



PROJECT

Empowering ethnic minority women for improved management of Pu Luong Natural Reserve, Ba Thuoc and Quan Hoa districts, Thanh Hoa province

Term of Reference

Responsible Community-based Tourism National Expert

Post: Responsible Community based Tourism Development Expert

Working location: 5 communes (Pù Luông, Cỗ Lũng, Phú Lê, Phú Xuân, Hôi Xuân) of core/buffer zone of Pù Luong Natural Reserve, Thanh Hoá province (with regular travel to project villages)

Language: Vietnamese, English

Consultant fee and other profit: Based on terms and conditions in the consultant service contract

Duration: 8/2026-5/2028

1. Context and project introduction

Founded in 1976, GRET is an international development NGO, governed by French law, which acts from work on the ground all the way up influencing policy, with the aim of providing durable and innovative answers to the challenges of poverty and inequalities. GRET has been working in 28 countries with its headquarter in France and 13 local representation offices in the world. Presented in Vietnam since 1988 with a representative office in Hanoi, GRET has developed diversified forms of support and expertise in agriculture, civic issues and democracy, natural resource management, energy and waste management, etc.. During its long term growth in Vietnam, expertise of the technical assistants, the profound knowledge of socio-economic context and local regulations, capacity of coordination of projects, experience in publication of references have been GRET Vietnam's strengths. For further information, please go to www.gret.org.

The Puluong Nature Reserve (PLNR) is located in 5 mountainous communes of Pu Luong, Co Lung, Hoi Xuan, Phu Xuan Phu Le in Thanh Hoa province. It is home to a population of approximately 13,275 people, is also primarily inhabited by the Thai and Muong ethnic groups residing in 31 villages (8 in the core area and 23 in the buffer zone area). Having very limited agricultural land, about 70% and 30% of these ethnic minorities in the NR's core and buffer zone areas endure high poverty rates (according to 2023 statistics) and a majority of their income is derived from forest products, particularly for poor households (60%-80% of these households' income).

The forests of Pu Luong play a vital role in providing resources such as food, potable and agricultural water, handicrafts, pharmacopoeia, and cultural services for the local communities. As a result, illegal access to the forests in the protected areas continues as communities try to make a living and maintain traditional cultural values through the forests, despite the legal restrictions. One of the people's popular adaptation to make ends meet is for the men to work elsewhere, leaving the women behind to secure household subsistence. Outnumbering men in agro-forestry workforce (58%), women/female headed households from ethnic minorities tend to be the poorest and often rely more on natural resources. While men have greater opportunities for off-farm employment, women are more likely to remain at home, bearing traditional roles in securing household subsistence. The indigenous populations of the NR experience multifaceted challenges, encompassing socio-



economic disparities, environmental conservation concerns, and gender-based marginalization. Despite its critical ecological role in restoration and rich biodiversity protection, the Natural Reserve faces mounting economic and environmental pressures from surrounding socio-economic activities. Exacerbating these challenges and inequalities, ethnic minorities' women and girls are often greatly marginalized in their access to opportunities and resources due to gender and ethnicity-based norms and discriminations

The action of this new phase seeks to facilitate a social and institutional dynamic, where the local authorities and agency (particularly the communes, the villages and the Pu Luong Natural Reserve), communities and private sector will engage together in building institutional arrangements and social commitment around green and responsible tourism in and around the Pu Luong Natural Reserve (NR). To achieve this, a specific objective will be that Ethnic minority women are economically and socially empowered for an improved management and better sustainability of the Natural Reserve. Four outputs are designed to achieve this specific objective:

The project of “**Empowering ethnic minority women for improved management of Pu Luong Natural Reserve, Ba Thuoc and Quan Hoá districts, Thanh Hoa province**” (EMPOWERING) is implemented by Gret in partnership with its local partners, including commune People’s Committees, commune Women’s Unions of Co Lung, Pu Luong, Hoi Xuan, Phu Xuan and Phu Le communes, Pu Luong Natural Reserve Management Board and other stakeholders in the communes, funded by European Union (EU), ASTOM Corporate Foundation and IOF. The project seeks to facilitate a social and institutional dynamic, where the local authorities and agency (particularly the communes, the villages and the Pu Luong Natural Reserve), communities and private sector will engage together in building institutional arrangements and social commitment around green and responsible tourism in and around the Pu Luong Natural Reserve (NR). To achieve this, a specific objective will be that ethnic minority women are economically and socially empowered for an improved management and better sustainability of the Natural Reserve. Four components are designed to achieve this specific objective:

- i) **Mainstreaming biodiversity and climate change issues in the local tourism strategies:** pilot of local dialogues and comprehensive framework in the natural reserve that will integrate community based forest protection and livelihood activities and promote inclusive mechanisms;
- ii) **Enhanced women's economic activities related to sustainable development:** set-up of community-based tourism cooperation groups and value-chain cooperation groups, providing respectively services and non-forest products to the tourism sector.
- iii) **Strengthen capacities of ethnic minority women to promote better environmental and gender-responsive practices:** village-based pool of village educators and communication and awareness raising on gender equality, environmental protection and responsible tourism.
- iv) **Develop a Green Label certification system to promote responsible production and consumption in community-based tourism sector:** pilot of a Green Label certification for community-based tourism villages and in-the-village services and supporting policies at local level.

The project operates in the core and buffer zones of the Pu Luong Natural Reserve. While community-based tourism (CBT) and green value chains are expanding, a baseline evaluation revealed that gender equality, biodiversity conservation, and climate change considerations are not yet fully integrated into local public policies. Local livelihoods remain highly vulnerable, and communities frequently lack technical knowledge on sustainable harvesting or waste management. Traditional norms continue to restrict ethnic minority women's representation in policy-level decision-making and asset ownership.



2. Objective of the consultancy

A consultant will be hired to provide technical expertise in translating the project's strategic goals into field realities by focusing on 4 main interventions:

- Mainstreaming biodiversity and climate change adaptation (CCA) into local tourism strategies and municipal public policies via multi-stakeholder local dialogues.
- Enhancing women's economic activities through the creation of community-based tourism cooperation groups and sustainable agro-ecological value chains.
- Strengthening the capacity of ethnic minority women to champion responsible tourism, environmental protection, and gender-responsive community practices.
- Developing, piloting, and institutionalizing a "Green Label" certification system to promote sustainable consumption and production across local villages and homestays

3. Scope of the consultancy

In close collaboration with project partners, stakeholders, and other team members, the National Expert is expected to conduct, but not limited to, the following tasks:

3.1 Strategic planning & technical implementation

Provide expertise to:

- The strategic management and adjustment of the project's overall planning and implementation, as well as the development of its tools, methods, monitoring and reporting systems, providing technical advice for improvement and adaptation.
- Development of the project's CBT intervention strategies and related budget plans aligned with project goals and local socio-economic contexts.
- The management for all aspects of CBT interventions, in close cooperation with Project Manager/other project team members and partners, from planning to execution and prepare reports and other project documents, towards achievement of the project objectives and expected results, in particularly but not limited to:

Output 1: Biodiversity and climate change issues are mainstreamed in the local tourism strategies:

- *Op1 Act. 1.2 - Set up and operate multi-stakeholder platform for dialoguing and shared vision development to mainstream biodiversity/climate change issues into the local public tourist policies:* Provide and contribute technically to the identification, facilitation, and operation of multi-stakeholder platforms and their follow-up actions, in order to promote perspectives that support biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation and adaptation within tourism-related public policies ; Provide inputs integrating Gender and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) principles into the drafting of local plans and policies such as commune tourism development plan to 2030... Support evidence-based advocacy for integrating biodiversity and gender considerations into local tourism strategies. Ensure that issues identified through the project's interventions on responsible community-based tourism (CBT) and Green Label initiatives are effectively integrated into the platforms' discussions and local policy integration.
- *Op1 Act. 1.3 - Develop and pilot a model of gender sensitive and inclusive benefit sharing as starting point/means to mitigate restrictions on access rights to natural resources of the vulnerable local communities in and around the protected area:* Support the pilot of the model with Pu Luong Natural Reserve Management Board; Provide technical inputs and expertise



guidance on market opportunities, sustainable business practices, product development/improvements/marketing, and tourism-integration pathways to in process of development and implementation of benefit-sharing mechanisms.

Output 2: Targeted women are leading economic activities related to sustainable development

- *Op2 Act 2.2 - Develop agroecological value chain products targeting tourist market:* Support the development and upgrading of agro-ecological products and services linked to tourism (local food, NTFPs, craft, etc.), ensuring alignment with environmental standards and local cultural values.
- *Op2 Act 2.3 - CBT services and product development:* strengthen existing community-based tourism services and develop new ones with the local partners and women-led cooperation groups; design training curricula and facilitate training sessions on responsible tourism, hospitality management, guest experience, and business skills; Conduct/coordinate studies, review and assessment on CBT, responsible tourism (M&E).
- *Op2 Act 2.4 - Women-led value chains under benefit-sharing agreements :* Support the development of NTFPs under benefit-sharing agreements , linked with tourism; Ensure integration of biodiversity conservation, gender equality, and inclusive business practices.

Output 4: Green Label certification system is developed by the district authorities to promote responsible production and consumption in community-based tourism sector for sustainable enhancement of environmental values and biodiversity protection in the Natural Reserve :

- *Op4 Act 4.1–4.2 – Develop and pilot Green Label Certification System:* support local authorities in developing, piloting and institutionalizing the Green Label certification for CBT villages and tourism services; Contribute to feasibility studies, monitoring tools, and communication materials.
- *Op4 Act 4.3- Support to the local authorities in development of guidelines on tourism integrating responsible tourism aspects:* Lead and provide technical management for project interventions to support local authorities local authorities in development and dissemination of guidelines on tourism integrating responsible tourism aspects in a participatory and gender mainstreaming approach;

3.2 Field coordination and capacity building

- Provide expertise to :
 - ✓ Coordination with local Women’s Unions, Pu Luong NR Management Board, commune authorities, local CBT groups, private sectors, and other related stakeholders to plan, implement, and monitor CBT field activities.
 - ✓ Facilitation of multi-stakeholder platforms (commune and village levels) for dialogue on sustainable tourism, climate change, and biodiversity integration.
- Provide **training, mentoring, and coaching** for local partners, women-led CBT groups, local service providers on product quality, hospitality, marketing, and environmental management (e.g., waste reduction, low-carbon operations) in order to co-design, development and marketing of responsible CBT products effectively.
- Develop programme and act as facilitator in different events, workshops, meetings, trainings.. when needed
- Identify potential **private-sector partners (tour operators, travel agencies, booking platforms)** and promote market linkages between these actors and local CBT suppliers.

3.3 Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

- Provide expertise to:



- ✓ Developing and monitoring CBT-related indicators consistent with the project’s Logical Framework and M&E Plan.
- ✓ Designing and facilitating the implementation of M&E surveys to review and evaluate the performance of CBT interventions for a quality delivery of activity outputs towards achievement of project objectives, and using participatory methods to ensure communities are involved in the process.
- Conduct the baseline, midline, and endline assessments on CBT and responsible tourism.
- Document and disseminate case studies, success stories, and best practices from CBT interventions for internal learning and external communication.
- Support evidence-based advocacy for integrating biodiversity and gender considerations into local tourism strategies.
- Prepare and submit technical reports, field mission notes, training reports, and quarterly summaries on CBT progress and challenges as per assignment-based ToRs.

4. Key output and deliverables

Component	Deliverables
<p>Component 1: Biodiversity and climate change issues are mainstreamed in the local tourism strategies:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bi-annual platform workshop programs, agendas, technical synthesis briefs, etc. ✓ Evidence-based advocacy position papers/policy recommendations that channel field-level realities from the Green Label and CBT pilots directly into municipal tourist strategies.
<p>Component 2: Targeted women are leading economic activities related to sustainable development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Intervention strategy/planning papers for different CBT services targeted by the project ✓ Operating charters, organisational structures, responsible CBT product improvement/development plans, capacity building plans for targeted CBT women cooperation groups. ✓ Tailored training curricula, materials, guidelines, etc. covering hospitality management, guest experiences, responsible tourism... ✓ ..number of improved CBT products/services
<p>Component 4: Green Label certification system is developed by the district authorities to promote responsible production and consumption in community-based tourism sector for sustainable enhancement of environmental values and biodiversity protection in the Natural Reserve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Green Label development strategy paper ✓ Agendas, facilitation notes, reports... of related working sessions at different levels. ✓ The formal technical index, operational definitions, scoring thresholds, and participatory evaluation indicators, etc. for the “Green Label” certifications. ✓ Participatory Green village development plans for the certified pilot sites of 2 villages. ✓ Structured RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) assignment charts mapping out village-level environmental responsibilities and governance tasks. ✓ Tailored training curricula/materials/guidelines, etc. on/for Green Label adoption



Note: Detailed deliverables will be elaborated in assignment-based ToR towards achievement of the project objectives and targets and as per changes in political context of the project.

5. Consultant's and GRET's Role

5.1 Consultant's role

- Act as the lead technical engine driving the strategy development and execution of CBT, Green Label, and green value chain components.
- Maintain regular field presence across the 5 target communes (expected to be 12-16 working days/month on average).
- Ensure all field outputs adhere strictly to international sustainable tourism guidelines, EU compliance requirements, and local cultural norms.
- Submit monthly detailed assignment notes, mission summaries, and technical deliverables as per assignment-based ToRs directly to the Project Manager.

5.2 GRET's role

- Provide all foundational project documents, baseline studies, and logical frameworks to guide the consultant's work.
- Facilitate official institutional introductions and formal connections with district People's Committees, local Women's Unions, and the Pu Luong NR Management Board.
- Provide project administrative support, coordinate workshop venues, and supply field translation/assistance where needed.
- Perform timely technical reviews, quality verification, and official sign-offs on all submitted monthly deliverables.

6. Timing

The consultancy should be realised in the field between August 2026 and May 2028 (estimated: working days).

7. Qualifications, skills & experience

Required skills and experience

- Strong communication and interpersonal skills to effectively liaise with diverse stakeholders.
- Strong experience in sustainable tourism development, ecotourism, or CBT.
- Strong experience in value chain development.
- Ability to design and deliver trainings, conduct research, analyze data, and write reports.
- Strong experience in project management methodologies and tools.
- Experience working with communities, local governments, and the private sector.
- Background and experiences in tourism, business, economics, rural development or a related field.
- Minimum of 10 years of working experiences in tourism and/or community-based tourism.
- Understanding community-based forest protection or agriculture is an asset.
- Good interpersonal, planning, time management, coordination and problem-solving skills



- Ability to work independently and as a good player in a team.
- Willingness to travel and stay overnight in the project targeted villages.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Fluency in English and Vietnamese is required. Knowledge of Thai or Muong language is an asset.

8. Evaluation criteria

Evaluation of the technical proposal: The main criteria and scoring system are shown in the table below:

No.	Criteria	Highest score
1.	CBT & sustainable tourism experience	30
2.	Technical methodology & ToR alignment (including engagement of private sector)	25
3.	Green value chain & market-linkage capacity	20
4.	Field coordination, inclusive capacity building, & MEL	15
5.	Understanding of local and organisational context	10
	MAXIMUM TOTAL SCORE	100

Evaluation of the financial proposal: The lowest evaluated price receives a maximum financial score of 100. The formula for determining the financial score (F) of all financial proposals is as follows: $F = 100 * Co/C$, where “F” is the financial score, “Co” is the lowest price, and “C” is the price of the proposal under consideration.

Combined technical-financial evaluation: The total weighting of the consultancy evaluation score is: Technical 70% and financial 30%. The consultant with proposal of the highest combined score will be invited to negotiate the contract.

Interested candidates should email a proposal in English (using annexed templates) to Gret representative office at gret.vietnam@gret.org, cc to huongtran.vietnam@gret.org with the email title: ***Pu Luong CBT Expert*** + **Name of Candidate** by 5pm, July 27 2026.



PROPOSAL TEMPLATE FOR CONSULTING SERVICE

1. Understanding of the consultancy objective and scope of work

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2. Task description and core activities

...

3. Implementation methodology

STT	Task	Implementation methodology
1		
2		
....		

4. Implementation plan

No	Task /Activity	Number of person-days
1	task 1	
2	task 2	
...	...	
	TOTAL	

5. Deliverables

No	Task /Activity	Deliverable
1	task 1	



2	task 2	
	

6. Financial Proposal (VND)

1 Consultant Fees	Unit	Quantity	Unit price	Total amount
1.1	day	...		
1.2		
..				
Total (1)				
2. Perdiem				
2.1	day	...		
2.2		
..				
Total (2)				
3. Accommodation				
3.1	Night	...		
3.2		...		
...				
Total(3)				
4. Transportation				
4.1	Trip/day	...		
4.2		
...				
Total (4)				



5. Others				
5.1		...		
5.2		
Total(5)				
TOTAL CONSULTANCY BUDGET ((1) + (2) +(3) + (4) + (5))				

EXPERT CURRICULUM VITAE (CV) TEMPLATE

1. **Expert information:** *(Full Name, Date of Birth, Contact Details)*
2. **Educational background:** *(List college, university, or postgraduate degrees and other specialized training courses completed by the consultant. State the name of the institution, degree classification/type, and date awarded).*
3. **Language proficiency:** *(List languages spoken and evaluate the level of proficiency in Speaking / Reading / Writing).*
4. **Areas of expertise:** *(Provide a comprehensive overview of the consultant's professional capabilities and technical disciplines).*
5. **Prior experience with GRET** (if applicable): *(List consultancy assignments previously undertaken with GRET, including duration, position, and specific tasks assigned).*
6. **Evidence for the ToR assignment:** *(Reference previous positions/tasks that best demonstrate your capacity to perform the required duties, including duration, employer name, and responsibilities held).*
7. **Experience with NGOs, bilateral, and multilateral international organizations** (if applicable): *(Provide a list of organizations the consultant has previously worked with).*
8. **Relevant research and publications (if applicable):** *(List and briefly describe research papers, articles, or publications that best demonstrate your competence and fitness for this specific assignment).*