
Terms of Reference



National Consultant - City Region Food System Analysis in Vietnam

Location: Vietnam (with focus on Hanoi, Dong Thap and Tuyen Quang provinces)

Expected start date: Upon contract signing

Contract type: National consultancy

Application deadline: 22 July 2025

1. Background

Rikolto International (hereinafter “Rikolto”) is a global NGO dedicated to transforming food systems to be more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable. Active in 18 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, Rikolto collaborates with farmers, businesses, governments and civil society actors to co-develop actionable and scalable solutions that ensure access to affordable, nutritious food while strengthening local livelihoods and ecosystems.

In Vietnam, Rikolto is currently implementing two flagship programmes (2022-2026) that reflect its commitment to food system transformation through three key pillars: **sustainable agricultural production, inclusive business** and an **enabling environment**. The **Good Food for Cities (GF4C)** programme focuses on strengthening inclusive food governance and promoting sustainable urban food environments to improve access to healthy diets. The **Sustainable Rice Production (SRP)** programme supports smallholder farmers in adopting regenerative, climate-resilient practices while enhancing their integration into inclusive and equitable markets.

To inform its next strategic programming cycle (2027-2031), Rikolto will conduct a City Region Food System (CRFS) analysis. This analysis will guide the design of system-based interventions aligned with **Rikolto’s Global Theory of Change (2027-2036)**, which aims to contribute to three interconnected impact areas: **healthy diets, livelihoods and prosperity**, and a **thriving ecosystem**. The strategy focuses on supporting key target groups, including the majority of consumers, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and smallholder farmers, through three main levers of change: **regenerative and climate-resilient agriculture, inclusive and viable food business models**, and an **enabling environment** fostered by inclusive governance and responsive policies.

A city region refers to a functional area that includes an urban centre and its surrounding peri-urban and rural hinterlands, which are economically, socially, and ecologically interlinked. A CRFS, defined as the network of actors, processes, and relationships involved in food production, distribution, marketing, consumption, and waste management within a defined city region, provides a critical lens for understanding territorial food system dynamics. It captures the economic, social, and environmental interactions across urban, peri-urban, and rural areas (FAO & RUAF, 2023). The CRFS framework offers a valuable entry point for analysing Vietnam’s food system, enabling a holistic understanding of supply chains, governance structures, and sustainability challenges. Through this analysis, Rikolto seeks to identify strategic leverage points for systemic, inclusive, and sustainable food system transformation.

2. Purpose of the assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to conduct a focused CRFS analysis to generate actionable insights that directly inform Rikolto in Vietnam's 2027–2031 strategy and programming. The analysis will examine food system structures, governance, and transformation opportunities in three strategically selected locations, including Hanoi, Cao Lanh City (Dong Thap province), and Tuyen Quang City (Tuyen Quang province), which reflect the diversity of Vietnam's agro-ecological and institutional contexts. Hanoi represents the Red River Delta and urban CRFS models; Tuyen Quang reflects challenges in mountainous, less urbanised areas; and Dong Thap offers lessons from the Mekong Delta, Vietnam's primary agricultural zone. Rather than aiming for a full-scope national assessment, the assignment will use these case studies to explore key trends and leverage points within Vietnam's food system, particularly in relation to governance, sustainable value chains, and inclusive market access. The findings will support Rikolto in Vietnam in refining its strategic positioning, programming priorities, and stakeholder engagement, while also contributing to the global knowledge base on CRFS transformation.

3. Objectives of the assignment

- Provide a practical and structured overview of Vietnam's CRFS through the lens of city-region dynamics, with a focus on rural-urban linkages, food chains and interdependencies across locations.
- Identify key challenges and opportunities across the CRFS, including constraints related to production, processing, trade, food access, waste management, sustainability and governance.
- Map and analyse the roles, relationships and influence of key stakeholders and institutions at both regional and national levels, including public, private, civil society and informal actors.
- Synthesise cross-cutting insights from the three case studies to draw out national-level implications that support strategy development, policy engagement and territorial programming.
- Formulate a set of system-based recommendations to inform Rikolto in Vietnam's 2027-2031 strategy, with a focus on identifying strategic leverage points aligned with Rikolto's thematic priorities, particularly sustainable business models within food system supply chains and an enabling environment for inclusive and resilient CRFS transformation.

4. Scope of work and methodology

The consultant will apply the framework outlined in Rikolto's Food System Analysis Guidelines and work in close coordination with Rikolto Vietnam staff. The assignment will adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining participatory research techniques with field-based data collection to ensure both analytical depth and contextual relevance.

Key tasks

Desk review

Conduct a thorough review of national and sub-national sources, including policy documents, reports, academic literature, food system datasets, and programme evaluations. This will establish a foundational understanding of Vietnam's CRFS, identify data gaps and shape the scope of the case study analysis.

Stakeholder mapping

Identify and categorise relevant actors at regional and national levels, including authorities, farmer organisations, businesses, CSOs, and market actors. Analyse their functions, interests, relationships and influence to inform governance and partnership strategies.

Fieldwork in case study areas

Carry out field visits and/or remote engagements in Hanoi, Dong Thap (Cao Lanh City) and Tuyen Quang. Conduct interviews, focus group discussions, and direct observations involving farmers, processors, traders, local officials, and consumers. Use a consistent set of tools and checklists aligned with Rikolto's FSA methodology.

Data analysis and synthesis

Examine key dimensions of each case city-region's food system, including production, trade, consumption, environment, nutrition, and governance. Draw out commonalities and divergences. Synthesise findings into national-level conclusions regarding the structure, gaps, and transformation potential of the Vietnamese CRFS landscape.

Validation meeting

Present preliminary findings (virtual or in-person) to key stakeholders and Rikolto staff in a participatory session. Gather feedback to verify accuracy, test assumptions, and refine recommendations.

Reporting

The final output will be a comprehensive CRFS analysis report, structured according to Rikolto's template. The report will focus primarily on national-level findings and analysis regarding the structure, dynamics and performance of Vietnam's CRFSs. The three case studies will serve as illustrative examples to deepen understanding, highlight regional diversity, and support national-level conclusions. Supporting annexes (e.g. interview lists, tools used, data sources) must also be included.

5. Deliverables and timeline

The consultancy will commence immediately after contract signing and must be completed by 05 September 2025.

Deliverable	Description	Deadline
Inception report	Methodology, tools, work plan, and stakeholder engagement plan	27/7/2025
Desk review/study	A concise synthesis of key findings from national and sub-national policies, datasets, literature, and existing food system assessments, to inform case study focus and fieldwork tools	03/8/2025
Stakeholder mapping	Matrix of actors and institutions across three case regions and the national level	04/8/2025
Fieldwork	Summary of key insights gathered from field visits and interviews	15/8/2025
Draft report	A full, structured draft with findings and recommendations	25/8/2025

Validation meeting	Stakeholder presentation and feedback session	26/8/2025
Final report	Finalised and validated report (in English) with national and regional content	05/9/2025

6. Qualifications and experience

- At least an MA degree in food systems, agriculture, rural/urban development, public policy, environmental science, or a related field.
- At least 5 years of relevant experience in food system research, policy analysis, programme design, or territorial development in Vietnam or the Southeast Asia region.
- Proven experience in conducting field-based, participatory research and engaging with multi-stakeholder processes, including smallholder farmers, MSMEs, local authorities, and civil society actors.
- Strong understanding of food systems framework and Vietnam Food Systems Transformation policy process, governance, urban-rural linkages, inclusive value chains, and environmental sustainability.
- Demonstrated experience contributing to the development or implementation of the Vietnam National Action Plan on Food System Transformation at different levels or similar food policy frameworks.
- Excellent analytical, synthesis, and academic writing skills in English.
- Familiarity with Rikolto's thematic priorities and strategic approach is a strong advantage.

7. Application procedure

Interested consultants should submit the following:

- Curriculum Vitae highlighting relevant academic and professional background.
- Technical proposal (max 5 pages) outlining the consultant's understanding of the assignment, proposed methodology and timeline.
- Financial proposal, specifying daily consultancy rate (gross) and total cost for the package.
- Sample(s) of relevant previous work (e.g., food system analysis, food system policy and intervention designs).

Please send your application to: vietnam@rikolto.org

Subject line: *Application - National Consultant for CRFS Analysis in Vietnam*