

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Project Name	Mekong Capacity-Building for Resilient and Enhanced Agricultural Technologies and Food System
Contract Type	Consultancy Services
Service Title	Lead Trainer on “ <i>Regional Training on Carbon Markets for Resilient Agri-Food Systems</i> ”
Activity Code	A29-NZAP25-ADCY1-2.1-06-2.1.8
Contract Category	Special Services Agreement (SSA)
Duration	7-10 Working Days (Between February to March 2026)
Duty Station	Homebased, with one trip to Khon Kaen, Thailand (March 1-7, 2026)

1. Background / Project Description

Carbon markets are increasingly recognized as critical instruments for mobilizing climate finance, accelerating decarbonisation, and supporting countries in achieving their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement¹²³. For developing countries, including those in the Mekong Subregion, carbon markets offer opportunities to attract private investment into low-emission development pathways where public finance remains constrained⁴⁵.

However, the current carbon market landscape remains fragmented. Additional challenges include uneven regulatory development, heterogeneous methodologies, limited mutual recognition of credits, and insufficiently harmonized measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems. These challenges are particularly pronounced in Southeast Asia, where countries are at different stages of readiness regarding domestic carbon pricing instruments, Article 6 implementation, and engagement with voluntary carbon markets (VCMs)⁶⁷. This fragmentation constrains

¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). (2015). *Paris Agreement*. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

² Schneider, L., La Hoz Theuer, S., Broerkamp, C., Füssler, J., & Kohli, A. (2019). Environmental integrity of international carbon market mechanisms under the Paris Agreement. *Climate Policy*, 19(3), 386–400. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2018.1521332>

³ World Bank. (2023). *State and trends of carbon pricing 2023*. Washington, DC.

⁴ World Bank. (2024). *Article 6 readiness and implementation: A practical guide for countries*. Washington, DC.

⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). (2022). *Carbon markets and agriculture: Opportunities and challenges for smallholder farmers*. Rome.

⁶ Schneider, L., Broerkamp, C., Füssler, J., Kohli, A., & La Hoz Theuer, S. (2023). Aligning voluntary carbon markets with the Paris Agreement. *Nature Climate Change*, 13, 8–15. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-022-01505-2>

⁷ Cames, M., Harthan, R., Füssler, J., Lazarus, M., Lee, C. M., Erickson, P., & Spalding-Fecher, R. (2024). *How additional is the Clean Development Mechanism? Lessons for Article 6*. Öko-Institut.

market liquidity, undermines environmental integrity, and limit investor confidence, as well as countries' ability to scale mitigation projects efficiently⁸⁹.

The ASEAN Strategy for Carbon Neutrality identifies “Interoperable Carbon Markets” as one of eight priority strategies for enabling a just, inclusive, and competitive low-carbon transition¹⁰. The strategy emphasizes the need for regionally aligned, credible, and internationally recognised carbon market systems that can interface with global compliance and voluntary markets, including those under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement¹¹¹²¹³.

Agri-food systems are central to ASEAN's carbon market potential. Agriculture, land use, forestry, and emerging blue carbon activities are major sources of existing and prospective carbon credits in the region¹⁴¹⁵¹⁶. At the same time, these sectors underpin rural livelihoods, food security, and export competitiveness in Mekong countries. As global buyers and financial institutions increasingly demand low-carbon, traceable, and climate-resilient production, carbon markets can serve as a complementary mechanism to enhance sustainability, productivity, and resilience in agri-food value chains¹⁷¹⁸.

The Mekong CREATES Regional Training on Carbon Markets for Resilient Agri-Food Systems is therefore designed as a participant-centered, applied training program. It targets government officials, agribusiness leaders, and technical practitioners from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Viet Nam (CLMV). It prioritizes clarity, usability, and decision-relevance, enabling participants to: understand how carbon markets work in practice; distinguish between Article 6 pathways and voluntary markets; access opportunities and risks for agri-food systems while situating them within ASEAN policy directions; and develop actionable next steps aligned with national and organizational contexts.

⁸ Calel, R., & Dechezleprêtre, A. (2016). Environmental policy and directed technological change: Evidence from the European carbon market. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 98(1), 173–191.

⁹ Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market (IC-VCM). (2023). *Core Carbon Principles and assessment framework*. London.

¹⁰ ASEAN Secretariat. (2023). *ASEAN strategy for carbon neutrality*. Jakarta.

¹¹ CMA. (2021). *Decision 2/CMA.3: Guidance on cooperative approaches referred to in Article 6, paragraph 2*. UNFCCC.

¹² CMA. (2021). *Decision 3/CMA.3: Rules, modalities and procedures for the mechanism established by Article 6, paragraph 4*. UNFCCC.

¹³ CMA. (2023). *Decision 7/CMA.5: Further guidance on the Article 6.4 mechanism*. UNFCCC.

¹⁴ Griscom, B. W., Adams, J., Ellis, P. W., et al. (2017). Natural climate solutions. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(44), 11645–11650.

¹⁵ Haya, B., Berndt, C., Dechezleprêtre, A., et al. (2020). Managing uncertainty in carbon offsets. *Energy Policy*, 141, 111427.

¹⁶ FAO. (2023). *Agriculture, forestry and other land use emissions by sources and removals by sinks*. Rome.

¹⁷ Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative (VCMI). (2023). *Claims code of practice*. London.

¹⁸ Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market (IC-VCM). (2023). *High-integrity carbon markets for sustainable development*. London.

About Mekong CREATES

By building on the achievements of the PROSAFE initiative, [Mekong CREATES: Mekong Capacity-building for Resilient and Enhanced Agricultural Technologies and Food Systems](#) promotes sustainable food systems by enhancing food safety and climate resilience of agricultural value chains in CLMV. The project focuses on strengthening the capacities of government, academia, research institutions, and private sector actors in two key thematic areas: the capacity of government, academic, research, and the private sector across two thematic areas:

1. food safety across agricultural value chains, and
2. climate resilience and low-emission transformation of agricultural systems.

Mekong CREATES is supported by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).

2. Objective of this Consultancy

The objective of this consultancy is to engage a highly qualified Lead Trainer to provide technical leadership, curriculum design, and delivery of a regional training course on carbon markets for resilient agri-food system, with a particular focus on:

- Article 6 of the Paris Agreement (6.2 and 6.4) and their relevance for Mekong countries;
- Voluntary carbon markets and their interaction with compliance and emerging regional markets;
- Agricultural, forestry, land use, and nature-based mitigation opportunities;
- Institutional, policy, and technical readiness requirements, including MRV and safeguards; and
- Practical pathways for governments and agri-food stakeholders to engage in carbon markets with environmental integrity and development co-benefits.

3. Role and Responsibilities of the Consultant

Under the overall coordination of Mekong Institute (MI), the Lead Trainer will be responsible for the overall technical quality and coherence of the training.

Specifically, key responsibilities include:

1. Provide technical leadership in the design and refinement of the training curriculum;
2. Develop structured, coherent, and context-specific training modules;
3. Deliver at least 60% of the total training sessions;
4. Facilitate interactive, practice-oriented sessions, including case studies and country group exercises;
5. Guide country groups in the preparation of draft Action Plans for post-training application; and
6. Document training results and provide recommendations for follow-up and sustaining capacity-building efforts.

4. Scope of Work and Deliverables

Phase	Scope of Work / Tasks	Deliverables	Timeline	LOE* (Days)
Pre-Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and refine the provisional training design prepared by MI Develop a detailed curriculum, including learning objectives, session activities, exercises, and approaches Prepare training materials, including presentations, exercises and reference resources Design interactive components such as case studies with a focus on ASEAN and agri-food systems, group tasks, and simulations Participate in preparatory coordination meetings with MI to finalize content and logistics 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Finalized training curriculum and agenda Training needs assessment questionnaire (if needed) Pre- and post-training assessment questions PPTs for modules Exercises guidelines and templates Proposed list of guest speakers or resource persons 	1–2 weeks before training	1-3
During Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve as Lead Trainer during the training in Khon Kaen, Thailand Deliver core technical modules in accordance with the agreed agenda Facilitate group discussions, exercises, and peer learning Mentor country groups in developing practical and realistic Action Plans 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of training sessions Consolidated outputs from group exercises and Action Plans 	March 2-6, 2026	5
Post-Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and consolidate participant outputs (Action Plans, exercises) Prepare and submit a concise Training Report summarizing content 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Post-training report Annexes, including finalised Action Plans, 	Within 2 weeks after training	1-2

	delivered, key discussions, participant feedback, and recommendations for next steps	presentations, outputs of exercises		
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5. Required Qualifications and Experience

- **Education**
 - A Master’s degree or higher in Environmental Science, Climate Change, Agricultural Economics, Natural Resource Management, Carbon Finance, Sustainability, Law, Public Policy, or related fields
 - A PhD is an advantage but not mandatory

- **Technical Expertise**
 - Minimum of 7 years of relevant professional experience in carbon markets, climate policy, MRV systems, climate finance, sustainable agriculture, or related fields
 - Strong understanding of voluntary carbon markets and compliance, including global mechanisms, standards, registries, and integrity challenges
 - Experience applying carbon market concepts to real-world agricultural, forestry, land-use, or nature-based projects
 - Knowledge of ASEAN and Mekong-region policy and institutional contexts, including national readiness for carbon market

- **Other Skills**
 - Proven experience designing and delivering technical training or adult-learning training programs
 - Demonstrated ability to translate complex rules and standards into practical guidance, examples, and decision tools
 - Experience facilitating group work, simulations, or action-planning exercises
 - Excellent written and spoken English; knowledge of a Mekong country language is an advantage
 - Strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to work across multicultural and multidisciplinary teams

6. Application Guidelines

Interested applicants should submit:

1. Updated CV highlighting relevant technical and training experience.
2. A brief cover note outlining suitability for the assignment and examples of previous similar assignments.
3. Proposed consultancy rate (daily or lump sum)

Submission

- Applications should be submitted through MI online application form: <https://forms.gle/WXGPFLxAEcwm9A5D9>
- Ensure all uploaded documents are set public access
- Subject title: Lead Trainer on “*Regional Training on Carbon Markets for Resilient Agri-Food Systems*”
- **Deadline:** January 5, 2026