

Terms of Reference

Consultancy to Develop Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Plan

EU SWITCH Kenya Green

Tujenge Pamoja: Advancing Kenya's Circular Economy through MSMEs

About Hivos

Founded in 1968, Hivos is a human rights and social justice organization driven by humanist values. We envision a just world in which everyone, regardless of their identity, background or circumstances, lives in dignity and freedom and can build a fair and sustainable future for themselves, their communities, and the wider society.

Our mission is to defend and expand the civil and political rights that enable people, either as individuals, communities, grassroots movements, or organizations, to realize this vision. The full, unhindered exercise of these rights is necessary to keep civic space open and growing.

We focus on supporting and strengthening civil society actors, organizations, and networks; social movements; independent media and cultural actors; human rights defenders; and community organizations whose work aims to achieve equality and justice in their societies.

About Tujenge Pamoja: Advancing Kenya's Circular Economy through MSMEs

The EU SWITCH Kenya Green: "Tujenge Pamoja: Advancing Kenya's Circular Economy through MSMEs" is a multistakeholder initiative funded by the European Union under the EU SWITCH Kenya Green Framework. The program aims at accelerating Kenya's transition to an inclusive circular economy (CE).

The project is implemented by a consortium led by Hivos, in partnership with the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), KCB Foundation, United States International University – Africa (USIU-A) and Somo Africa. The program supports Kenya's transition to an inclusive circular economy – strengthening Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Business Support Organizations (BSOs) and TVETs, enhancing access to green finance, and promoting sustainable production and consumption practices across three value chains: plastics, textiles and organic waste. The project is implemented in eight counties: Nairobi, Kiambu, Nakuru, Machakos, Makueni (Nairobi Metropolitan Bloc) and Mombasa, Kilifi, Kwale (Pwani Economic Bloc).

The project's overall objective is to contribute to inclusive green growth in Kenya through strengthened environmental governance and circular business practices. The project commits to have 4,000 MSMEs adopting improved circular-economy practices; 4,800 individuals trained on circular-economy technical and business skills; €3 million in green finance accessed by MSMEs; 560 inclusive green jobs created; at least 150

MSMEs receiving sub-grants from a €1.5 million Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) mechanism (the Let's Go Green Seed Fund); and 30 million people reached through circular-economy awareness campaigns over the project period.

Invitation to Bid

Hivos invites qualified consultants or firms to submit proposals to develop the project's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Plan.

The GESI Plan is a foundational governance document for the project. The GESI Plan will be guided by KEPSA's 2022 Private Sector Gender Mainstreaming Policy, the Hivos GEDI White Paper and other GESI best practices in the sector and must operationalize the inclusion commitments the consortium made in its proposal to the EU. It will guide how the project selects, supports, and monitors its MSME beneficiaries over the project period.

This is a co-design assignment, not an isolated drafting exercise. The selected consultant will work closely with the consortium – in particular KEPSA and Hivos – through structured consultation and validation checkpoints, so that the final Plan is owned and implementable by the consortium that must deliver it.

This TOR sets out the background, objectives, scope, deliverables, eligibility, and submission requirements.

Purpose of the Study

The Project's Gender-transformative Commitment

The project commits to a gender-transformative approach to ensure women, youth, Persons Living with Disabilities (PWDs), LGBTQI+ entrepreneurs, and refugees are driving and benefiting from Kenya's transition to a circular economy.

The GESI Plan will inform inclusive targeting, accessible capacity building, anti-GBV/SH measures, gender-responsive advocacy and budgeting, and a monitoring framework with quarterly GESI reviews.

The project commits to the following inclusion benchmarks for supported MSMEs, aligned with the 2X Challenge:

- At least 50% women-led MSMEs
- At least 60% youth-led MSMEs
- At least 10% MSMEs from marginalized groups (PWDs, refugees, LGBTQI+).

Objectives of the Assignment

The overall objective is to produce a practical, consortium-owned GESI Plan that operationalizes the project's inclusion commitments across its full results chain.

Specific objectives

1. Translate the project's inclusion commitments into a coherent, pragmatic, time-bound GESI Plan that consortium partners can implement and be held accountable to.
2. Anchor the Plan on KEPSA's 2022 Private Sector Gender Mainstreaming Policy, the Hivos GEDI White Paper, KCB Foundation GEDI Framework and other GESI best practices in the sector.
3. Define the operational mechanisms for inclusive MSME targeting and selection – including how the 50%/60%/10% benchmarks and 2X Challenge alignment will be achieved in practice in the eight counties.
4. Specify accessibility and gender-responsive provisions for capacity building and mentorship that address the real barriers marginalized groups face (social and domestic burdens, norms, physical and communication access).
5. Set out the Project's anti-gender-based-violence and sexual-harassment provisions, and how they connect to the Project's broader safeguarding and PSEAH framework.
6. Define the GESI monitoring framework – the qualitative and quantitative indicators, disaggregation requirements, and the quarterly review mechanism – in alignment with the Project's Performance Management Plan (PMP).
7. Embed the Plan in the consortium through genuine co-design, so that partners understand, accept, and deliver it.

Scope of Work

The consultant will undertake the following. The consortium will provide the proposal, the log frame, the PMP, KEPSA's 2022 policy, Hivos GEDI White Paper, and introductions to partners and key stakeholders.

1. Inception and Document Review

- Review the proposal (Description of the Project and log frame), the PMP, the consortium members' safeguarding/PSEAH materials.
- Review relevant Kenyan frameworks including but not limited to the MSME Act 2012, the Constitution of Kenya 2010 (equality and inclusion provisions), the Persons with Disabilities Act 2025, the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) relevant publications and studies, relevant county-level inclusion frameworks, and the EU Gender Project Plan III (GAP III).
- Submit a short inception note with refined methodology, a co-design and consultation plan, and an annotated outline of the GESI Plan.

2. Consultation and Co-design

This is the heart of the assignment. The consultant must convene, at a minimum:

- A kickoff co-design session with consortium members.
- Consultations with each consortium member on how GESI will apply.
- Targeted consultations with disability-rights organizations (e.g. a Persons with Disability (PWD) focused Organization), a refugee-serving organizations including the Department of Refugee Services (DRS), women's enterprise networks including Women Enterprise Fund, youth networks including Youth Enterprise Development Fund, and an LGBTQI+ economic organizations, and an LGBTQI+ safety specialist, reflecting the Project's commitment to these groups.
- A validation workshop with the full consortium before the Plan is finalized.

3. Drafting the GESI Plan

The GESI Plan must, at a minimum, contain:

- A clear statement of how it anchors in and applies KEPSA's 2022 Private Sector Gender Mainstreaming Policy, the Hivos GEDI White Paper, KCB Foundation GEDI Framework and other GESI best practices in the sector.
- An operational inclusive targeting and selection framework delivering the 50%/60%/10% benchmarks and 2X Challenge alignment, with Participatory Action Research (PAR)-informed criteria.
- Accessibility and gender-responsive provisions for all capacity building, mentorship and the FSTP (Let's Go Green Seed Fund) implementation process.
- Anti-GBV/SH provisions linked to the consortium members' safeguarding and PSEAH frameworks.
- Proposed strategies and approaches to actualize the GESI Plan

- Gender-responsive budgeting and resourcing guidance.
- A GESI monitoring framework – indicators, disaggregation (sex, age, disability via Washington Group Short Set, marginalized status), and the quarterly GESI review mechanism – aligned with the PMP, including the PMP's composite GESI inclusion indicator.
- A risk assessment covering inclusion-specific and Do-No-Harm risks such as marginalized groups' safety in the Kenyan context, backlash risks, community dynamics, with mitigations and responsibility matrix.

4. Finalization

- Deliver a final Costed GESI Plan incorporating review comments
- Develop a concise summary version suitable for partner staff and field teams.
- Deliver a short implementation-handover note so the consortium can run the Plan without further consultant involvement.

Consultant Qualifications

Mandatory

1. Advanced degree in gender studies, development studies, social sciences, or related fields.
2. At least 5 years demonstrated experience developing GESI or gender-mainstreaming strategies for development programs in Kenya or the region.
3. Demonstrated familiarity with private-sector gender mainstreaming, ideally including KEPSA's 2022 Private Sector Gender Mainstreaming Policy or comparable frameworks.
4. Demonstrated experience with disability inclusion (including the Washington Group questions) and with the 2X Challenge or equivalent gender-finance frameworks.
5. At least 2 comparable assignments completed in the last 5 years, with references.
6. For firms: a registered Kenyan legal entity with a valid Tax Compliance Certificate. For individuals: valid registration/KRA PIN.

Strongly Preferred

- Experience with EU-funded Projects and EU GAP III.
- Experience in circular economy, MSME, or green growth programming.
- Demonstrated ability to engage LGBTQI+ inclusion sensitively and safely in the Kenyan context.
- Lived experience of, or close association with, the disability or other marginalized communities in the Plan concerns.

Time Frame

It is expected that the report will be completed within **30 working days** from the day of engagement.

Application process and requirements

Interested consultants are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) that includes both a Technical and Financial proposal. The submission should not exceed fifteen pages in total and must clearly outline the proposed methodology and budget.

Technical proposal

- Individual or Company profile.
- A detailed proposal outlining the approach and methodologies, including a work plan.
- Updated CVs of core team members, clearly demonstrating relevant experience and background.
- One (1) written sample of previous GESI studies with direct attribution

Financial Proposal

- A detailed budget - in Kenya Shillings with cost breakdown, including consultant fees, travel expenses and any other direct or indirect costs necessary for the execution of the assignment.

The submission should be sent to tujengepamoja@hivos.org with the subject "A Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Plan" in the subject line by **20th July 2026**.

Hivos reserves the right to cancel this procurement, to reject any or all bids, and to negotiate terms with the preferred bidder before contract signature. Hivos is not bound to accept the lowest or any bid.