



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title: Consultancy for research on ESG in the coffee sector

Project name: SustainCoffee: Advancing ESG Practices in Vietnam's Coffee Sector

Location: Hanoi, Dak Lak and other coffee-growing areas, as required

Duration: Jun to Oct 2026

Reporting to: MEAL Advisor, Portfolio Manager - CARE International in Vietnam

Since 1989, CARE International in Vietnam has partnered with a wide range of organizations to implement over 300 impactful projects across the country. We believe that true sustainable development can only be achieved by addressing the root causes of poverty, social injustice, and inequality. In collaboration with our partners, we are committed to empowering women and their communities—whether smallholder farmers, workers, or owners of micro and small enterprises—by enhancing their skills, confidence, and capacity to engage in economic development, adapt to climate change, and strengthen their resilience to natural or major disasters. Together, we aim to foster a society where development is inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all.

Project information

The adoption of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices among Vietnamese enterprises, including those in the coffee sector, remains uneven. A 2024 national assessment found that 39% of enterprises had never heard of ESG, and 62% lacked understanding of related national regulations and policies. While foreign-invested and large enterprises have made greater progress in ESG compliance, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) — which account for 97% of Vietnam's economy — face significant challenges due to limited knowledge and resources.

Across the three ESG pillars, Vietnamese enterprises perform best in the **Social** dimension (68%), followed by **Governance** (63%) and **Environment** (52%). The main barriers include (i) lack of information about ESG, (ii) insufficient training, and (iii) absence of specific government policies or incentives to encourage adoption. In the coffee sector, there are currently no sector-specific ESG guidelines or tailored policy incentives. Compliance with new EU regulations — notably the **European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)** and the **Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)** — presents additional challenges. Meeting these requirements, especially on traceability, demands substantial investments in GPS tracking, satellite monitoring, and certification, which are difficult for MSMEs and smallholder farmers dominating the supply chain. The **SustainCoffee: Advancing ESG Practices in Vietnam's Coffee Sector** project, funded by the European Union, aims to strengthen the role of **Non-State Actors (NSAs)** — particularly coffee business associations and their MSME members — in promoting ESG adoption. The project focuses on enhancing their capacity to implement ESG-aligned practices, improving engagement in ESG-related policy dialogue and monitoring, and fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration among

This action has received funding from the European Union

government, buyers, certification bodies, NGOs, and farmers to advance a more sustainable, inclusive, and responsible coffee value chain in Vietnam.

Overall Objective (OO): To strengthen the role of NSAs, particularly business associations and their members, in promoting the adoption of ESG practices in line with international standards on sustainable development and environmental due diligence.

Specific Objective 1 (SO1): To increase the capacity of business associations and their members to implement ESG practices in line with international standards and national policies.

- **Output 1.1:** Improved awareness among business associations and their members of ESG practices in sustainable coffee supply chains.
- **Output 1.2:** ESG self-assessment tools are utilised by business association members, in line with international standards and national policies
- **Output 1.3:** Coffee enterprises develop ESG action plans to address environmental sustainability, social equity, and governance standards.

Specific Objective 2: To enhance the participation of coffee business associations and their members in ESG-related policy dialogue and monitoring at national and local levels.

- **Output 2.1:** Evidence on the implementation progress of ESG policies and requirements is developed by business associations.
- **Output 2.2:** Existing platforms and networks are leveraged to promote multi-stakeholder engagement on ESG policy dialogue and compliance.

Assignment objective:

Overall Aim

The objective of this assignment is to generate a robust, decision-oriented baseline on ESG awareness, capacity, and implementation among coffee business associations and their members in Vietnam., in alignment with international standards and national policies, while identifying key ESG challenges in Vietnam's coffee sector.

The study will:

- establish reference values for key project indicators, and
- generate actionable insights to inform targeting, intervention design, and prioritisation of ESG support across different actors in the coffee sector.
- identify key ESG risks, constraints, and opportunities in relation to international standards (EUDR, CSDDD, GRI) and evolving market expectations, particularly in export markets.

Specific Objectives

Objective 1:

To establish baseline values for project indicators and refine the MEL framework to ensure clarity, measurability, and usability for performance tracking and adaptive management.

Objective 2:

To conduct a stakeholder mapping to identify relevant NSAs for project engagement, and to assess their ESG awareness, capacity, and readiness, including key knowledge and implementation gaps, priority ESG issues, readiness to meet international standards and buyer requirements, and constraints across enterprise types and value chain actors.

The consultant is expected to apply an ESG risk and market access lens, including analysis of how structural factors (e.g. gender, ethnicity, enterprise scale) affect:

- access to markets and finance,
- compliance with ESG requirements,

- participation in sustainable value chains.

Objective 3:

To provide evidence-based recommendations for project intervention design (including tools and capacity building), ESG policy implementation and monitoring, and strengthening multi-stakeholder coordination across the coffee value chain.

Approach and Methodology:

Overall Approach

The consultant shall adopt a mixed-methods, market-oriented, and implementation-focused approach. The study must be:

- **Decision-oriented:** generating insights directly usable for program design and targeting
- **Market-aligned:** grounded in ESG requirements from buyers and export markets
- **Segmented:** identifying differences across enterprise types and value chain actors
- **Analytically rigorous:** ensuring consistency, triangulation, and robustness of findings

Methodology

Desk Review

Review relevant project documents, ESG frameworks, regulatory requirements, and sector studies.

Quantitative Baseline Survey with 150 MSMEs/cooperatives

A structured survey will be administered to assess:

- ESG awareness and practices
- constraints and investment capacity
- exposure to buyer requirements
- perceived incentives and risks

Qualitative survey

Key informant interview and FGDs can be applying to deep dive the information with the following actors: enterprises across value chain; business associations; buyers/exporters; policymakers and producers.

Data collection tools must explicitly capture:

- understanding of ESG requirements from buyers and export markets
- perceived costs and operational challenges (e.g. traceability, due diligence)
- current buyer relationships and ESG expectations
- perceived incentives and support needs

Data Analysis Requirements

The consultant must:

- go beyond aggregate averages and provide disaggregated analysis
- develop enterprise typologies based on: ESG readiness, market exposure and compliance capacity
- Identify: key bottlenecks, enabling factors and priority intervention areas,
- Integrate quantitative and qualitative findings

Materiality Assessment

Materiality analysis should:

- follow GRI-inspired methodology
- result in a prioritised set of 8–12 ESG issues
- clearly link each issue to: business impact, stakeholder concern, and relevance to EU regulations and market requirements

Data Governance and Confidentiality

The consultant shall ensure that:

- all data collected is treated as confidential and used solely for the purpose of this assignment
- all outputs are anonymised and presented in aggregated form
- no individual enterprise or organisation is identifiable without explicit consent

These measures are required to ensure data reliability and enable meaningful disclosure of business practices and ESG gaps

Key deliverables:

1. Baseline Study Report (max 30 pages)

- methodology and data analysis
- baseline values for indicators
- mapping of NSAs
- disaggregated analysis
- ESG readiness segmentation
- actionable recommendations

2. Baseline report brief: A concise 02 page brief in CARE template

3. ESG Sector Insight Report

A visually designed report that:

- presents key ESG insights and priorities
- is suitable for external audiences (associations, policymakers, buyers)
- focuses on implications rather than methodology

4. ESG Insight Brief

A concise 4–6 page brief that:

- highlights key findings and patterns
- focuses on implications for the coffee sector
- supports learning, communication, and stakeholder engagement

5. Dataset & Analytical Outputs

- cleaned dataset
- codebook and analysis files
- structured tables for reuse
- segmentation/typology outputs

6. Presentation & Validation Workshops

- presentation of key findings
- validation with stakeholders
- refinement of recommendations

Tentative Timeframe & Key deliverables:

Activity	Tentative timeline (2026)	No of working days
Discussion with CARE and refine the study protocol	3 - 12 Jun	1.5
Develop and finalize qualitative and quantitative tools	15 - 30 Jun	3
Data collection and analysis	6 - 31 Jul	15
Validation workshop with stakeholders	3 - 7 Aug	1
Drafting and finalize reports	15 Aug - 30 Sept	8.5
Presentation in Launching workshop	1 - 9 Oct	1
Total		30

Selection criteria

- 1 Experience
 - At least 10 years of experience in social research, monitoring and evaluation, or development programming. .
 - Expertise in study areas including sustainable development, ESG, MSMEs, Coffee supply chain and international certification process.
 - Demonstrated experience in quantitative and qualitative research, and data analysis for development projects.
 - Strong understanding of Vietnam’s policy and institutional context related to Green growth, Sustainable agriculture, MSMEs, and export sector
- 2 Qualification
 - Relevant postgraduate qualifications.
- 3 Technical skills
 - Research, surveys, stakeholder interviews (ranging from national-level to local-level stakeholders), report writing, and presentation.
 - Ability to work autonomously and demonstrated skills in leading baseline survey projects.
- 4 Language
 - Excellent command of English (writing and speaking).
- 5 References
 - A minimum of two referee contacts who have managed the proposed consultant previously.

Application procedure:

Interested firms or consortia should submit the following documents in English/Vietnamese, clearly stating “*ESG study – SustainCoffee*” in the subject line to email: procurement@care.org.vn, by 13th May 2026:

- Technical Proposal (max. 8 pages):
 - Research methodology including sampling strategy, estimated sample size for qualitative and quantitative component

- Proposed data matrix in which clearly identify the key informants, data collection techniques and key themes will be explored
 - Baseline study process, quality control and ethical considerations plan
 - Data analysis plan: the Plan must clearly describe the analytical approach to be applied in order to ensure methodological rigor, reliability, and alignment with the study objectives. Description of statistical methods and techniques to be applied for quantitative and qualitative data. Explanation of how quantitative and qualitative findings will be integrated to generate robust, evidence-based conclusions. Description of how inconsistencies across data sources will be addressed.
 - Team arrangement which clearly indicated the each team members roles and responsibility
 - Work plan aligned with the TOR requirement.
- Financial Proposal (inclusive of all taxes and costs)
 - CVs or team bios demonstrating relevant experience
 - 01 sample of previous relevant work
 - Valid company/firm registration documents (if relevant)

CARE is an equal opportunity employer committed to a diverse workforce. Women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Thanks for your interest in CARE! We are committed to each other and to the protection of the people we serve. We do not tolerate sexual misconduct within or external to our organisation and imbed child protection in all we do. Protection from sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse and child protection are fundamental to our relationships, including employment, and our recruitment practices are designed to ensure we only recruit people who are suitable to work with other staff and the people we serve. As well as pre-employment checks, we will use the recruitment and reference process to ensure potential new consultant/supplier understand and are aligned with these expectations. To find out more, please contact the Human Resources Team Leader.