

CONSULTANCY TO UNDERTAKE INVESTIGATIVE RESEARCH ON GENDER-BASED VIOLATIONS IN TEA ESTATES IN KENYA AND TANZANIA AND PALM OIL PLANTATIONS IN UGANDA

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction.

Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI), in partnership with Diakonia Africa and supported by Ford Foundation, is implementing a project titled “*Curbing Gender-based violence (GBV) in commercial investment schemes in EAC.*” The project aims to ensure better and dignified working conditions leading to the promotion of rights for decent work for women and girls working in large scale investment schemes in the East African countries of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. Specifically, the project will contribute to various medium-term outcomes including to:

- International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions on harassment and gender-based violence, and AfCFTA investment protocol mainstreamed in investment legal and regulatory policy frameworks for the effective protection of the rights of women workers.
- Enhanced capacity of labor officers, women labor unions to effectively engage and advocate for policy reforms that support access remedy mechanisms for women and girls affected by Gender Based Violence in the three-member EAC states.
- Strengthened platforms for engagement between women and girls’ casual workers, and policy makers and employers to champion their rights at the respective national and regional levels.
- Evidence generated on the proliferation of gender-based violations in large-scale investment schemes to inform advocacy for policy review.
- Strengthened institutional capacity of partners to adequately deliver on programme outcomes.

In light of the above, SEATINI seeks to contract a consultant undertake investigative research on gender-based violations in tea estates in Kenya and Tanzania and Palm oil plantations in Uganda. This research will collect the voices and experiences of women workers, providing evidence-based insights that can support policy review and reform efforts. This research aligns with SEATINI’s broader objectives to address systemic gender-based violence (GBV) in agricultural value chains, which has been exacerbated by inadequate legal protections and gender-discriminatory practices. The findings will inform advocacy at national, regional, and international levels to promote gender equality and better working conditions for women workers in these industries.

Background and Problem Statement.

The growing focus on attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) across East African Community (EAC) partner states has led to an investment landscape that increasingly prioritizes corporate interests, often at the expense of social and environmental obligations. EAC member states, including Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, have put in place strategies such as the EAC Investment Strategy, EAC Model Investment Treaty, and liberalization of their economies to rapidly attract foreign capital. In Uganda, government initiatives like the National Development Plan (NDP), the Investment Code Act of 2019, and the State House Investor Protection Unity reflect the emphasis on boosting investment, particularly in the agriculture sector. This includes provisions for foreign investment in key agricultural industries such as tea and palm oil.

However, the rush to attract investment has often overlooked the potential adverse impacts on workers, particularly women, in these sectors. Despite international frameworks like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the International Labour Organization's (ILO) conventions, and regional commitments such as the African Union's Protocol on the Rights of Women, gender-based violations (GBVs) remain a persistent issue in East African agriculture. Women working in tea estates and palm oil plantations often face exploitative working conditions, including wage disparities, sexual harassment, discrimination, and physical abuse, which undermine their health, dignity, and economic well-being.

In Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, the tea and palm oil industries are key economic sectors, yet they fail to consistently implement effective policies to protect women workers from GBV. While Kenya has ratified the ILO C190 convention on violence and harassment, Tanzania has yet to do so, creating a regional policy gap that needs to be addressed. Furthermore, issues such as weak labor law enforcement, insufficient gender policies, and the prevalence of informal, temporary, and seasonal employment make women in these sectors particularly vulnerable to abuse.

This research aims to investigate and document the gender-based violations in tea estates and palm oil plantations across Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. It will examine the prevalence and nature of GBVs within these sectors, assess the current policy and regulatory frameworks, and explore how they can be strengthened to better protect workers' rights. The findings will inform advocacy for stronger legal protections, improved enforcement of labor rights, and the integration of gender-sensitive

policies that align with both regional and international standards. By amplifying the voices and experiences of women workers, this research seeks to address the systemic issues of GBV in these critical sectors and promote a more sustainable and equitable investment framework in East Africa.

Objectives of the Consultancy:

The overall objective of this consultancy is to document gender-based violations within tea estates and palm oil plantations in East Africa, with a focus on collecting the voices and experiences of women workers. Specific objectives are to:

- Investigate the nature and extent of gender-based violations faced by women workers in tea estates in Kenya and Tanzania, and palm oil plantations in Uganda.
- Identify and analyze the policies, practices, and regulations (or lack thereof) that contribute to gender inequality and GBV in these sectors.
- Collect and amplify the voices of affected women workers, including their experiences of discrimination, harassment, unequal pay, and violence.
- Provide evidence-based recommendations for policy review, legal reforms, and actions needed to protect the rights and improve the welfare of women workers in these industries.

Scope of Work:

The research will focus on the following areas:

- **Tea Estates in Kenya and Tanzania:** The study will assess gender-based violations faced by women workers in tea estates, with a particular focus on their working conditions, wages, access to benefits, safety at the workplace, and any forms of violence or harassment.
- **Palm Oil Plantations in Uganda:** The research will examine the situation of women workers in the palm oil plantations in Uganda, focusing on gender-based violence, discrimination, wage disparities, and exploitation.
- **Data Collection:** Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected through surveys, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and case studies of women workers across the selected sites.

- **Policy Analysis:** The research will analyze the existing policy framework, including national labor laws, international conventions, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitments, to assess their adequacy in addressing gender-based violations in these industries.

Methodology

The research will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. This will include:

- **Desk Research:** Review of existing literature, reports from organizations such as UNCTAD, ILO, etc. and other relevant research to establish a baseline understanding of the issue.
- **Field Research:** Direct engagement with women workers in tea estates in Kenya and Tanzania and palm oil plantations in Uganda through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews.
- **Focus Group Discussions:** Organizing focus groups with women workers to facilitate open discussion and capture collective experiences.
- **Case Studies:** Detailed case studies of specific instances of gender-based violations and their impact on workers' lives.
- **Policy and Legal Analysis:** Review of existing national and regional policies, labor laws, and corporate practices, alongside international human rights conventions and frameworks like the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

Deliverables

The deliverables for this research include:

- **Research Report:** A comprehensive research report detailing the findings on gender-based violations in tea estates in Kenya and Tanzania and palm oil plantations in Uganda. This report will include:
 - A detailed analysis of the data collected, including qualitative narratives from women workers.
 - Case studies of gender-based violence, harassment, discrimination, and wage disparity.
 - A policy analysis section outlining the strengths and gaps in the existing legal frameworks and regulations.
 - Evidence-based recommendations for policy and legal reforms to protect women workers' rights and enhance gender equality.
- **Executive Summary:** A concise executive summary of the key findings and recommendations aimed at policymakers, civil society organizations, and international

stakeholders.

- **Advocacy Brief:** A short advocacy brief based on the research findings, which can be used to raise awareness and engage stakeholders such as government bodies, international organizations, and companies operating in the agricultural sector.

Timeline

The research is expected to be completed within four months from the start date. The major milestones will be as follows:

- Month 1: Desk research and preparation of data collection tools.
- Month 2: Field research (data collection in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda).
- Month 3: Data analysis and drafting of the report.
- Month 4: Finalization of the report, review, and dissemination of findings.

Budget

- A detailed budget will be provided separately, covering the costs of research, data collection, travel, consultations, and report preparation.

Reporting and Supervision

The research will be supervised by the SEATINI team including the Executive Director, Programs and Communications Manager and the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. The lead researcher will be responsible for coordinating the research team, data collection, and report writing.

Qualifications and Experience of the Research Team

The research team should include professionals with the following qualifications:

- **Lead Researcher:** Expertise in gender studies, labor rights, or development studies with experience conducting field research on gender-based violence and labor conditions in the agricultural sector.
- **Field Researchers:** Experience in qualitative research, specifically in gender-based violence and agricultural value chains in East Africa.
- **Legal Expert:** Knowledge of labor law, international human rights frameworks, and national regulatory policies in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania.

Mode of Application

- The consultant will submit a technical and financial proposal including a brief on their



understanding of the ToRs, the proposed methodology, timelines and an indicative budget including tax. This should also be followed by a CV and an Expression of Interest that highlights previous similar experiences.

- Submission deadline by COB on 15th February 2025 to: procurement@seatiniuganda.org and info@seatiniuganda.org