Terms of Reference

Title	**: Establishment of climate-resilient rice-shrimp farming demonstration plots**
Client	**: Hoa De Cooperative (HACO)**
Country	**: VIETNAM**
Project number	**: 24HACO-10072**
Assignment number	**:**
Period	**: January - March 2025**
Cooperative advisor (CA)	**: Nguyen Thanh Trang**
Mode of Agripool involvement	**: ☐ Remote (Online) only**
	☐ Field visit included

Introduction cooperative

Hoa De Cooperative was established in 2016 in Hoa Tu commune, Can Tho city (formerly Soc Trang province). The cooperative currently has 53 members managing a total of 63 hectares, including 51 hectares for shrimp farming and 32 hectares for rice cultivation. In addition to shrimp production, the cooperative also combines with rice cultivation. Hoa De has the potential to increase product value through processing (dried shrimp, shrimp salt, shrimp powder, etc.) and exploit high-quality domestic markets.

Background of the assignment

Hoa De Cooperative cultivates black tiger shrimp and white-leg shrimp in a rice–shrimp farming system under VietGAP standards, with part of its area applying improved extensive methods. The cooperative produces about 61 tons of shrimp annually, generating 5.3 billion VND in revenue. However, climate risks such as heavy rainfall, extreme heat, and sharp temperature fluctuations reduce rice yields by up to 12% and shrimp yields by 45%.

To address these challenges, in October 2025, Agriterra with technical consultancy from Vietnam Institute for Fisheries Economics and Planning (VIFEP), facilitated a Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) workshop that helped members identify key issues and prioritize solutions. The cooperative's top priority is redesigning its shrimp–rice farming system to adapt to climate change, including measures like deeper ponds with higher banks, separate settling ponds, distinct canal and sewer systems, and improved regulation of salinity and freshwater according to seasonal conditions.

Building on these findings, in November 2025 Agriterra organized technical training sessions for cooperative members to improve current practices and arranged an exchange visit to another province where similar models are successfully implemented, allowing members to learn from real examples.

To incentivize and promote adoption of this recommended CSA practice, Hoa De cooperative asked Agriterra to support the cooperative to establish co-investment

demonstration plots that showcases these local-led CSA practices and provides farmers with a practical learning site to observe, adopt and scale up successful CSA practices under guidance and supervision of the cooperative.

Therefore, Agriterra seeks a consultant to assess existing shrimp pond systems and provide technical support for pond improvement and upgrading (site selection, design, and layout) to establish climate-resilient rice-shrimp farming demonstration plots for learning purposes. The consultancy will focus on practical, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible solutions tailored to the local context and production systems (e.g. earthen ponds, PE-lined ponds, extensive or improved extensive method).

Main objective

To improve the technical performance, biosecurity, and sustainability of shrimp pond systems operated by selected cooperative members, leading to higher survival rates, improved yields, reduced risks, and better economic outcomes.

Specific objectives

- Assess the current condition and performance of shrimp pond systems of 10 cooperative members.
- Identify key technical gaps, risks, and opportunities for improvement
- Propose practical upgrading solutions for pond design and layout, water management, aeration, drainage, and biosecurity of 02 selected cooperative members.

Scope of work

1. Desk work to review Agriterra's CSA report, conducted by VIFEP to learn about pond design issues to prepare for the assessment and design.
2. Site assessment to define the most appropriate locations for the plots to be improved as demonstration plots at Hoa De Cooperative, ensuring the ponds are the central location that provides farmer members with convenient and easy access to visit and learn.
3. Develop necessary criteria and requirements for household selection to perform demo, making sure that the plots are properly established in consultation with all members.
4. Develop visual 3D layouts and designs with specific and concrete parameters for the demo plots to support the future construction.
5. Provide recommended lists of equipment and materials and a cost estimate for the construction of the demonstration ponds.
6. Provide technical advice during establishment of ponds.

Expected results

1. Assessment report indicating all results, including a list of at least 05 most appropriate households, suggested criteria, and requirements to select the pond, assessment plan, and assessment tools/approach.

2. An approved 3D plot layout/design for the construction along with all the materials for the plot establishment.

3. Final consultancy report.

Tentative programme

The assignment will run from 26 January to 10 March 2026 with a total of estimated 17 working days. The consultant will carry out the following task:

Day	Programme	Available
02 days	**Preparation** - Desk review, literature overview to learn about recommendations of CSA report - Online meeting with Hoa De Cooperative to pre-assess shrimp farming models; agree on objectives, methodology and schedule - Prepare tools for on-site assessments	Consultant/ CA/ the coop
04 days	**On-site assessment of shrimp ponds at cooperative** - Discuss with cooperative to learn about farm geographic distributions and potential locations for plot establishment - Conduct on-site assessments at 10 households to: + Learn about the currently adopted shrimp farming practices by farmers (culture pond, settling pond, discharge pond, pond bottom, embankment, inlet/outlet systems, sludge management, aeration); + Identify constraints related to technical design, operation, environment, and management capacity; + Identify opportunities for improvement	Consultant/ CA/ the coop & coop members
03 days	**Technical recommendations and pond upgrading plan for 02 selected cooperative members maximum** - Develop a list of criteria and requirements of the pond selection for improvements - Recommend optimal 3D pond design and layout adjustments with full technical parameters related to water, areration system, biosecurity measures, and waste management - Recommend lists of equipment and materials and a cost estimate for the construction of the demonstration ponds	Consultant/ CA/ the coop & selected coop members

Day	Programme	Available
06 days	**Pilot support and demonstration** - Support selected members to apply recommended improvements on pilot ponds - Provide technical supervision during pond improvement	Consultant/ CA/ the coop & selected coop members
02 days	**Reporting** - An assessment and recommendation report - A final consultancy report summarizing activities, results, lessons learned, and next steps	Consultant/ CA
17 days		

CA = Nguyen Thanh Trang, Agriterra Cooperative Advisor

Logistics and support

Agriterra will provide logistical support, including travel arrangements for site visits to Hoa De Cooperative.

Application and selection process

Interested consultants are invited to submit a complete application package. Application should include:

- Cover letter: Indicating the applicant's interest in the assignment, highlighting relevant experience, and outlining suitability for the role.
- Technical proposal: Presenting the proposed methodology, tools, workplan to carry out the tasks and expected results outlined in the ToR.
- Financial proposal: Including the daily rate in VND (inclusive of taxes), with a clear breakdown of estimated costs.
- Updated CV(s): Providing detailed qualifications and professional experience of the consultant, with at least two references. Examples of similar past assignments should be attached.

Qualifications required

- Advanced degree in aquaculture, water resources, or related fields.
- At least 5-7 years of practical experience in shrimp farming systems, preferably in the Mekong River Delta.
- Strong expertise in shrimp pond design, water management, and biosecurity.
- Proven experience working with smallholder farmers or cooperatives.
- Ability to provide practical, farmer-oriented solutions.
- English proficiency required for reporting.

Submission guidelines:

- All application documents must be in English.
- Please submit the full package by email with the subject line: *"Consultant – Establishment of climate-resilient rice-shrimp farming demonstration plots"*
- Email submissions should be sent to: trang.thanh@agriterra.org, vietnam@agriterra.org

Selection process:

- Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted and invited for an interview.
- The closing date for application is **17:00, 22 January, 2026**.

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.