SIGMA
Southeast Asian Innovation Alliance for a Global Model of Future Agri-Food Systems

Technical Lead - Vietnam Field Operations

SIGMA Rice Pilot Project

Location:

Based in or near the Mekong Delta region (Can Tho or An Giang). Frequent local travel to pilot sites required.

Position Type:

Freelance Consultancy Contract (Initial term: 6 months, with potential renewal dependent on funding and performance).

Project Overview:

The SIGMA initiative (Southeast Asian Innovation Alliance for a Global Model of Future Agri-food Systems) is piloting a science-based, scalable approach to monitoring greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in rice production, with a focus on implementing alternative irrigation practices for smallholder farmers in Vietnam. The project integrates field sensors, satellite remote sensing, and farmer-contributed data to support sustainable agriculture and food security. The key aim of this pilot project, implemented in partnership with Can Tho University and U.S.-based researchers, is to refine a low-cost MRV (Measurement, Reporting, and Verification) system for rice farming in Southeast Asia.

Position Summary:

We are seeking an experienced **Technical Lead** to manage field implementation and provide scientific support for the SIGMA Rice Pilot Project in the Mekong Delta. This role combines hands-on field coordination with responsibility for supporting greenhouse gas measurement activities, sensor deployment, and high-quality data collection. This person will work closely with farmers, local academic partners and the international SIGMA research team to ensure that field protocols are implemented accurately and that project data are collected in a consistent and scientifically robust manner.

Key Responsibilities:

- Serve as the primary liaison between academic partners (e.g., Can Tho University) and international researchers to ensure data integrity and scientific rigor.
- Supervise the collection, organization, and preliminary quality control of complex field data (e.g., sensor logs, chamber sampling schedules, and geospatial data).
- Coordinate day-to-day operations of fieldwork across pilot farms, ensuring that irrigation practices are correctly implemented and monitored.
- Develop and lead technical training sessions for local field staff and farmers on monitoring and data collection protocols
- Interface between local teams and the international SIGMA team to provide technical updates and resolve challenges.

Qualifications and Experience:

Required:

- Bachelor's degree in agriculture, environmental science, natural resource management, or a related field.
- Experience with agricultural data collection (e.g. yield measurements, fertilizer records, or irrigation practices).
- Familiarity with rice agriculture, sustainability practices, or carbon emissions mitigation.
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Proficiency in both Vietnamese and English.

Preferred:

- Master's degree in a relevant field of study.
- Knowledge of GHG measurement techniques (e.g., closed chamber methods).
- Research or professional experience in rice-based cropping systems and smallholder farming systems.
- Experience working with universities, NGOs, or international development projects.

Compensation and Terms:

- Competitive **monthly retainer** based on experience and location.
- **Operational expenditure allowance:** To cover local travel, communications, and project-related field expenses.
- **Health and safety support:** A one-off payment will be provided at the start of the contract as a contribution toward a Personal Accident and Health Insurance policy.
- **Note:** As this is a freelance consultancy, the consultant is responsible for their own personal income tax filings and social insurance contributions as per local regulations.

How to Apply:

Please submit your CV, a cover letter describing your interest in the position, and contact information for two references to jtill@illinois.edu. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, with priority given to candidates based in the Mekong Delta.