Terms of Reference (Draft)

Funding & Capital Ecosystem for Community-based Climate Resilience in Vietnam

1. Background

1.1. About Plan International Vietnam

Plan International Viet Nam is part of Plan International, an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. Working in Viet Nam since 1993, Plan International Viet Nam partners with children, young people, communities, civil society and government agencies to address the root causes of inequality and support children, especially girls and young women, to learn, lead, decide and thrive. Our work focuses on inclusive social services, gender equality, youth economic empowerment, climate and disaster resilience, and meaningful participation of children and young people. By 2027, we aim to support 2 million girls in Vietnam to learn, lead, make informed decisions, and thrive, through strengthened inclusive social services, enhanced disaster and climate resilience, and increased economic empowerment.

1.2. Background to the Assignment

Community-based climate resilience programmes (CBCR) in Vietnam are increasingly expected to demonstrate sustainability beyond the lifetime of individual projects. Over the past decade, significant investments from development partners, government programmes, civil society organisations and communities have supported locally led initiatives in areas such as climate adaptation, resilient livelihoods, school safety, community infrastructure, participatory planning and institutional strengthening. Many of these interventions have generated valuable outcomes and local capacities.

As programmes enter their phase-out stages, discussions on sustainability often focus on questions such as whether activities will continue, whether local actors will maintain results, and whether additional funding can be secured. While these questions remain important, recent reflections from programme implementation suggest that sustainability can no longer be understood solely through the continuation of project activities.

At the same time, the broader ecosystem surrounding social impact and climate resilience in Vietnam is changing rapidly. Traditional grant-based development cooperation remains essential, particularly for public goods, rights-based work and support for vulnerable communities. However, it increasingly co-exists with other forms of capital and partnership, including climate finance, philanthropic funding, corporate sustainability initiatives, ESG-related investment, domestic green finance, blended finance mechanisms and government financing programmes.

These different actors do not necessarily pursue the same objectives, use the same language or apply the same decision criteria. Government agencies may prioritise public value and policy mandates; climate finance actors may focus on measurable resilience outcomes; philanthropic organisations may emphasise equity and innovation; businesses may look for operational relevance, risk reduction or long-term competitiveness. As a result, development practitioners are increasingly operating within a more diverse and more complex than the traditional funding landscape.

For programmes approaching completion, this creates a practical learning challenge. Before exploring how specific community-based models might connect to future partnerships or financing pathways, it is first necessary to develop a clearer understanding of the ecosystem itself. This assignment therefore focuses specifically on developing a Funding & Capital Ecosystem Analysis relevant to community-based climate resilience in Vietnam. Rather than identifying potential donors or funding opportunities for specific projects, the assignment seeks to answer a more fundamental questions: **"How is the ecosystem surrounding community-based climate resilience changing, and what does this mean for programmes approaching sustainability and phase-out?**".

By developing a shared understanding of the evolving funding and capital landscape, the programme seeks to establish a common strategic foundation for future discussions on sustainability, partnership development and resource mobilization. Rather than starting with individual programme models, this learning exercise intentionally begins by understanding the broader funding and capital ecosystem operating within that changing landscape. Findings from this assignment will provide a common evidence base for programme staff, partners and other stakeholders. They will also inform a subsequent phase of programme learning that will explore the types of assets created through community-based interventions and how these assets may connect with future sustainability and resource mobilization pathways.

2. Objectives

Objective 1. Map the evolving funding and capital ecosystem for community-based climate resilience in Vietnam: The assignment will map the funding and capital ecosystem in order to develop a systems-level understanding of how different forms of capital interact within Vietnam's changing development finance landscape. Rather than compiling a directory of donors or financing mechanisms, the mapping should explain the major categories of capital currently supporting community-based climate resilience; the different institutional actors involved; the relationships and interactions among these actors; the distinct roles and purposes served by different forms of capital; and the broader trends reshaping the ecosystem over the coming five to ten years. The mapping should encourage a shift from a donor-centric understanding of resource mobilization towards a system perspective on how different forms of capital contribute to community-based climate resilience.

Objective 2. Understand the different decision logics that shape funding and investment decisions: Analyse how different actors within the ecosystem make decisions, including the types of value they seek to create, the outcomes they prioritise, and the criteria they apply when allocating resources. Rather than focusing solely on financial instruments, the assignment should explore questions such as:

- What kinds of social, environmental or institutional value are different actors seeking?
- Which types of interventions are considered suitable for different forms of capital?
- Under what conditions are certain interventions more likely to attract public funding, philanthropic support, climate finance, corporate partnerships or commercial investment?
- Which types of interventions are likely to remain dependent on grant financing because of their public-good characteristics?

The objective is not to categorise interventions as "fundable" or "non-fundable", but to better understand how different forms of capital recognise different forms of value.

Objective 3. Generate practical insights for programme sustainability and future partnership development: Translate ecosystem analysis into practical insights that can support programme reflection during its phase-out period. This includes identifying: emerging opportunities for collaboration with new actors; implications of ecosystem changes for community-based climate resilience programmes; potential partnership pathways beyond traditional donor funding; strategic considerations for future resource mobilisation discussions; and priority questions requiring further exploration during the next phase of the programme's learning journey.

The assignment is expected to generate practical insights rather than strategic recommendations, providing an evidence base for future dialogue among programme partners and other stakeholders.

3. Key Learning Questions

The assignment is expected to address, but not necessarily be limited to, the following strategic learning questions.

Theme 1. Understanding the ecosystem

How is the funding and capital ecosystem for climate resilience evolving in Vietnam?

The assignment should explore questions such as:

- What are the major categories of funding and capital currently supporting climate resilience in Vietnam?
- Which actors constitute this ecosystem (e.g. bilateral donors, multilateral funds, government financing, philanthropic foundations, corporate sustainability, impact investment, commercial finance)?
- How do these actors relate to one another?
- What new actors or financing mechanisms are emerging?
- What important trends are likely to shape the ecosystem over the next 5–10 years?

Theme 2. Capital Logics and Financing Approaches

How do different forms of capital make decision, and what kinds of development outcomes do they typically support?

Rather than simply describing funding sources, the assignment should examine the institutional logic behind different types of capital.
For example:

- What kinds of outcomes, value or benefits (financial, reputational, strategic…) does each type of capital seek?
- What criteria influence funding or investment decisions?
- What levels of financial, implementation or political risk are considered acceptable?
- What time horizons do different actors typically operate within?
- What kinds of evidence, narratives, and proof points are increasingly valued by different forms of capital?
- Which development outcomes are typically supported by different forms of capital?
- Under what circumstances do different forms of capital collaborate?

Theme 3. Emerging transitions

How is the funding and capital ecosystem evolving?

Particular attention should be given to financing mechanisms that are increasingly relevant to community-based climate resilience, including adaptation finance, locally led adaptation, nature-based solutions, resilience financing and other emerging approaches.
The assignment should analyse:

- How is ODA evolving globally and within Vietnam?
- How are climate finance, ESG, corporate sustainability and philanthropic funding influencing the ecosystem?
- What changes are occurring in donor expectations regarding sustainability, localisation and partnership?

Theme 4. Implications for community-based climate resilience programmes

Based on the ecosystem analysis, what strategic implications emerge for community-based climate resilience programmes. The assignment should consider questions such as:

- What opportunities does the changing funding ecosystem create for community-based climate resilience programmes?
- What challenges are likely to become more significant over the coming years?
- Which types of programme outcomes appear to remain primarily dependent on grant or public financing?
- Which emerging financing trends are most relevant for programmes working on community resilience?
- What strategic questions should programme teams consider during sustainability planning and future partnership development?

Theme 5. Emerging Functions within the Development Ecosystem

Without developing organisational recommendations, the assignment should provide initial reflections on broader questions such as:

- What capabilities are becoming increasingly important for development organisations operating within a more diverse funding ecosystem?
- What kinds of partnerships are becoming more common?
- What emerging intermediary functions can be observed across the sector?

4. Deliverables

The Consultant/Consulting Team is expected to produce the following deliverables.

Deliverable 1. Inception Note (5–10 pages)

The Inception Note should demonstrate the Consultant's understanding of the assignment and propose a clear analytical approach.

At a minimum, it should include: understanding of the assignment objectives; proposed analytical framework; methodology; literature review strategy; stakeholder mapping and interview plan; proposed structure of the final report; workplan and timeline.

Expected submission: Within one week after contract signing.

Deliverable 2. Funding & Capital Ecosystem Mapping Report (40–60 pages, excluding annexes)

This will be the principal knowledge product of the assignment. The report is expected to synthesise evidence from literature review, stakeholder interviews and ecosystem analysis. The report should focus on explaining **how the ecosystem works**, rather than compiling a directory of funding sources.

Where appropriate, the analysis should draw on illustrative examples from Vietnam or the region to demonstrate emerging funding models or financing approaches. These examples are intended to illustrate broader patterns rather than serve as standalone case studies.

Deliverable 3. Funding & Capital Ecosystem Map

The Consultant shall develop one visual ecosystem map that clearly illustrates: major categories of capital; key institutional actors; relationships between different parts of the ecosystem; indicative funding flows; emerging trends and areas of convergence.

The visual should be suitable for presentation during workshops and strategic discussions. Both editable and high-resolution versions should be provided. The Consultant is encouraged to propose creative visualisation approaches rather than conventional stakeholder diagrams.

Deliverable 4. Capital Logic Matrix

The Consultant shall develop one matrix providing information of capital logics, covering several aspects named in the following table, it could be expanded, covering the collected information, for instance, risk tolerance, evidence preference and others if relevant. For example:

No	Type of capital	Primary objective	Typical decision logic	Preferred outcomes	Risk tolerance	Typical financing instrument	Examples in Vietnam

Deliverable 5. Executive Summary (8–10 pages)

A concise summary highlighting: key findings, major ecosystem trends, practical implications, strategic questions emerging from the analysis.

The Executive Summary should be written as a standalone document for senior management and external partners.

Deliverable 6. Presentation Materials

The Consultant shall prepare presentation materials to facilitate dissemination and discussion of findings. Deliverables should include:

- PowerPoint presentation (20–30 slides)
- visual graphics extracted from the report

The presentation should be suitable for use in a multi-stakeholder learning workshop.

Language of deliverables:

- Deliverable 1, 2, 3, 4, 5: English
- Deliverable 6: English and Vietnamese

5. Consultant Qualifications and Team Composition

Eligible Applicants

The assignment may be undertaken by:

- a consulting firm;
- a research institute or think tank;
- a consortium of independent consultants; or
- another multidisciplinary team with demonstrated experience relevant to the assignment.

Applicants are encouraged to form teams that combine complementary expertise rather than relying on a single discipline.

Desired Team Composition: The assignment is expected to be undertaken by a multidisciplinary team of 3–5 consultants, bringing together expertise across development finance, public policy, research, and systems analysis. While applicants may propose alternative team structures, the following expertise is expected to be represented.

Team Leader / Lead Researcher

The Team Leader will be responsible for the overall quality of the assignment, analytical coherence, client engagement and delivery of all outputs. The Team Leader should demonstrate:

- Advanced knowledge of international development and the social impact ecosystem;
- Strong understanding of development cooperation, public policy or development finance;
- Proven experience leading analytical studies, policy research or strategic reviews;
- Excellent analytical writing and synthesis skills;
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate strategic discussions with senior stakeholders.

- Experience working in Vietnam is highly desirable.

Development Finance / Social Finance Specialist: The team should include expertise in the evolving funding and financing landscape for social impact. The specialist should demonstrate familiarity with topics such as: development cooperation, philanthropic funding, climate finance, blended finance, impact investing, ESG and corporate sustainability, domestic financing mechanisms.
The purpose is not to provide technical financial modelling, but to help explain how different forms of capital operate and the institutional logic behind them.

Vietnam Development Policy / Civil Society Specialist
The team should include a consultant with strong knowledge of Vietnam's development context. Relevant experience may include:

- development policy;
- localisation;
- civil society;
- community-based development;
- climate resilience;
- governance;
- public administration;
- social development programmes.

This expertise is expected to ensure that ecosystem analysis is grounded in Vietnam's institutional realities rather than relying solely on global trends.

Team Competencies
Beyond technical expertise, the programme is looking for a team that demonstrates the following competencies:

- **Analytical thinking:** Ability to identify patterns, connect different sources of evidence, and explain complex systems clearly.
- **Systems perspective:** Ability to understand relationships between institutions, funding mechanisms and broader development trends, rather than analysing actors in isolation.
- **Curiosity and learning orientation:** Ability to approach the assignment as a strategic learning exercise rather than a conventional market scan. Applicants should demonstrate openness to exploring emerging questions rather than applying predetermined frameworks.
- **Strong communication skills:** Ability to communicate complex ideas clearly through written reports, visual products and facilitated discussions.
- **Facilitation:** Experience facilitating discussions among diverse stakeholders including development partners, government agencies, civil society organisations and private sector actors.
- **Context sensitivity:** Ability to interpret international trends within Vietnam's specific policy, institutional and development context.
- **Demonstrated Experience:** Applicants should provide evidence of previous work relevant to this assignment.

Advantageous Experience

The following experience would be considered an advantage:

- work across more than one sector (public, development, philanthropy, private sector);
- experience in Southeast Asia;
- understanding of climate resilience and community-based development;
- experience engaging with both development partners and domestic actors;
- publication of analytical papers, policy briefs or strategic studies.

6. Indicative Level of Effort and Budget

The assignment is expected to be completed over a period of approximately **3 months**, with an estimated total input of **45–55 professional person-days**.

Applicants are encouraged to propose an appropriate mix of senior and junior expertise to achieve the objectives within the available budget.

The proposed level of effort should demonstrate sufficient time allocation for:

Activity	**Indicative Person-days**
Inception and methodology refinement	3
Literature review and evidence synthesis	10
Stakeholder mapping and interview preparation	3
Stakeholder consultations (15–20 interviews) (*Interviews should include representatives from the major categories of actors within the funding and capital ecosystem. Such categories may include: bilateral and multilateral development partners, government financing institutions, philanthropic organisations, climate finance actors, private sector sustainability initiatives, impact investment or social finance organisations, research institutions and intermediary organisations).*	12
Data analysis and ecosystem mapping	8
Draft report preparation	7
Validation workshop and revisions	5
Final report and presentation materials	4
Total	**52 person-days**

7. Indicative Budget

The available budget for this assignment is **up to VND 250 million**, inclusive of professional fees, travel, communication costs, report production and all applicable taxes. Applicants are requested to submit a detailed financial proposal demonstrating value for money and an efficient allocation of resources. The financial proposal should clearly indicate:

- professional fees by team member;
- estimated level of effort (person-days);

- travel and fieldwork costs (if applicable);

Payment Schedule (suggested)

Milestone	Payment
Approved Inception Note	20%
Submission of Draft Report, Ecosystem Map & Capital Logic Matrix	40%
Final Report, Executive Summary, Presentation and all editable files accepted	40%

The assignment places greater emphasis on the quality of analysis, synthesis and strategic insight than on the volume of data collected. Applicants are therefore encouraged to propose a methodology that is proportionate to the scope, timeline and budget available.

8. Application

Applicants should submit

- Technical Proposal: includes, but not limited to, Consultants' understanding of the assignment and the strategic questions it seeks to explore, proposed analytical framework and methodology, proposed consultation approach, workplan and timeline, team composition and division of responsibilities
- Financial Proposal
- CVs of proposed team members
- Two examples of relevant analytical reports or knowledge products

Interested applicants are requested to submit their application electronically to Huyen.DoanThi@plan-international.org by 17h00 on 15 August 2026.