Call for quotes: Feasibility study of transitioning toward large-scale potassium-enriched low-sodium salt production in Viet Nam

Implementation duration: [Contract signing date] – 30 June 2027

Reporting to: Alive & Thrive, FHI 360

Background

Viet Nam's average sodium intake is approximately twice the recommended level. Around 80% of this sodium comes from discretionary sources added during cooking or at the table, such as mixed seasonings, fish sauce, monosodium glutamate, and salt. Excess sodium consumption is a major contributor to hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

Potassium-enriched low-sodium salt substitutes (LSSS) offer a practical, evidence-based, and cost-effective approach to reducing sodium intake and blood pressure, while remaining acceptable to consumers. Despite this, the availability and use of LSSS in Viet Nam remain very limited. Key barriers include higher costs, limited domestic production and supply, low consumer awareness, unclear regulatory requirements, and insufficient incentives for producers and food manufacturers to invest in healthier salt alternatives.

Alive & Thrive (A&T) is an initiative to save lives, prevent illness, and ensure healthy growth and development. From 2009 to 2014, A&T demonstrated that rapid improvements in infant and young child feeding (IYCF) are possible in settings as diverse as Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Viet Nam. In 2014, A&T began working in Burkina Faso, India, Nigeria and throughout the Southeast Asia region, expanding its scope to include maternal and adolescent nutrition, and using agriculture and social protection programs as delivery mechanisms for maternal, infant and young child nutrition (MIYCN). Since 2025, Alive & Thrive (A&T) has been working with relevant government agencies and research institutes in Vietnam to advance research and communication on LSSS.

Evidence on whether and how Viet Nam can produce LSSS at scale is currently lacking. To address this gap, Alive & Thrive seeks to commission a feasibility study on transitioning toward large-scale production of potassium-enriched low-sodium salt in Viet Nam. The study will assess production capacity, supply chains, climate resilience, policy and regulatory requirements, and relevant technical standards. Th**is** study will establish the evidence needed to support large-scale production, identify the required policy, regulatory and technical reforms, and build consensus around practical measures to increase the availability, affordability and uptake of LSSS nationwide.

Objectives

The objective of this project is to generate evidence, policy recommendations, and stakeholder consensus needed to enable large-scale production and uptake of LSSS in Vietnam in 2026 – 2027.

Specific objectives;

1. Assess Viet Nam's capacity to transition toward large-scale, climate-resilient and gender-inclusive LSSS production for domestic consumption and export, covering production capacity, raw material supply, technology, supply chains and market potential.

2. Identify the policy measures and incentives needed to enable salt producers and enterprises to shift toward large-scale, climate-resilient LSSS production.
3. Identify the national standards and technical regulations needed for LSSS.

Scope and methodology

The vendor will use a mixed-methods design combining desk review, quantitative surveys, and in-depth interviews (IDIs). The vendor will propose and justify the sampling strategy, sample sizes and analysis methods in its technical proposal.

- Study design and inception: Develop the study protocol, sampling strategy, data collection tools, and quality assurance and ethics procedures; agree the approach with A&T, relevant government focal points, and research partners before fieldwork.
- Desk review: Review national policies, standards, salt sector statistics, and the MAE national salt survey data.
- Stakeholder engagement and approvals: Coordinate with national and local authorities and institutions to access and collect data, arrange interviews and fieldwork, and obtain administrative and ethical approvals, including informed consent and safeguarding procedures.
- Data collection: Conduct quantitative surveys and IDIs in selected provinces representing the main salt-producing regions and production models, plus major processing and distribution hubs. Target groups include:

- local government officials in charge of agriculture, trade, health and food safety at commune/ward and provincial levels;
- leaders or authorized representatives of industry associations, cooperatives and enterprises that produce, process, import or distribute salt and seasonings;
- scientists, policy experts and researchers in food technology, nutrition and salt value chain management at relevant departments and institutes under MOH and MAE

- Data analysis: Analyze quantitative survey data and IDI data, and triangulate findings by research question
- Policy brief and recommendations: Translate findings into a policy brief and specific recommendations
- Policy advocacy workshop: Organize a national policy advocacy workshop with MAE, MOH, industry, and experts to present findings, discuss recommendations, and develop a consensus statement on scaling up LSSS.

Required qualifications

- A registered firm or research institute with strong experience in food systems, agricultural value chains, or public health policy research in Viet Nam, or a related field.
- A team leader with a postgraduate degree in public health, nutrition, food science, agriculture, or a related field.
- Team expertise in salt processing, refining, food ingredient blending, and quality control.
- Knowledge of Vietnamese legal drafting and food standards (TCVN/QCVN, Codex), and experience contributing to decrees or circulars.

- Demonstrated experience compiling national administrative and policy data, and conducting research with government officials, enterprises, producers and technical experts.
- Proven working relationships with MAE, MOH and provincial authorities; experience with salt-related programs is a strong advantage.

Proposal contents

- Technical proposal
- Financial proposal (in VND, inclusive of all taxes and fees)
- CVs of key team members, including the team leader; legal registration documents of the firm or institute

Submission

Submit the technical and financial proposals by email to procurementvietnam@fhi360.org with the subject line "A&T– LSSS feasibility study" no later than **November 9, 2026**. FHI 360 reserves the right to accept or reject any quotation and to negotiate with shortlisted applicants.

All bidders interested in this Request for Proposal (RFP) are required to comply with FHI 360's Safeguarding Policy (details available at https://www.fhi360.org/ethicssafeguarding/#our-policies-and-supplementalguidance). FHI 360 reserves the right to terminate any contract immediately with any individual, organization, or entity found to be in violation of this policy.

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- FHI 360 may choose to award only part of the activities in the solicitation, or issue multiple awards based on the solicitation activities
- FHI 360 reserves the right to waive minor proposal deficiencies that can be corrected prior to award determination to promote competition
- FHI 360's supplier terms and conditions can be found here while our consultant terms and conditions can be found here