TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title: ESG Tool Development & Capacity Building Consultancy (SustainCoffee)

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

Duration: Nov 2026 – May 2027

Reporting to: 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, who dominate the supply chain, to meet.

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

Overall Objective: 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 : 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.

Rationale and Purpose

This consultancy directly contributes to **Specific Objective 1** of the project with a particular focus on **Output 1.1** and **Output 1.2**.

Despite growing international and domestic pressure to adopt ESG practices, Vietnamese coffee MSMEs continue to lack access to practical, sector-specific tools and structured learning opportunities to build their ESG competency. No standardized ESG self-assessment tool currently exists for the Vietnamese coffee sector, and capacity-building efforts to date have been fragmented and insufficiently tailored to the operational realities of MSMEs and their representative associations.

Early findings from the project's ongoing baseline research suggest that enterprises' exposure to EU market requirements depends less on their formal position in the value chain and more on how their specific buyer relationships are structured. The tool should therefore be designed to capture this variation within each of the three tool versions, rather than assuming uniform exposure or readiness across enterprises sharing the same supply chain role.

To address these gaps, CARE International in Vietnam seeks to engage a qualified consultant team to design and develop contextualized ESG self-assessment tools for Vietnamese coffee enterprises and MSMEs. These will form the foundation upon which enterprises can identify their ESG baseline, prioritize areas for improvement, and take informed action toward greater sustainability and regulatory compliance. To consolidate these gains, the consultancy will further provide advisory and monitoring support to guide selected enterprises in developing concrete ESG action plans—ensuring that awareness and knowledge are translated into measurable, enterprise-level change.

We invite qualified individuals or firms to submit proposals for a comprehensive consultancy assignment covering the following three workstreams:

- Workstream 1: Development of an ESG Self-Assessment Tool for Vietnamese coffee enterprises and MSMEs;
- Workstream 2: ESG Capacity Building for business associations and MSME members; and
- Workstream 3: Conduct a baseline report on ESG awareness and adoption of coffee MSMEs. The report will be based primarily on the anonymized, aggregated results of the ESG self-

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assessments conducted.

The three workstreams are closely interrelated and will be implemented in a coordinated, phased manner. Applicants are expected to demonstrate capacity across all three workstreams, or clearly propose a team composition that collectively covers the required expertise.

Key Objectives

The consultancy assignment has the following key objectives, corresponding to the three workstreams:

1. Workstream 1: ESG Self-Assessment Tool Development

Design a practical, self-administered ESG self-assessment tool for Vietnamese coffee enterprises and MSMEs, aligned with sector certification standards (Rainforest Alliance, 4C, Fairtrade) and EUDR/CSDDD requirements.

2. Workstream 2: ESG Capacity Building, Advisory & Monitoring Support

Build the capacity of business associations and MSMEs to apply the tool, translate results into ESG action plans, and monitor implementation progress.

3. Workstream 3: Baseline Report

Document the current state of ESG awareness and adoption among coffee-sector MSMEs, based on aggregated self-assessment results.

Scope of Work and Key Deliverables

1 Workstream 1: ESG Self-Assessment Tool Development

- Conduct a desk review of existing ESG assessment frameworks, national policies, and sector-specific requirements relevant to the Vietnamese coffee sector;
- Undertake consultations with key stakeholders, including coffee associations, selected enterprises and MSMEs, and ESG experts, to inform tool design; Validate and refine the segment-specific value proposition for adopting ESG practices (e.g. price premiums and cost/risk reduction for farming/production actors, supply continuity for processors, market access retention for exporters/aggregators) through stakeholder consultation, and ensure this is reflected in how indicators and outputs are framed for each tool version.
- Develop the ESG self-assessment tool in both Vietnamese, covering all three ESG pillars with scoring criteria, indicators, and benchmarks contextualized to the coffee value chain, including indicators on export market readiness and access to green finance (e.g. eligibility criteria commonly used by green credit/sustainability-linked lending programs) and aligned to international standards. The toolkits should include three versions tailored for:
    1. Farming/production MSMEs and cooperatives
    2. Processing MSME
    3. Exporters and aggregators
- Within each tool version, include a short self-screening module (5–8 questions) so any enterprise — including first-time users — can quickly locate itself by (i) level of buyer/market requirement exposure and (ii) current readiness, and receive appropriately scoped follow-up questions and recommendations;
- Coordinate and lead pilot testing of the tool with at least 15 enterprises (5 per version)
- Revise and finalize the tool based on pilot feedback;

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- Develop a user manual and facilitation guide for targeted end-users to independently administer the tool.

2 Workstream 2: ESG Capacity Building, Advisory & Monitoring Support

- Design a modular capacity-building curriculum covering but not limited to: ESG fundamentals and the business case for sustainable coffee; EUDR and CSDDD compliance requirements and implications for Vietnamese exporters; environmental management in coffee production; social standards and labor rights along the coffee value chain; governance, traceability, and transparency; and ESG reporting and communication to buyers and certification bodies;
- Develop training materials, facilitation guides, pre and post test, and participant workbooks;
- Deliver 02 ESG Training of trainers trainings and 01 training for MSMEs and members, as appropriate. The consultant(s) will be in charge of technical aspects while the logistic arrangement will be supported by the project team.
- Provide advisory sessions to selected coffee enterprises to support the development of tailored ESG action plans based on self-assessment results;
  Design a practical monitoring framework (including KPIs, measurement method, tools, verification mechanisms aligned with certification body requirements to track ESG implementation progress and results at enterprise level. Reporting templates is also an output for monitoring package.

3. Workstream 3: Baseline report

- Develop a baseline report on the current state of ESG awareness and adoption among coffee-sector MSMEs. The report will be based primarily on the anonymized, aggregated results of the ESG self-assessments conducted in Workstream 1, 2, and existing secondary sources.

Workstream	Key deliverables	No of working day	Timeline
Workstream 1: ESG Self-Assessment Tool Development (Act 1.2.1)	• 03 toolkits including: Modular checklists, good **practices** examples, step by step guidance • 01 field test report	20	Dec 2026
Workstream 2: ESG Capacity Building (Act 1.2.1; 1.2.2; 1.2.3)	• Training packages (pre and post test, facilitation materials) • Training reports • Package of monitoring (Monitoring framework and report template) to track ESG implementation progress	20	Jan – March 2027
Workstream 3: Develop a baseline report on ESG awareness and adoption of coffee MSMEs (Act 1.2.3)	• 01 report on ESG performance	10	Apr-May 2027

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Selection Criteria

	Selection criteria	Description / scoring guidance
1	Experience	▪ At least 10 years of experience in development of programming, capacity building, or sustainable business development. ▪ Expertise in areas including sustainable development, ESG, MSMEs, green finance, coffee supply chain, and international certification processes. ▪ Demonstrated experience in developing assessment tools, training curricula, or monitoring frameworks in a development context. ▪ Strong understanding of Vietnam's policy and institutional context related to green growth, sustainable agriculture, MSMEs, and export sector, including familiarity with EUDR and CSDDD requirements.
2	Qualification	▪ Relevant postgraduate qualifications in ESG, sustainability, business management, environmental science, development studies, or related field
3	Technical skills	▪ Assessment tool development, training design and facilitation, advisory support, stakeholder consultations (ranging from national-level to local-level stakeholders), and report writing. ▪ Ability to work autonomously and demonstrated skills in managing multi-workstream consultancy assignments.
4	Language	▪ Excellent command of both Vietnamese and English (writing and speaking).
5	References	▪ A minimum of two referee contacts who have managed the proposed consultant previously.

Application procedure:

Interested firms, consortia, or individual consultants should submit the following documents in English/Vietnamese to email: **procurement@care.org.vn**, clearly stating *"ESG Tool Development – SustainCoffee"* in the subject line, before 17h00 of 15th Oct 2026.

Mandatory requirements:

1. **Technical Proposal (max. 8 pages):**
   - Understanding of the assignment and the Vietnamese coffee sector ESG context
   - Proposed methodology and approach for each workstream (tool development, capacity building, baseline)
   - Proposed work plan aligned with TOR requirements and tentative timeframe
   - Team arrangement clearly indicating each team member's roles and responsibilities
2. **Financial Proposal (inclusive of all taxes and costs)**
3. **CVs or team bios demonstrating relevant experience; Evidence of relevant experience in similar assignments (preferably with NGOs/INGOs or donor-funded projects).**
4. **At least 01 sample of previous relevant work**

Other requirements:

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- ✓ **List of regular clients/customers of the company:** including full client name, address and contact person
- ✓ **Business Registration Certificate/Business License** :
  - Business Registration Certificate / Business License (for consulting firms only)
  - Copy of National ID Card / Citizen ID (for individual consultants or members of a consortium)
- ✓ **Conflict of interest and IP disclosure statement:** Applicants must disclose any current or prior engagement in the design, development, or delivery of ESG self-assessment tools, or similar instruments for other organizations in Viet Nam's coffee sector, including the nature of that engagement and any confidentiality or intellectual property obligations owed to the other organization. Applicants must confirm in writing that no proprietary content owned by a third party will be reproduced, adapted, or otherwise incorporated into the deliverables of this consultancy without prior written consent from the rights holder.

Evaluation criteria for selection:

Criteria/bidder	Description	Standard Score	Clarification
Technical proposal		**80%**	
Understand TOR	Demonstrated understanding of the assignment's objectives, scope, and context, including the regulatory drivers (EUDR/CSDDD and coffee certification standards), the interrelation between the three workstreams, and the distinct realities of Vietnamese coffee MSMEs, cooperatives, and business associations.	1	Any proposals less than 7 out of 10 in the technical proposal will not be considered
Technical proposal	Soundness, relevance, and feasibility of the proposed methodology for each workstream, including the approach to contextualizing ESG indicators to the coffee value chain, validating segment-specific value propositions through stakeholder consultation, designing the self-screening module, and ensuring the tool remains usable by first-time and public users beyond the project's direct beneficiaries.	4	
Consultant team	Relevant qualifications, experience, and composition of the proposed team, including demonstrated expertise in ESG self-assessment tool design, EUDR/CSDDD compliance, coffee sector value chains and certification standards (Rainforest Alliance, 4C, Fairtrade), and training/capacity-building design, with clear allocation of roles and responsibilities across the team.	3	

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Work Plan	Realism and coherence of the proposed timeline, including sequencing of activities across the three workstreams, allocation of working days to each deliverable, and consistency with the overall contract duration.	1	
References	Relevance and quality of similar assignments previously delivered, particularly involving ESG tool development, coffee/agricultural value chains, or capacity building, supported by credible referee contacts.	1	
Financial proposal	Reasonableness, completeness, and value for money of the financial proposal, including a clear breakdown of the number of days and daily rate for each team member.	**20%**	

Copyright and intellectual property rights:

All ESG self-assessment tools, methodologies, and guidance documents are intellectual property of CARE International in Vietnam. The Consultant shall not publish, disclose, or use any project output or confidential data outside this assignment without prior written consent from CARE. All outputs must comply with EU visibility requirements.

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.

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