
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Contract-no:

Project/mandate no: 2026.05.04/ Vietnam

Project/mandate name/country: Swiss Tourism 4 Sustainable Development

Client HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
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Contract duration From: May 2026 October, 2026

1. Background

The Swiss Tourism for Sustainable Development (ST4SD) project is funded by The Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) for a duration of four years, from April 2023 to March 2027, with implementation led by HELVETAS Swiss Inter-cooperation in Vietnam (Helvetas Vietnam) as the Lead Implementing Agency, and CRED Tourism & Agriculture Solution Consulting Company Limited (CRED) as the Consortium Partner.

The main objective of the ST4SD project is to contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive tourism sector in Vietnam. In the long term, the project aims to support the creation of new livelihoods and promote sustainable economic development in the country. This overarching objective will be achieved by focusing on three key outcomes:

- Outcome 1 (macro level): Enhancing sustainable tourism development by ensuring that national and subnational action plans, master plans, and relevant policies include necessary actions. This includes facilitating the decision-making and implementation processes.
- Outcome 2 (meso level): Strengthening Vietnamese training institutions to provide quality training and develop skills and expertise in sustainable tourism. The project will assist in the selection and enhancement of these institutions.
- Outcome 3 (meso and micro level): Encouraging tourism destinations and companies to adopt more sustainable practices in their operations and investments. This outcome aims to make both the destinations and the companies more environmentally and socially responsible.

From 2024, the ST4SD Project provided consultancy and support to the pilot research and assessment of the Vietnam Tourism Development Index (VTDI). In 2026, the Project continue to support the revision of VTDI. Currently, VTDI is being used as a tool to rank the competitiveness of provinces. To improve the effectiveness of sustainable policy planning at the local level, the ST4SD Project is seeking a national consultant to restructure the VTDI. Instead of being used for ranking purposes, the new tool will serve as a basis for provinces and tourist destinations to self-assess their tourism development, thereby proactively developing appropriate management policies and promoting sustainable tourism development. Thus, the Project is recruiting a national consultant to carry out this assignment in early 2026.

2. Main tasks and activities:

Experts will work under the coordination of the ST4SD Project and in close collaboration with international consultant and the Vietnam National Authority Tourism (VNAT). Key tasks include:

- *Desk Review*: Reviewing the current structure of the 111 indicators across the 17 pillars of the VTDI 2024. Analyzing the shortcomings of using VTDI for "ranking" and researching destination self-assessment models worldwide.

- *Restructuring the indicator set*: Developing a new methodology framework divided into two layers: a mandatory "Core Indicators" layer for the entire country and a "Context-Specific Indicators" layer allowing localities to select based on their specific resources (sea, mountains, heritage, etc.).

- *Transforming the measurement method*: Developing a new scoring and reporting methodology. Transitioning from a relative comparison (ranking) system to absolute benchmarking/gap analysis combined with a traffic light system helps identify risks and weaknesses.

- *Policy integration consultation*: Proposing a mechanism for VNAT to manage the index; guiding provinces on how to use these self-assessment results to draft tourism development documents/resolutions.

- *Stakeholder consultation*: Attending in consultation meetings with VNAT, with the participation of provincial tourism departments representing different regions and other relevant stakeholders to refine the methodology. Field trip to provinces to collect data may be needed.

3. Expected deliverables

The national expert is expected to deliver the following key deliverables:

- A report analyzing the current situation and proposing a new structural framework for the Destination Self-Assessment Toolkit.

- A report on the Methodology and Calculation Toolkit Guidelines (including the Core Layer and customized Layers for provinces).

- A User Manual for Tourism Departments to integrate self-assessment results into policy planning.

- Attend to and present advices in at least two meeting or workshop/ training courses organized by VNAT or ST4SD to the aforementioned advisory content.

*All reports and deliverables must be prepared and submitted in both English and Vietnamese.

4. Key competencies and experience

The selected expert is expected to meet the following qualifications and experience:

- A minimum of a Master's degree in Tourism;
- At least 20 years of professional experience in the tourism sector;
- Proven knowledges on tourism policy development, international tourism criteria/index (WEF, UN Tourism...), including the experiences to consult or work with governmental agencies, both national and provincial levels.
- Experience in tourism capacity building and training activities.
- Proven knowledge in writing researches, books, papers on sustainable tourism or tourism policies is an advantage;
- Proficiency in both English and Vietnamese, with the ability to prepare and submit all

deliverables in both languages;

- Demonstrated experience working with NGOs, government agencies, or donor-funded projects related to sustainable tourism development.

5. Working methodology

Of the various applicable research methods and techniques available to consultants, it is expected that at least the following will be applied.

- Consultative meetings with project staff, international consultant, and key tourism stakeholders to ensure alignment and gather inputs;
- Desk review of relevant documents (VTDI 2024 report, TTDI report by WEF and other national and international tourism index and policies, strategies, reports on sustainable tourism destination management in Vietnam and comparable contexts;
- Attending capacity building workshop to present the consultatory results.

6. Time Frame of the assignment

The indicative start date for the assignment is expected to be on May 25, 2026 and the period of implementation is expected to end on October 30, 2026. The assignment would officially end when the project accepts the deliverables.

7. Logistics

- ST4SD will provide logistics support to the consultant if needed.
- The meetings or workshops expenses will be covered by Helvetas in accordance with Helvetas' cost norms.
- All other expenses and procedures incurred during the consultancy will be managed by the consultant, in compliance with the terms outlined in the contract with HELVETAS.

8. Application document

Interested experts are invited to submit application to ST4SD project at procurement@st4sd.vn and assist3@st4sd no later than 15 May 2026. Application documents include:

- (1) CV of applicant
- (2) Methodological approach to conduct the consultancy
- (3) Certificate of good completion of similar consultancies and experiences.
- (4) Financial proposal (with number of working day and proposed daily rate)

Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.