

Terms of Reference

Consultancy for facilitating a training workshop on basic business, marketing skills and contract negotiation skills for farmers in the Mekong River Delta

1. Introduction

Helvetas, the Swiss Association for International Cooperation, has started a five-year programme to develop Organic and Fair-Trade Cocoa in Vietnam. The program aims to increase the living standard of the rural population in the southern regions of Vietnam via improved social, economic and environmental conditions related to agriculture. This project will be coordinated by Helvetas and implemented by three project partners: the Nong Lam University, Ben Tre Province's Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and Tien Giang Province's Department of Science and Technology (DOST). The primary target groups for the project are the small-scale farmers in the two selected provinces. At least 2000 farmers will directly benefit from the project through their participation in the training organized by the project and via involvement in the farmer networks to be developed by the program and supported to obtain organic and fair-trade certifications. If successful, the program will have the ability to reach some 10,000 additional farmers in a follow up phase.

Started in 2009, the program has attained encouraging results. After one year of conversion, organic cocoa has been proven technically feasible under the local context. Farmers are able to apply recommended organic cocoa farming techniques such as composting and using ants to control cocoa mirids instead of using agrochemicals. As a result, starting with 22 demonstration farmers in June 2009, there are now 154 local cocoa farmers converting to organic cocoa and the number of converting farmers are expected to increase over time once local farmers are convinced of the cost effectiveness associated with organic cocoa. In fact, it usually takes time for local farmers to test and learn newly introduced farming technologies and therefore, it would be desirable to promote organic agriculture to a local area gradually, at least during the first few years. The international experience also shows the likelihood of organic production success will be greater if farmers are highly motivated, particularly by health and environmental concerns in addition to the economic advantages.

For the organic cocoa to be recognized in the international market, the cocoa produced in the program area must be certified by internationally recognized organizations. This is because certification gives the buyers the confidence that an organic product has been produced and processed in accordance to the organic requirements and standards. Moreover, since farmers in the Mekong Delta are small scale farmers, the farmers need to group themselves as clubs for group certification because group certification will reduce the cost of certification per farmer. Also, from the marketing perspective, local farmers need to form their associations because marketing of organic products through farmer organizations with direct contacts with buyers is a key to obtaining better prices.

However, in the Mekong River Delta, individual cocoa farmers as well as their organizations have limited capacities in business start-up and management, marketing

and contract negotiation. The international experience indicates that capacity-building at the farmer level (local farmers associations, local training and advisory services) should be a central aspect of any strategy aimed at using organic agriculture as a tool for poverty alleviation. Therefore, for the sustainability of the program intervention, Helvetas plans to enable individual farmers and their organizations to build up their capacities in business start-up and management, marketing and contract negotiation to ensure that farmer groups are able to efficiently manage their business and have sufficient bargaining power in negotiating with buyers during the program life and long afterwards.

2. Objective of the mission

The overall objective of the mission is to improve knowledge and skills of individual farmers and their organizations in relation to business start-up and management, marketing and contract negotiation. Specifically speaking, after the training, the participants will be able to:

- explain and apply the basic concepts of business start-up and management (eg. business idea selection, potential market identification, price setting, much needed investment estimation, staffing and business plan formulation)
- describe essential elements of, and develop the marketing strategies that are suited for cocoa trading in the local context
- explain basic requirements of, and prepare trading contracts with cocoa buyers (eg. tasks and duties of each party involved, effective duration, value, products/services, transaction and penalties); and
- use basic negotiation principles, approaches and skills to discuss trading contracts on a more even footing with cocoa traders.

3. Expected Results

- Training materials, and teaching aids for the training workshop are prepared
- The capacities of 30 key program stakeholders are improved in the areas relating to business start-up and management, marketing and contract negotiation
- A training report is produced specifying the training activities, contents and recommendations for improvements

4. Specific aspects of the consultancy

- Conduct literature review and discuss with Helvetas staff to better understand cocoa trading and markets in the Mekong River Delta
- Prepare and discuss with the program staff the training materials and schedule for the workshop and revise them where relevant
- Develop an agenda for the training workshop specifying session topics, sequence and time breakdown and facilitation methods for each session.
- Facilitate the workshop in such a way that after the training, the trained local staff and farmer organization leaders have their capacities improved in the areas as stated in above. During the workshop, the participants are enabled to practice the

development of their business plans, marketing approaches and contract preparation.

- Conduct training evaluation to better understand the usefulness and effectiveness of the training and solutions for improvements afterwards
- Submit a training report to Helvetas, describing training activities implemented, people involved and recommendations for improvements

5. Methodology

The consultant will conduct a review to better understand the current cocoa trading in the Mekong River Delta, and accordingly prepare training materials and teaching aids for effective delivery of the course.

The training program is designed in accordance to the level of the trainees' understandings and thus simple pre and post training assessments are conducted. Also, interactions between the trainer and trainees are expected. The learner centred teaching and participatory methods are applied throughout the training. It is also important that the training is balanced between the theory and practical contents. The practical part (discussion and practice) should be 60% at the minimum of the whole training program. Moreover, the trainer makes daily reviews in order to adjust the training program if necessary.

6. Workshop facilitators

The training workshop is facilitated by the following persons:

1. Facilitator: the national consultant
2. Assistants: Helvetas staff and local partner staff

7. Participants

A total of 30 people are attending the training workshop: 3 Helvetas staff, 3 from Tien Giang Province, 3 from Ben Tre Province, 5 from Cho Gao Cooperative and 16 cocoa farmer group leaders.

8. Time

No. of Days	Activity
1	Conduct a review of the current cocoa value chain and discuss with Helvetas staff
3	Prepare training content and methodologies
1	Discuss the methodologies, content of training and schedule with Helvetas staff and revise them if needed
5	Conduct the training including travel times
1	Prepare and submit a training report in consultation with Helvetas staff

No. of Days	Activity
11 days in total	

9. Workshop Venue

My Tho City, Tien Giang province

10. Report

A brief report (maximum 5 pages) on the results of the training against the expected results will be sent to Helvetas one week after the training. Lessons learnt and follow up recommendations are made. All the hand outs of the training are attached to the report as annexes.

11. Qualification of national consultant

The consultant is expected to have:

- Master's degree or higher in economics, business administration or other related subject.
- Substantial hands-on experience in agro-business in Vietnam
- Experience in preparing and conducting adult training
- Good facilitation skills and English proficiency
- Knowledge about cocoa trading and experience in working with local people in the Mekong Delta will be an advantage

Interested candidates should send the following documents electronically:

- Curriculum Vitae, 3 pages maximum, with at least 2 letters of reference from prior places of employment or contact names and details of your referees
- Two samples of training reports that he/she has conducted

to the following persons: Ms Nguyen Lam Giang at lam.giang@helvetas.org and/or Mr Vo Van Phong at vo.phong@helvetas.org before 31th August 2010