

Terms of Reference

Scoping Study on EU-Viet Nam Cooperation on Critical Raw Materials (CRM)

Date: 29 July 2026

1. BACKGROUND

With the Joint Statement for the elevation of the EU–Viet Nam relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, critical raw materials have been identified as a priority area for cooperation.

In the last year, Viet Nam has shown ambitions to position itself as an emerging actor in the global supply of critical raw materials (CRM), leveraging significant reserves of rare earths, tungsten, bauxite, titanium, fluorspar, bismuth or antimony, which are deemed as critical for industries in the energy and digital transition or in other strategic sectors. Viet Nam currently supplies Antimony, Tungsten and some Titanium to the EU. Viet Nam also has significant reserves in Bauxite, Bismuth, Rare Earth Elements (REE), as well as in Feldspar, Fluorspar, Manganese, Natural Graphite, Copper, Phosphorus, Nickel. However, the EU RMIS – Raw Materials Information System has not (yet) created a country profile for Viet Nam. Viet Nam could also produce gallium, as a by-product of bauxite to alumina processing. Viet Nam is currently working on the basis of a dedicated mineral strategy¹ and until now seems to be focusing on two main pillars for the development of its CRM reserves:

1. completing 85 percent of the geological and mineral mapping area at the scale of 1:50,000 of the mainland by 2030 (and assess the mineral potential of promising mining structures), and
2. promoting domestic processing and moving up the value chain with technology transfers from international partners.

Recent reforms, including the amended *Law on Geology and Minerals*, and *Resolution 79* on the leading role of state-owned enterprises, are indeed aiming to ensure domestic value addition by limiting raw exports and pushing for foreign partnerships, particularly for technology transfer in a sector considered strategic and sensitive, notably on rare earth elements. Sustainable mining practices have also been recently emphasized in the amended Law on Geology and Minerals and could be an interesting entry point for Viet Nam’s cooperation with international partners.

In parallel, the European Union has been growingly dependent on foreign suppliers regarding CRM essential to the twin transitions, be it on green energy transition, electric vehicles, aeronautics, robotics and digitalisation. Due to the growing threat of supply chain disruption and of excessive dependences on single few supplier nations, the European Union has set up the CRM Act², which aims to diversify its critical material supply and to build partnerships with resource-rich countries so that the dependency on a single country should not exceed 65% by 2030 at all processing stages.

The EU and Vietnam upgraded their relations to a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership”. The Joint Statement of January 29th, 2026, on this upgrade explicitly includes CRM as a “sector of mutual

¹ This strategy lies essentially in Vietnam’s Decision 866/QĐ-TTg (2023) providing for a National Master Plan for mineral exploration, extraction, and processing from 2021 to 2030. This decision was supplemented in 2024 by a dedicated implementation plan and by the adoption of a new Geology and Minerals Law. In 2025, a strategy on rare earth elements and specific export measures were adopted.

² [Critical Raw Materials Act](#), see the list of 34 CRMs for EU in Annex II

interest” for trade and investment opportunities. EU heads of missions have identified Viet Nam as a potential source and a partner for CRM extraction and processing, with needs in technology, sustainability, community relations and access to finance, and as a market for related EU goods and services. They also have identified a number of knowledge gaps.

Regarding member states, there has been already some existing institutional partnerships between Viet Nam and Member States expert institutions such as BGR, TNO, NCEA, BRGM, University of Warsaw.

2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

2.1 General Objective

The overall objective of the assignment is to provide the European Commission with a scoping study of Viet Nam’s CRM potential and recommend options for EU engagement in the sector in Viet Nam. This study should in particular fill existing knowledge gaps, identify bankable projects beyond the known mining and processing activities, identify EU business and financial actors willing to engage in Viet Nam, answer questions about associated risks, any trade restrictions that could negatively impact CRM value chains and help aligning EU and EU Member States’ capabilities with Viet Nam’s needs and vice versa Viet Nam’s potential with EU economic security and commercial needs.

2.2 Detailed Tasks

The contractor shall conduct the following tasks:

- Map current and prospective CRM-related value chains, including extraction, trade in raw materials or scrap, processing, use in downstream applications, and export capacities in Viet Nam and explore and develop further focus areas that will be determined jointly with the EU during the desk review.
- Identify bankable projects, i.e. concrete mining, processing, refining, or other projects that are open to EU off-takers/investors indicating the particular needs on the Viet Nam side, within short and medium term (up to 3-5 years).
- Carry out a key Vietnamese CRM stakeholder analysis and institutional set up, including Vietnamese authorities, industry, and civil society (e.g., Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, Ministry of Industry and Trade, State-owned Vinacomin, Masan, ...)
- Review the capacities and interest of EU stakeholders active in the CRM sector, and EU industries with an interest in securing key raw material inputs, and their relevance for and interest in engagement in Viet Nam with a view to define the EU offer for CRM engagement in Viet Nam.
- Review and synthesize the geological potential and mapping of CRM resources in Viet Nam, analyse Viet Nam’s legal and policy framework concerning geological resources, mining and processing with a focus on provisions relevant to potential European investment in this sector as well as on any restrictive practices that could negatively impact trade and investments in CRM; explore Vietnamese priorities and strategic interests in CRM development and assess them against EU priorities as set out in the CRM Act.
- Identify current international partnerships of Viet Nam, both public and private, without EU or EU Member State participation, any lessons to be learnt from them, and whether they would be interesting and open for EU participation.

- Based on existing EU engagement with Viet Nam (e.g. via the cooperation by EU Member State national geological services, participation of Viet Nam in Erasmus and Horizon programs, etc.), identify relevant EU opportunities for institutional, geological and R&D cooperation, human resources development, and/or on supporting investment projects of common interest, and identify and explore and recommend any other entry points and modalities for EU support and engagement.

This should include describing how such additional engagement builds-on and complements existing or other planned engagements notably by EU Member States, and how best to sequence different activities.

- Carry out a benchmark assessment of the opportunities identified for EU cooperation with Viet Nam against similar CRM opportunities in other countries considered as suppliers or potential suppliers to Europe (potentially with using studies already done by the Facility if available).

2.3 Methodology and working arrangements

The study will consist of three main phases:

- a) a desk review phase,
- b) an expert field mission in Viet Nam;
- c) a report writing phase.

Each component will contribute to a holistic understanding of Viet Nam's CRM potential and cooperation opportunities as per the overall objective of the assignment.

The contractor shall apply a proportionate methodology with a phase 1 dedicated to reviewing existing literature, studies and other reports and information, and a phase 2 dedicated to a field mission in Viet Nam, including targeted consultations with relevant Vietnamese and European stakeholders. Phase 3 will serve to consolidate the findings and prepare the final report as main deliverable of the scoping study.

At all relevant stages, the contractor, will be in close contact with the EU Delegation to Viet Nam in Hanoi to ensure a smooth implementation of the assignment in line with the EU's expectations. The EU Delegation will be available to provide support towards establishing contacts with locally based partners, including Vietnamese and EU actors.

2.4 Deliverables

The final deliverable of this scoping study will be a report covering the findings and recommendations resulting from the tasks as described under 2.2 above. The report will contain a clear, objective assessment of Viet Nam's CRM potential and actionable recommendations that could be used to feed the elaboration of a roadmap for EU-Viet Nam cooperation on CRM.

The findings will serve as basis to inform policy decisions and support the development of strategic engagement initiatives.

The final report shall be concise and evidence based. It should not be longer than 50 pages excluding annexes. Intermediate versions shall be delivered as follows:

D1 version 1	An initial report submitted at the end of the desk review phase, which includes the findings of the desk phase and identifies recommended focus areas. The Initial report will be the basis for the EU to determine the focus areas of the scoping study and to provide overall guidance on the further proceedings of the study.
D1 version 2	A draft final report to delivered one week after the end of the field mission. It will consist of the revised desk review findings and recommendations and the results of the scoping mission.
D1 version 3	A final report including all findings on the tasks as described in section 2.2, providing clear and specific recommendations for EU cooperation with Viet Nam on CRM.
D2 version 1	A presentation summarising the main findings of the desk review (D1 v.1) to be presented to stakeholders.
D2 version 2	A presentation summarising the main findings of the final report (D1 v.3) to be presented to stakeholders.
D3	Provide excel sheet of relevant data attached to the final report, e.g., list of relevant projects with their parameters, data used in modelling or analysis (e.g. graphs, charts etc.)

After each delivery, the EC shall be given 7 working days to provide feedback and further iterations of each report may be requested by the EU if required to achieve the level of quality envisaged.

Online consultations may be set up if/where needed.

The reports and presentation documents shall be made with the Global Gateway templates (to be provided).

3. REQUIRED PROFILES

The contractor's team of experts would be composed of a senior expert and a junior expert. They should be collectively skilled in the following fields:

- Expertise in geology, mining, processing of raw materials, notably on the value chains covering REE, tungsten, nickel, bauxite-aluminium-aluminium, titanium.
- Knowledge of and experience with European CRM value chains, the CRM Act and EU's support instruments.
- Professional background in Government policy making and planning, economics and the business sector;
- Professional experience in carrying out similar scoping studies in the sector
- Working experience in South-East Asia, especially Viet Nam.
- Fluency in English and Vietnamese, in speaking, reading and writing.

As part of the proposal, detailed CVs of the experts reflecting the above requirements shall be included in the offer.

4. TIMELINE

The estimated effort should be around **50 person days**. The envisaged timeline to implement the assignment is as follows:

Deliverables	Start week	End week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
D1: Desk Review, Scoping Mission and Roadmap											
v.1: initial report	1	2									
EU feedback	3	3									
v.2: draft full report with scoping mission results	4	6									
EC feedback	7	7									
v.3: Final report	8	9									
D2: Powerpoint Presentation											
v.1: desk review	1	2									
v.2: final presentation	4	6									
D3: Data Excel Sheet											

▲ Delivery of report by email on Friday end of business day (eob).

The final report shall be submitted to the contracting organization by early November 2026.

The consultant(s) shall expect a few follow-up calls to present the findings to stakeholders within 2-3 weeks after the final report delivery or during a related event (potentially 1-hour online for each session).