

Terms of reference (ToR) for a short-term consultant

Non-timber forest product value chains and market feasibility study for the Phu Kha Solutionscape, Nan province

Wyss Academy for Nature, Hub Southeast Asia

Deadline for application: 26 October 2026

1. Background

The Wyss Academy for Nature, Hub Southeast Asia (Hub SEA), together with its partners, has identified the Phu Kha Solutionscape in Nan province as a priority landscape. The work aims to address interconnected human–nature challenges while generating co-benefits for biodiversity conservation and local livelihoods.

As part of the ‘Catalysing nature-positive livelihoods, inclusive leadership and cultural vitality’ initiative, Hub SEA will assess the potential of unique and high-value non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) as sustainable alternatives to existing cash crops. It will also analyse the possible opportunities NTFPs and MAPs present for community-based enterprise development.

While NTFPs and ecosystem services support local livelihoods by providing food, medicine, fuel and other resources, their value chains remain underdeveloped. Market opportunities are also not well understood. This study will identify promising NTFPs and MAPs in pilot villages and assess their value chains and market potential. Furthermore, it will evaluate their competitiveness relative to existing cash crops and provide recommendations for developing viable, nature-positive livelihood models.

2. Objectives

2.1 Main objective

To assess opportunities for developing viable high-value NTFP and MAP value chains that can serve as sustainable alternative income sources and support community-based enterprise development within the Phu Kha Solutionscape. Results from this assessment will help inform crucial interventions and activities for the initiative in Phu Kha.

2.2 Specific objectives

The assessment will:

- Identify presently collected and domesticated NTFPs and MAPs, prioritizing high-value products, including wild mushrooms local to Nan or northern Thailand, with the potential to contribute to sustainable economic development in Phu Kha and Nan province
- Map value chains for prioritized products, including key actors, market channels, regulatory requirements and major constraints
- Assess market demand (export statistics from reputable sources) and opportunities in local, national and international markets
- Evaluate the competitiveness of prioritized products compared with existing cash crop systems and assess where niche products could be included in the annual cropping cycle
- Provide recommendations for strengthening viable value chains and promoting new, alternative opportunities for community enterprises, youth engagement and women's participation

3. Scope of work

3.1 Thematic scope

The consultant will undertake the following tasks:

Identification and prioritization of NTFPs and MAPs

In two pilot villages within the Phu Kha Solutionscape, the consultant will:

- Inventory available NTFPs – including wild mushrooms, medicinal and aromatic plants, gums and resins, and authentic forest foods – used for household consumption and commercial purposes
- Document key information for each product, including:
 - product names (scientific, Thai and local languages)
 - quantity and quality characteristics
 - seasonality and harvesting calendar
 - current uses (household consumption, raw material sales, processing, packaging or value-added products)
 - existing markets, sales volumes and prices, where applicable
 - harvesting practices and relevant traditional knowledge or cultural beliefs
 - historical trends and availability or absence of NTFPs and MAPs
 - other relevant production and livelihood information
- Facilitate a participatory prioritization process with harvesters, producers, village leaders, local traders and government staff to identify products with the greatest

potential for income generation and value chain development. The prioritization process should produce a list of five to ten prioritized NTFPs and MAPs, including at least one and up to two types of wild mushroom per village, based on but not limited to the following criteria:

- seasonality
- potential for domestication
- current markets and demand
- interest among producers/harvesters, local traders – including wholesalers and retailers – and government staff, with documented rationale
- potential for producing alternative sources of income and competitiveness in relation to cash crops, based on different needs and interests among producers and harvesters
- Comparison tables with existing cash crops, including:
 - species cultivated
 - cropping calendar
 - production costs and revenues and trends over the last five years
 - other relevant agronomic and economic information

Value chain and market feasibility assessment

For the prioritized NTFPs and MAPs, with at least one and up to two types of wild mushroom identified, the consultant will:

- Map and analyse value chains from production to end markets, including:
 - production volumes and quality characteristics
 - value chain actors and stakeholder roles
 - value chain diagrams
 - market channels and buyer profiles
 - market prices, trends and consumer preferences
 - current and projected demand
 - local production capacity and growth potential
 - opportunities for processing and value addition
 - production, labour and transportation costs
 - estimated profitability and returns for households
- Assess enabling and regulatory conditions, including:
 - relevant regulations, standards, permits and certification requirements
 - existing support programmes, incentives and subsidies
 - existing governance and institutional arrangements
 - resource tenure and access rights
 - infrastructure, transport and logistics
 - gender roles and benefit distribution
 - potential environmental, market and operational risks
- Assess environmental and sustainability considerations, including:
 - sustainable harvesting practices
 - climate resilience potential
 - use of agricultural inputs and chemicals

- potential impacts on biodiversity, forests and soil fertility
- Evaluate the competitiveness of prioritized products relative to existing dominant cash crops in the pilot villages (e.g. maize, cassava, rubber and ginger)
- Identify opportunities and constraints across upstream, midstream and downstream segments, including gaps in:
 - technical knowledge and skills
 - access to finance
 - technology and innovation
 - institutional coordination
 - market access

Opportunities and recommendations

The consultants shall:

- Identify opportunities to strengthen, scale and commercialize viable NTFP and MAP value chains
- Recommend three to five practical business models and interventions to enhance sustainable income generation, value addition and market access
- Provide actionable recommendations for the Wyss Academy for Nature on promoting community enterprises and increasing the participation of youth and women in nature-positive value chains

3.2 Geographic scope

The study will focus on two pilot villages (Ban Nam Kwang village and Ban Nam Pua Pattana village) within the Phu Kha Solutionscape in Pua district, Nan province, Thailand. Market feasibility analysis may cover opportunities beyond Nan Province, including national and international markets, through desk review and selected stakeholder consultations.

4. Methodology

The consultant should apply mixed qualitative and quantitative methods:

4.1 Desk review and analysis

- Enabling environment analysis
- Domestic and international market demand and trends
- Statistics of market share, import and export

4.2 Fieldwork, interviews and focus group workshops

- Participatory assessment that engages stakeholders in the prioritization of products and value chain assessments
- Focus group discussions with producers, growers and harvesters in two pilot villages (and neighbouring villages, if applicable), including representatives from relevant agencies who have key mandates related to value chains and enterprise development

- Key individual informant interviews or focus group discussions for key actors and end users in the prioritized value chains and stakeholders who influence decision-making and governance in the value chains

4.3 Analysis and reporting

- Presentation of analysis and compilation of feedback from Wyss Academy for Nature
- Opportunities and recommendations

5. Deliverables and timeline (12 weeks)

The tentative implementation and deliverable submission period is between November 2026 to January 2027.

Timeline	Deliverable	Description
Week 1–2	Inception report in Thai (not to exceed 10–15 pages) with executive summary in Thai and English	• Methodology, scope, key questions, list of interviewees/stakeholders, draft product inventory and list of criteria for prioritization • Wyss Academy team to provide feedback on the methodology, key questions and prioritization of products
Week 7–8	PowerPoint presentation of preliminary findings in Thai and English	• Interim results for five to ten prioritized products and value chains per village • Wyss Academy to provide feedback on the preliminary findings
Week 9–10	Draft final report in Thai	• Full analysis, findings and draft recommendations • Wyss Academy to provide feedback to improve report
Week 11–12	Final report in Thai and English	• Revised report with annexes

6. Report structure (Thai and English, max 50 pages excluding annexes)

1. Executive summary
 - a. Main findings
 - b. Priority recommendations
2. Introduction
 - a. Purpose and scope

3. Assessment methodology and limitations
4. Existing product inventory
5. Product identification and prioritization
6. Value chain assessment for each of the 10 high potential products
7. Enabling environment analysis
8. Synthesis, including strengths, gaps and challenges
9. Opportunities and recommendations for further viable value chain development
10. Annexes
 - a. References
 - b. Interview guides
 - c. Stakeholder list
 - d. Data tables for statistics and
 - e. Photographs from fieldwork organized in a dedicated folder (link to online folder)

7. Consultant qualifications

- PhD or advanced academic degree in forestry, ecology, development, economics, business or sustainability, or equivalent experience in related fields
- Proven knowledge and experience in NTFP value chains, the business sector and ecosystem assessments
- Strong analytical and stakeholder engagement skills and experience with participatory approaches
- Excellent written and spoken Thai is compulsory for in-country data collection; proficiency in English is required for report writing and presentation
- No conflict of interest with Wyss Academy for Nature's Hub Southeast Asia

8. Evaluation criteria

- Quality and clarity of technical approach
- Understanding of study objectives
- Relevant experience and expertise
- Quality of work plan and methodology
- Value-added or innovative approaches
- Realistic budget proposal

9. Budget guidelines

Budget should include:

- Level of effort, including additional personnel (if needed)
- Logistical support, including travel and accommodations (if needed) for consultant and key informant interviews, focus group discussions and stakeholder workshops
 - Expected minimum number of seven to ten participants per focus group discussion in each pilot village for harvesters/producers and growers

- Expected reasonable number of interviewees for each prioritized product actor in the respective value chain (exclude participants from pilot village mentioned above)
- Honorarium for workshop participants (if needed)
- Data transcription and processing
- Study design and reporting, including costs of translation to English

10. Management and ethical considerations

The consultant will be commissioned and managed by the Wyss Academy for Nature's Hub Southeast Asia. The consultant will report to the Wyss Academy for Nature's Hub Southeast Asia, with technical oversight from the Hub Director, Research Coordinator and the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Officer. The consultant will adhere to ethical research standards, including informed consent, do-no-harm principles, data confidentiality and gender-sensitive data collection. All assessment products become the property of the Wyss Academy for Nature's Hub Southeast Asia.

Interested consultants should submit a technical proposal (max 5 pages) along with their CV, two relevant work samples and a detailed budget proposal to **Pratya Youngpatana, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Officer, Wyss Academy Hub SEA at pratya.youngpatana@wyssacademy.org**, copying hub.sea@wyssacademy.org, by **26 October 2026**, with the subject line: 'Application – NTFP Consultancy'.