

Call for Quotation/Application for Consultancy Services

Title: Consultation for The Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture Recirculating System plus Mangrove (IMTA-RAS-M) for the project "Increasing coastal resilience in the Mekong Delta through mangrove restoration and hybrid nature-based solutions in Sóc Trăng and Bạc Liêu"

Objective of the Consultancy

This consultancy aims to deliver the following outcomes:

The overall objective is to improve water and environmental quality in aquaculture through the application of innovative water management technologies using the RAS–IMTA–M model, while rehabilitating mangrove trees within shrimp farming systems.

Specific Objectives:

- Survey, select and negotiate with farmers to join the project.
- Design 3 RAS–IMTA–M models and prepare detailed equipment lists and cost estimates for each participating farm.
- Build the capacity of farmers to adopt and operate RAS–IMTA–M technology effectively.
- Monitor farm operations and provide technical consultation during the first and second production cycles.
- Provide a technical report in English for the first and second production cycles.

Background

Project Reference:

The coastal areas of Sóc Trăng and Bạc Liêu are increasingly vulnerable to sea-level rise and extreme weather events. Extensive mangrove clearance has exposed shorelines to accelerated erosion, as the loss of trees reduces wave attenuation and soil stabilization. In the Mekong Delta—home to approximately 75% of Viet Nam’s mangroves—mangrove degradation is driven by declining sediment supply, sea-level rise (SLR), and human interventions such as sea dike construction, shrimp farming, and groundwater extraction, which has led to significant land subsidence.

Flat and low-lying, Sóc Trăng and Bạc Liêu are experiencing the fastest rates of shoreline mangrove loss, with severe consequences for local communities and businesses. In these provinces, mangroves are being squeezed between inland dirt dikes and rising sea levels—a phenomenon known as coastal squeeze. Any mangroves planted seaward of the dikes are rapidly eroded due to the combined effects of reduced sediment supply, SLR, and subsidence. Restoring mangroves in these highly vulnerable coastal zones therefore requires a new approach that delivers both environmental and economic benefits.

Despite environmental pressures, shrimp farming remains one of the few viable livelihood options for relatively poor coastal communities, particularly in areas where salinity levels are too high for crop cultivation. As a result, both the sustainability of the shrimp sector and mangrove conservation are national priorities. To ensure long-term environmental, social, and economic sustainability, a new production model based on Recirculating Aquaculture Systems and Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (RAS–IMTA) is needed.

With funding from TCCF, IUCN proposes to pilot several RAS–IMTA-M models in Sóc Trăng and Bạc Liêu over a three-year period (2024–2026). The project aims to expand mangrove coverage inside sea dikes in coastal communes by testing and scaling up a hybrid nature-based solution (NbS) that combines mangrove restoration—through natural and assisted regeneration—with the conversion of shrimp farming from large, open-air ponds to hyper-intensive RAS. These systems can produce up to 20 times more shrimp per unit area while significantly reducing disease risks.

The transition to RAS will also eliminate or substantially reduce the need for groundwater pumping to dilute pond water, thereby helping to curb land subsidence, which currently occurs at a rate of approximately 2.5 cm per year—five times faster than the global average rate of sea-level rise. Knowledge and lessons learned from integrating RAS with mangrove restoration will be shared with businesses to encourage broader adoption of these sustainable practices. In this context, the project seeks to contract a qualified consultant with relevant expertise and experience to carry out the tasks outlined above.

RfP Reference: IUCN -BLST-2026-01

About IUCN

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is a global membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private, and non-governmental entities with the tools and knowledge needed to advance sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. IUCN combines the latest science with traditional knowledge and stakeholder engagement to support effective and equitable environmental governance.

More information: www.iucn.org

Position Details

- **Title:** RAS – IMTA - M Consultant
- **Category:** National Individual Consultant
- **Duration:** 11 months (February – December 2026), approximately 135 working days
- **Payment Modality:** Delivery-based (against accepted deliverables)

Description of the Assignment

The consultant will be responsible for the following tasks:

Key Tasks:

1. **Field Survey:** Conduct survey, select and negotiate with at least 3 farmers to collect data for designing IMTA – RAS - M models.
2. **System Design:** Develop technical layouts, cost estimation for equipment, operational guidelines, and water monitoring during the first production cycle.
3. **On-Site Support and Training:** Support to install the RAS models and provide technical advice for one production cycle for 03 farmers.
4. **Capacity Building:** Develop training materials and conduct Training of Trainers (TOT) sessions for farmers and local staff.

Deliverables and Timeline

Deliverable	Description	Deadline
Field Survey	Including site assessment, analysis, and consultation	February -March 2026
System Design	Technical layouts, cost estimation for equipment, operational guidelines, and data sheets for monitoring during the production cycles	March – April 2026
On-Site Support and Training	Support to install the RAS models and provide technical advice for one production cycle for each selected famer	April - November 2026
Capacity Building	Develop training materials and conduct Training of Trainers (TOT) sessions for farmers and local staff	November – December 2026

Duration and Level of Effort

Total Duration: 11 months (February – December 2026)

Estimated Level of Effort: 135 working days, including:

- Field Survey – 5 days
- System Design and – 25 days
- On-Site Support and Training – 100 days
- Capacity Building – 10 days

Qualifications and Experience

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- MSc or PhD in Aquaculture with a focus on IMTA-RAS and mangrove restoration.
- Proven experience (minimum 5 years) in aquaculture in the Mekong Delta region.
- Demonstrated understanding of aquaculture–mangrove integration models.
- Familiarity with project development and community consultation in conservation or sustainable livelihoods.
- Excellent written and spoken Vietnamese and English. Experience in participatory conservation planning and community engagement.
- Strong analytical, facilitation, and communication skills.

Duty Station

The consultant will work with the IUCN office in Ho Chi Minh city to arrange travel, meetings, and stakeholder workshops. Travel and hotel are arranged and paid directly by IUCN.

Travel Requirements

Travel to project field sites within Vietnam is required. All related travel costs will be reimbursed according to IUCN's travel policy.

Application Process

Eligibility Requirements:

Applicants must:

- Be free of any conflict of interest.
- Be a citizen of Vietnam (for national positions).

- Be compliant with all applicable tax obligations.
- Not have been found guilty of environmental, financial, or ethical misconduct.
- Not be involved in any pending bankruptcy or legal proceedings.

Required Documents:

Applicants must submit the following documents in PDF format:

- Proposal, including budget.
- CVs
- Signed Declaration Form [[Attach if applicable](#)].

Submission Details:

- Submission Deadline: **12 February 2026**
- Email Address: phong.nguyenthanh@iucn.org
- Email Subject Line: IUCN -BLST-2026-01 – Applicant Name
- All submissions must be in PDF format. If necessary, split large files into multiple emails (e.g., Email 1 of 2, Email 2 of 2).
- Do not use file-sharing links or platforms for submission.

Additional Information

- IUCN reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications without providing any reason.
- Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for further steps.