

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mapping Child Labour Risk in the Local Supply Chain: An Analysis of the Crop Farming and Aquaculture Sector in Vietnam

Title	Child Labor Risk Mapping in Crop Farming and Aquaculture in Vietnam
Purpose	The study aims to conduct a child labor risks mapping in the crop farming and aquaculture sectors in Vietnam, focusing on identifying the incidence of child labor, child exploitation and abuse, forced and bonded labor, and health and safety risks to children working in the supply chains, and providing strategic and action-oriented recommendations for Vietnam component of WNCB and other stakeholders to accelerate their action where gaps in child labor elimination efforts are evident.
Location	Selected provinces within crop farming and aquaculture supply chains, with prominent child labor risks and substantial contributions to the targeted subsectors, based on the initial assessment.
Duration	5.5 months
Start Date	1 st October 2023
Reporting to	Chief of Social Policy and Governance (SPG)
Type of consultancy	Institutional contract

1. Background

Empirical evidence shows that child labour in agriculture is a multifaceted problem that affects children's health, education, and development and future. Working in agricultural activities under harsh conditions takes a severe toll on children's health and emotional well-being. Children suffer health problems caused by working long hours in the harsh climate with little rest and no access to basic health care. The consequences include stunted physical growth, malnutrition, anemia, injuries and other serious health issues that make it difficult for children to find work after they finish their education. The COVID-19 pandemic and the recent economic downturn might further exacerbate the situation, by pushing children out of education who might then involve in work to make up for income loss and labour gaps in food and agricultural production.

The prevalence of child labour in agriculture is closely linked to poverty and lack of access to education/retention in schools. Children from poor families are often forced to work to supplement their family's income, while lack of access to education robs them of the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge that could help them find better-paying jobs in the future. In many countries, girls are more vulnerable to child labour in agriculture than boys, often due to gender discrimination and cultural norms that limit girls' access to education and other opportunities.

In 2021, Viet Nam's agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector (AFF) contributes 12.56 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The AFF sector employs almost 47% of the labour force and still ranks as the most important economic sector in Viet Nam.¹ After 40 years of Doi Moi economic reforms and trade liberalization, the country has developed a diverse commercial agriculture sector to meet not only domestic, but more importantly, also global demands. The leading export products include rice, coffee, pepper, tea, cashews, rubber, cassava, aquatic products, and furniture. –In 2022, US Department of Labour published a list of products produced by forced or indentured child labour, in

¹ General Statistics Office of Vietnam. (2020). Vietnam Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Statistics Yearbook 2020

which Vietnam has been mentioned for several products. The majority are agricultural, namely the production of cashews, coffee, pepper, rice, rubber, sugarcane, tobacco and tea. The others are textiles, timber, footwear, furniture, leather, and fish.

According to the Child Labour National Survey 2018 in Vietnam, nearly 60% of 1 million child-labour cases are in the agriculture sector, ranging from crop farming, forestry to fishery and aquaculture. The Child Labour National Survey 2018 also indicated as high as 84% of child labour cases were found in rural areas, with 40% of them working as unpaid workers in households and in informal economy. The Survey on SDG indicators on children and women of Viet Nam 2020-2021 indicates that 5.7% of all children aged 5-17 years involving in child labour in economic activities, that covers those in crop farming and aquaculture sector.

UNICEF Viet Nam has decided to commission a study to address the knowledge gap surrounding the risk factors of child labor along the supply chains of crop farming and aquaculture, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing economic downturn. The study findings will inform UNICEF's policy advocacy, programming, awareness-raising, and partnership-building efforts aimed at addressing child labour in these subsectors of agriculture. The study has the potential to inform Government policies and programmes to reduce child labour risks in the supply chains of Viet Nam. The study findings will be disseminated to the private sector, helping them design and adopt prevention and remediation measures to address child labour, thereby increasing their compliance with human rights due diligence (HRDD) processes and global environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) safeguards.

2. Justification for Requesting a Local Institution

- Conducting a child labour risk mapping study in agriculture with a focus on crop farming and aquaculture requires a diverse range of skills and expertise, including knowledge of the agricultural sector, child labour issues, and research methods. UNICEF may not have all of these skills in-house, especially in the sector of agriculture.
- Commissioning a consultancy institution allows UNICEF to access a larger pool of experts with diverse experiences and skill sets that can be tailored to the specific needs of the study.
- A consultancy institution can also provide a more comprehensive approach to the study, with a team of experts working together to manage all aspects of the project, from data collection to analysis and reporting, ensuring that the study is conducted in a timely and efficient manner. Additionally, a consultancy institution can provide more specialized support and can offer guidance on best practices and approaches in the field of child labour risk mapping in agriculture.

3. Purposes and Objectives

The purpose of the assignment is to map the child labour risks along the local supply chains of crop farming and aquaculture in the agricultural sector in Vietnam. Based on the findings and evidence, the study will formulate recommendations that are strategic and action-oriented for key stakeholders of Viet Nam, especially the private sector and the governmental agency working with the corporate to address child labour, while taking into account the specific issues and needs by gender dynamics engaging in child labour.

The objectives of the assignment are:

- (1) To identify risk factors of child labour in the sectors,;
- (2) To map the risks along the local supply chains in crop farming and aquaculture in Viet Nam.
- (3) To formulate strategic and action-oriented recommendations for the Government, the private business sector engaged in crop farming and aquaculture in Vietnam, and other stakeholders to accelerate their action to prevent, reduce and eliminate child labour in the supply chain.

Key research questions:

What are the risk factors, including the gender, of child labour along the local supply chains in crop farming and aquaculture subsectors in Vietnam?

1. What are the push and pull/ market supply and demand factors that enabled child labour in the supply chain?
2. What are the tiers, stages, and processes of production in the crop-farming and aquacultural supply chains that involve children in child labour?
3. How do gender roles and societal norms influence the engagement of boys and girls in child labor within the crop farming and aquaculture supply chains in Vietnam?
4. What are the existing Government policies and programs to eliminate child labour applicable to the sector/subsector, including their effectiveness in tackling child labour and any gaps in enforcement, particularly in relation to HRDD across the supply chains?
5. What are the existing interventions of the private sector to eliminate child labour in the sector/subsector supply chain, including any gaps in enforcement, and what actions can the private sector take to fulfill their responsibilities of prevention and remediation of child labour in line with international standards such as HRDD, ESG, or other responsible business practices?

4. Methodology and technical approach

The assignment can employ a combination of a systematic review and qualitative research methods, including a rigorous review of existing literature on child labour and crop farming and aquaculture sector, interviews with key informants and focused-group discussions.

Based on the existing literature, the consultancy institution needs to map out the locations and themes of child labour risks in crop farming and aquaculture in a participatory manner.

The institution will apply a Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) lens review, to identify the corporate responsibilities in the context of child labour and suggest actions that businesses can take to fulfill their responsibilities, in line with international standards for responsible business practices. The institution should reference and align with the following international standards for responsible business practices:

- Children's rights and Business Principles developed by UNICEF, the UN Global Compact and Save the Children
- Child Labour and Responsible Business Conduct: A guidance note for Action by UNICEF
- United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- UN Global Compact Principles
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8 and 12, which focus on decent work and economic growth, and responsible consumption and production, respectively.

The consultancy should also consider any other relevant international standards and guidelines related to responsible business practices.

The institution will be required to identify any potential ethical issue(s), as well as the processes for ethical review and oversight of the research/data collection process in the technical proposal and in the work plan. All work will comply with [UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection, and Analysis \(April 2021\)](https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/1786/file/UNICEF%20Procedure%20on%20Ethical%20Standards%20in%20Research,%20Evaluation,%20Data%20Collection%20and%20Analysis.pdf), which will also be consistently applied throughout the research process.²

5. Scope of work, deliverables and timeframe**Scope of work:**

² For more details:

<https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/1786/file/UNICEF%20Procedure%20on%20Ethical%20Standards%20in%20Research,%20Evaluation,%20Data%20Collection%20and%20Analysis.pdf>

This study covers child labour in the local supply chain of crop farming and aquaculture sector of Viet Nam, in which the end products are for local consumption and possible connections with the broader global supply chain. This study does not cover children working (not involving child labour).

The findings will be disseminated through Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)– UNICEF’s partner in Child Rights and Business Principles Program, Vietnam Association for the Protection of Children’s Rights (VAPCR) – UNICEF Child Protection’s partner, and business associations under MARD (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development), including:

- Vietnam Food Association (Hiệp sản hội Lương thực Việt Nam)
- Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (Hiệp hội Chế biến và xuất khẩu thủy sản)
- Vietnam Coffee-Cocoa Association (Hiệp hội Cà phê – Ca cao Việt Nam) – if relevant
- Pepper Association (Hiệp hội Hồ tiêu) – if relevant
- Tea Association (Hiệp hội Chè) – if relevant
- Fruit and Vegetable Association (Hiệp hội Rau quả Việt Nam) – if relevant

The dissemination of this study will contribute to the support for policy revision in light of the recent responsible business national action plan administered by the Ministry of Justice. By sharing the mapping results with VCCI and business associations under MARD, the aim is to raise awareness about child labor risks within these sectors and propose proactive measures to address and mitigate such risks. Additionally, the study output will be utilized to facilitate capacity building at the enterprise level by providing valuable insights to businesses and encouraging them to develop strategies that prioritize child labor prevention and mitigation.

Locations:

The study will prioritize few key geographic areas along the agricultural supply chains of crop farming and aquaculture based on the strategic assessment in the initial stage. Efforts will be made to select areas with salient risks of child labor and significant contributive factors to the focused subsectors.

Tasks:

The contractor will be responsible for conducting a comprehensive child labour risk mapping exercise in crop farming and aquaculture in Vietnam. The institute should cover the following:

1. Desk review of existing literature and data on child labour in crop farming and aquaculture in Vietnam. This will include analyzing the underlying causes of the problem, the social and economic factors, and the impact on children's health, education, well-being, etc. The desk review should, as much as possible, include updates related to the effects of COVID-19 pandemic and recent economic recession on the child labour situation in VietNam.
2. Pinpoint specific crops and aquaculture products (such as coffee, cashew nuts, shrimp, and catfish) as well as geographic areas where salient child labor risks and significant contributing factors are prevalent, indicating a higher likelihood of child labor and insufficient measures to address the problem.
3. Develop a conceptual framework for analyzing the findings from the desk review, expert consultation, and field research. This should be an illustrative diagram of the different levels of the supply chain, beyond the 1st tier, to be interrogated and the key research questions.
4. Field research to identify the existing and potential child labour risks, including differential impacts shaped by genders- in the supply chains (throughout different levels of tier). It should aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current situation, including the key actors, processes, and outcomes, and generate
5. Formulate policy and programme recommendations with the consideration of gender-specific circumstance and implications, that Government can adopt to address child labour risks in the supply-chain in specific product lines/ subsectors of crop farming and aquaculture in Vietnam. This will include who, what and how, including the adoption of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD) across the supply/value chains. It will also examine enabling factors and potential risks in adopting the recommendations.
6. Formulate actionable recommendations incorporating those addressing the gender-responsive challenges for businesses to fulfill their responsibilities in addressing child labour in specific

product lines in crop farming and aquaculture in Vietnam, possibly to the level of lower-tier suppliers and the informal sector. This will include identifying the corporate responsibilities in the context of child labour and suggesting actions that businesses can take to bear the responsibilities, in line with international standards for responsible business practices such as HRDD, ESG, or other industry certifications.

Deliverables and Timeframes

Deliverables			Timeframes
Tasks/Activities	Deliverables	Format	
1. Planning Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with UNICEF to clarify the assignment Review of existing literature Preparation and approval of Inception Report 	Inception Report, including a summary of existing literature which informed the proposed methodology, detailed description of the methodology and technical approach, analytical framework and key research questions; deliverables and key tasks, detailed workplan; ethical considerations, risk management plan	Soft copy of the Inception Report: maximum of 50-pages; English and Vietnamese language; Word (editable) and PDF format	1-15 October 2023
2. Preparation Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of research protocol Ethical review and approval of the research protocol 	Research protocol, including finalized data collection tools and ethical clearance	Soft copy of the Research Protocol: maximum of 50-pages, excluding Annexes; English and Vietnamese language; Word (editable) and PDF format	16 October to 15 December 2023
3. Implementation Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection Analysis Report writing Validation of the first draft of the Research Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Full Research Report, with Executive Summary; Photo documentation with captions of field data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soft copy of the Draft Full Report, with Executive Summary maximum of 50-pages, excluding Annexes; English and Vietnamese language; Word (editable) and PDF format Soft copy of high-resolution photos with captions 	16 December 2023 to 31 January 2024

4. Dissemination Phase			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Report • Policy Brief • Presentation of Key Findings and Recommendations to Stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Report; • Policy Brief; • Powerpoint Presentation; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft copy of the Final Report, with Executive Summary maximum of 50-pages, excluding Annexes; English and Vietnamese language; Word (editable) and PDF format • Soft copy of the Policy Brief maximum of 4-pages; English and Vietnamese language; Word (editable) and PDF format • Powerpoint Presentation 	1 February to 15 March 2024

6. **Management**

The Chief of the Social Policy and Governance Section will provide strategic oversight of the assignment, by providing guidance to the Social Policy Partnerships Officer.

The Partnerships Officer will directly supervise the assignment, and will provide technical guidance, monitor deliverables and supervise the institution. The Partnership Officer will maintain direct communication and liaison with the institution, while coordinating the review and quality assurance within UNICEF.

All intermediate and final products will be reviewed and endorsed by the Partnership Officer to the Chief of Social Policy and Governance for final approval and processing of payments.

The institution will be fully responsible for coordinating with stakeholders for the field missions, data collection, validation workshops and dissemination activities. UNICEF can support by providing access to contacts and connection in the Government and the private sector, including the VietNam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI). As UNICEF has an existing partnership agreement with the VCCI, UNICEF will coordinate and facilitate contact between VCCI and the institution to ensure timely support and inputs to the institution.

7. **Qualifications and experience required:**

This assignment will require an institution which can assign a team of researchers with multi-disciplinary academic background and research experience, with details as follows:

Project Coordinator

- Post-graduate degree (preferably Ph.D. level) in economics or social science with
- At least 10 years experience in social science research and studies, including undertaking studies on sensitive social issues
- At least 10 years experience in managing and leading a research team, including providing overall coordination and quality assurance of research outputs

- Previous work with the UN is an asset;
- Having a wide established professional network with key stakeholders in the field, including the Government, private sector, etc.
- Excellent written and spoken English.

Project Team Members

- A maximum of 2 technical experts and 1 administrative staff as core members of the project team
- Technical experts must have:
 - Post-graduate degree in social science, -economics or equivalent fields;
 - At least 10 years of experience in social research, analysis and studies;
 - Technical expertise in agricultural policy and child rights, including child labour and exploitation in the private business sector, with a proven track record
 - Experience in undertaking studies on sensitive social issues and with vulnerable and hidden groups, especially with children;
 - Demonstrated knowledge and experience in carrying out research with the business community.
- Excellent written and spoken English and Vietnamese.

8. Technical evaluation criteria and relative points

Technical Criteria	Technical Sub-criteria	Maximum Points
Overall Response	Completeness of response	5
	Overall concord between RFP requirements and proposal	5
Maximum Points for overall response		10
Company and Key Personnel	Reputation of Organization and Staff (Competence / Reliability)	5
	Quality assurance procedures, warranty	5
	Range and depth of experience with similar projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number and size of similar projects - Type of clients, including UNICEF, UN agencies, IFIs - Client references 	10
	Key personnel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposed team structure and size, including project management - Relevant experience, qualifications and position with institution 	10
Maximum Points for Company and Key Personnel		30
Proposed Methodology and Approach	Research methodology and workplan is relevant and complies with UNICEF research standards	15
	Project approach to management, monitoring and quality assurance process meets UNICEF research standards	10
	Innovation approach	5
Maximum Points for Proposed Methodology and Approach		30
TOTAL Maximum		70

9. Weighted ratio between the technical and the price criteria: 70:30

First, the Technical Proposals will be evaluated. Technical Proposals receiving 70% of obtainable points (49 pts) or higher, will be considered technically qualified and the Financial Proposals will be opened. Proposals which are considered not technically compliant and non-responsive, will not be given further consideration.

The maximum number of points (30 pts) shall be allotted to the Proposal which is technically qualified and offers the lowest price. Other Financial Proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price.

All prices/rates quoted must be exclusive of all taxes as UNICEF is a tax-exempt organization.

Financial proposal should be all-inclusive lump-sum cost including consultancy fee, cost for the research team to travel for field data collection and other related expenses. The lump-sum should be divided across the 4 phases/deliverables of the project. UNICEF does not support budget for international travel.

Financial proposals must be submitted in Vietnam Dong (VND) if the Proposers are Vietnam-based. UNICEF applies EU-UN cost norms.

Proposals must be duly signed and stamped, in pdf. files, and prepared in English.