm coop and Ca Mau Cooperative Alliance.</b>
<b>Country</b>	<b>Vietnam</b>
<b>Project number</b>	<b>24ATVN-9764</b>
<b>Assignment number</b>	<b>Aug - Dec, 2025</b>
<b>Period</b>	
<b>Cooperative advisors (CAs)</b>	<b>Le Anh Tuan, Nguyen Thanh Trang, Tran Quang Dieu and Pham Nguyen Duy</b>
<b>Mode of Agripool involvement</b>	<b>No agripooler</b>

### 1. BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 Context of the Aquaculture and Cooperative Sector in Vietnam

Vietnam is one of the world's leading aquaculture producers, with the **Mekong River Delta (MRD)** playing a central role in the industry. The **MRD accounts for 70% of Vietnam's aquaculture production** and contributes significantly to global seafood exports. The region is home to **18 million people**, many of whom rely on aquaculture for their livelihoods.

However, the sector faces major challenges:

- **Fragmented production** and weak linkages in the value chain.
- **Limited access to finance and technology** for smallholder farmers and cooperatives.
- **Unstable market conditions** and fluctuating export prices.
- **Environmental degradation** due to climate change and unsustainable farming practices.
- **Regulatory barriers** affecting certification, seed quality, and policy enforcement.

Cooperatives play a vital role in addressing these challenges by improving **collective bargaining, financial resilience, and market access**. However, many cooperatives still struggle with weak governance, limited access to financial services, and a lack of structured policy engagement. **Public-private-producer dialogue (PPD) is crucial** to bridging these gaps and ensuring that policies support cooperative growth and sustainable aquaculture.

#### 1.2 Background of the MACIB Project

The **Making Aquaculture Cooperatives in the Mekong Delta Inclusive and Bankable (MACIB) Project** is a three-year initiative (2024-2026) led by **Agriterra**,

supported by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), and aligned with Vietnam's **Sustainable Aquaculture Development Plan to 2030**. The project is designed to strengthen **financial, governance, and policy frameworks** for aquaculture cooperatives in the MRD.

**Key objectives of MACIB:**

- **Professionalize aquaculture cooperatives** to make them **financially independent and bankable**.
- **Enhance service provision** within cooperatives to improve production efficiency and climate-smart aquaculture.
- **Increase participation of women and youth** in cooperative governance.
- **Strengthen policy engagement** by advocating for reforms that improve market access, certification, and financial sustainability.

**1.3 Dutch Priorities in Vietnam's Aquaculture Sector**

The Netherlands has a long-standing collaboration with Vietnam in sustainable aquaculture, particularly in the **Mekong Delta**. This partnership is guided by the **Netherlands-Vietnam Strategic Partnership Arrangement on Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security** and the **Strategic Partnership Arrangement on Climate Change Adaptation and Water Management**.

Dutch priorities for Vietnam's aquaculture sector include:

- **Strengthening climate-smart and circular aquaculture models** to enhance sustainability and reduce environmental impact.
- **Improving disease control and reducing antibiotic use** to meet international food safety standards.
- **Enhancing digital transformation in aquaculture** through data-driven farming and precision aquaculture technologies.
- **Supporting the development of high-tech shrimp and pangasius farming models** to boost efficiency and market competitiveness.
- **Facilitating public-private partnerships (PPPs)** to link Vietnamese farmers and cooperatives with Dutch expertise, innovative technologies, and financing solutions.
- **Promoting sustainable certification** (ASC, VietGAP, organic) to improve access to high-value markets such as the **EU, USA, and Japan**.

By aligning the **MACIB Project** with Dutch priorities, this policy dialogue aims to create a **resilient, innovative, and sustainable aquaculture sector** that benefits smallholder farmers, cooperatives, and the broader seafood industry.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The **Policy Dialogue under MACIB** aims to:

- **Strengthen cooperative participation** in policy formulation and decision-making.
- **Improve policy enforcement mechanisms** through cooperative feedback.
- **Institutionalize regular Public-Private Dialogue (PPD)** to foster collaboration between cooperatives, policymakers, and private sector stakeholders.
- **Advocate for improved policies** on seed quality, aquaculture certification, and financial access.
- **Support financial and regulatory reforms** to enhance cooperative viability and market access.

## 3. SCOPE OF WORK

The dialogue will utilize a **participatory and evidence-based approach**, including:

- **Desk research** on existing aquaculture policies and cooperative regulations.

- **Stakeholder consultations** with cooperatives, policymakers, and private sector representatives.
- **Workshops and roundtable discussions** to develop policy recommendations.
- **Case studies and best practices** from successful cooperative models.
- **Policy drafting sessions** to prepare actionable recommendations.

#### 4. DELIVERABLES

- **Policy Review Report:** Assessment of the current aquaculture cooperative regulations, identifying gaps and alignment with international best practices.
- **Stakeholder Engagement Report:** Summary of consultations with cooperatives, government agencies, private sector, and partners, highlighting key feedback and consensus
- **Regulatory Proposal:** Draft recommendations for policy and regulatory improvements to strengthen governance, market access, and sustainability of cooperatives.
- **Final Policy Recommendations Report:** A consolidated set of actionable policy recommendations for government adoption, providing a roadmap for short- and long-term reforms.

#### 5. TIMELINE AND CONSULTACY

The policy dialogue will be conducted from **September 1, 2025, to December 30, 2025**, with the following key phases:

Activity	Timeframe
<b>Preparatory Research &amp; Consultation</b>	Sep 1 – Sep 30, 2025
<b>Policy Review &amp; Drafting</b>	Oct 1 - Oct 15, 2025
<b>Stakeholder Engagement &amp; Advocacy</b>	Oct 16 - Oct 31, 2025
<b>Dialogue Platform Establishment</b>	Nov 1 - Nov 30, 2025
<b>Finalization &amp; Reporting</b>	Nov 30 - Dec 30, 2025

*The consultancy will include:*

- **Number of consultancy days:** 35 working days.
- **Fees:** Based on Agriterra's standard cost norms for consultant fees and reimbursable costs.
- **Contract Type:** A contract will be signed with the lead consultant, covering the full team. Individual payments will be based on agreed consultancy days.
- **Location:** Activities will take place in **Tra Vinh, Soc Trang, and Ca Mau provinces**.

#### 6. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The consultant(s) must meet the following criteria:

- **Educational Background:** A master's degree in agriculture, aquaculture, economics, social sciences, or related fields.
- **Experience:** At least 7 years of experience in policy research, cooperative development, sustainable aquaculture, or related fields.
- **Technical Expertise:**
  - Strong knowledge of **Vietnamese aquaculture policies** and cooperative governance frameworks.
  - Experience in **public-private-producer dialogue (PPD)** facilitation.
  - Familiarity with **financial mechanisms for cooperatives**, market integration, and policy formulation.
- **Analytical and Communication Skills:**
  - Proficiency in **qualitative and quantitative research methodologies**.
  - Strong **report writing and policy recommendation skills**.
  - Excellent **stakeholder engagement and facilitation abilities**.

- **Languages:** Fluency in **English and Vietnamese** (written and spoken) is required.

## 7. MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATIONS

The policy dialogue will be led by a dedicated implementation team consisting of:

- **02 Cooperative Advisors from Agriterra:** Responsible for technical support, policy recommendations, and cooperative development.
- **01 Consultant:** Leading policy analysis, stakeholder engagement, and report drafting.
- **Cooperative Alliance of Can Tho, Vinh Long and Ca Mau provinces:** Providing regional coordination, facilitating cooperative participation, and ensuring policy alignment.
- **Representatives of Cooperatives:** Engaging in dialogue, providing insights on cooperative challenges, and advocating for policy reforms.
- The consultant will **report directly to Agriterra Vietnam's MACIB Project Team**, under the supervision of the Senior Agribusiness Advisor and in close collaboration with relevant project advisors and cooperative support teams.
- The assignment will involve **regular coordination with cooperative board members, data focal points, and local extension officers**, especially during the field data collection and validation phases.
- Agriterra will provide:
  - Letters of introduction to cooperatives and local stakeholders
  - Technical briefings and existing datasets from MACIB assessments
  - Logistical and advisory support for training activities and validation workshops
- All deliverables must be submitted in English (with key training materials in Vietnamese) and will be **reviewed and approved by Agriterra prior to final acceptance**.

## 8. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

*Interested consultants should submit:*

- **Consultant team profile** and relevant experience.
- **A short technical proposal** outlining the approach and methodology.
- **Samples of previous reports** from similar assignments.
- **CVs of team members.**

**Submission deadline:** Proposals should be submitted in English via email to **vietnam@agriterra.org** with the subject **"Policy Dialogue for Sustainable Aquaculture Cooperative Development"** by August **15, 2025**.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for further discussion.

## Agriterra, for cooperatives

We are a purpose-driven organisation, aimed at strengthening farmer cooperatives in 13 countries in Africa and Asia. Agriterra's wheel of impact depicts how strong farmer cooperatives contribute to societal development and the relevance to many of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

Positively impacting farmer cooperatives is at the heart of our identity and is reflected in our legal entity as a Dutch non-profit foundation.



Agriterra provides high quality and hands-on advice, training and exchange services to farmer cooperatives with maximum impact to support dynamic, economic and sustainably strong and productive rural areas. We draw on a century of cooperative knowledge in the Netherlands shared through our extensive network in the Dutch agri-food sector. These Agripool experts from farmer organisations across the world work with Cooperative advisors from our country offices, supported by staff teams in the Netherlands.

In 2022 Agriterra worked together with 579 farmer organisations, trained 8,989 people and 3,808,366 farmers were reached.