

Annex II



CONSULTANT TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. Contract Overview

Consultancy Title:	<i>International consultant to conduct the final evaluation of the Gender Rural Equality and Tourism (GREAT) Project/ Team Lead</i>
Location:	Home Based
Practice Area:	Gender Equality
Type of Contract:	Individual Contract
Category (Eligible applicants):	External
Post Type and Level:	International Consultant
Languages Required:	English
Duration of Contract:	35 working days October 2024 – February 2025

II. Consultancy Assignment

Background/Context

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

Through its programmes and projects, UN Women in Albania is providing technical assistance to national partners (governmental and non-governmental) in the implementation of existing international and national commitments to women's rights and gender equality, it facilitates networking and exchange of good practices and advocates for women's rights and gender equality in all areas of life. According to its mandate, UN Women works in five thematic areas, such as leadership and participation, women's economic empowerment, ending violence against women, women peace and security and governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments. UN Women is also the lead Agency in coordinating the UN Country Team on gender equality and is chairing the UN Group on gender equality.

Rural women in Albania face many challenges to their economic security, such as: lack of financial support, a weak access to secure land rights, a limited understanding of which businesses are profitable, limited availability to enter the labor force due to disproportionate engagement in unpaid activities and, high dependence from family members. Women's contribution to agriculture in Albania is vital, with 54 percent of employed women working in this sector. However, such contribution often remains invisible because of the high levels of informality, which often leaves them without protection or social benefits.

To address some of these challenges UN Women, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Albania, and with the support of the Government of Italy, is implementing the **Gender Rural Equality and Tourism (GREAT)** project, a three-year initiative that will contribute to rural women's empowerment in Albania and will strengthen women's roles and contribution to rural development. The project will contribute to sustainable economic development of rural women in three targeted regions and their communities by increasing their income and ability to obtain work.

The project aims to develop the capacities of rural women to develop their own business, to self-organize and register as local groups and to improve their access to finance. Simultaneously, GREAT will support targeted municipalities to prioritize and promote rural women's businesses, rural tourism and value chain development. Furthermore, it will promote a policy and legislative environment to strengthen women's economic empowerment and their access to and control over productive assets.

The project GREAT was developed based on the needs identified by UN Women and FAO in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, following recommendations of different studies and country assessments undertaken by these entities. Its main goals are aligned with the priorities of the Government and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS Tirana), in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its core principle of leaving no-one behind. UN Women is the implementing agency for this project with FAO as the main responsible party that will implement specific components. UN Women will engage relevant staff and expertise to ensure overall coordination, quality assurance, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the project.

1.1 Project beneficiaries and key stakeholders

The primary beneficiaries of the project are women and girls living in the rural areas of the municipalities of Elbasan and Kolonja. Rural women are generally not employed and the ones who work in private businesses have no social security payments. They are identified as “self-employed” and for that reason they cannot profit from the social and health insurance schemes. As a result, women are increasingly dependent on men financially. Rural women’s entrepreneurship can contribute to economic growth in the rural areas, which typically suffer lack of private initiative, and women entrepreneurship clearly represents an untapped potential. So rural women should be encouraged by creating favorable conditions, support mechanisms and providing them with relevant training opportunities. Other project beneficiaries include: women entrepreneurs, owners, managers, technical personnel of small and medium rural enterprises run by women, craftswomen, startup female entrepreneurs, unemployed women who want to set small businesses, CSOs working on gender equality and rural development, formal and non-formal institutions, organizations on national, regional and local level, and the rural population at large.

1.2 Budget, geographical scope and timeframe

The total budget of the project is EUR 1,350,000, funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation. The project is implemented in Albania, with focus in the municipalities of Elbasan and Kolonja.

1.3 Management Arrangements of the project

The project is led and managed by UN Women Albania office and implemented in collaboration with FAO. The project has also established a Steering Committee (PSC), consisting of Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (AICS), UN Women, FAO, and a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) which leads the PSC. The PSC serves as a joint decision-making body and also ensures coordination among stakeholders, monitors the project's progress, and makes strategic informed decisions for the project implementation and paving the way for achieving the targeted indicators as outlined in the PSC Terms of Reference (TORs). The PSC should convene twice a year and as needed in case of urgent matters.

The project has established also a Technical Working Group (TWG) consisting of representatives from AICS, UN Women and FAO. This group organizes regular meetings for addressing matters related to the everyday implementation of project activities and drafting of proposals to be submitted to the PSC.

2. Evaluation purpose, objectives and use

The main purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the achievement of project results and performance of the above-described intervention considering the following evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency and sustainability.

Specifically, the objectives of this evaluation are to:

- Analyze the relevance of the project objectives, strategy and approach at the country level;
- Assess effectiveness and a potential measurable impact of the project intervention;
- Assess organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of project results as defined in the intervention;
- Assess the sustainability of the results and intervention in the empowerment of rural women;
- Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges within the project, to inform future work of UN Women on rural women empowerment;
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project’s best practices;
- Provide actionable recommendations for future project development and maximize ownership by partners in the areas covered by the project;
- Assess the value added of UN Women including but not limited to advancing gender equality, mainstreaming gender in local and national documents and strategies, fighting of gender stereotype in rural areas, economic and social empowerment of rural women.

The findings of the evaluation are expected to contribute to effective programming, organizational learning and accountability. The findings of the evaluation will moreover be used to engage policy makers and other stakeholders at local and national level to advocate and budget for gender equality and rural women economic and social empowerment.

Targeted users of the evaluation are government counterparts, CSOs, development partners, UN agencies and the personnel of UN Women. The evaluation should provide specific recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered to inform future

programming. This would include interventions that require continued support, successful interventions for expansion, and recommendations on prioritizing interventions to maximize impact.

3. Evaluation scope, methodology and questions

3.1. Scope of the evaluation

The final evaluation of the project will be conducted in the final stage of the project's implementation and will cover the period from 5 March 2021 to 31 January 2024. The evaluation will be conducted between February and June 2024. The evaluation will include data collection missions to all target geographical areas of implementation (up to 3 locations, for an expected duration of the field mission of up to 4 days) and shall cover all aspects of the project's implementation.

3.2 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation will be a transparent and participatory process involving relevant stakeholders and partners. The evaluation will be based on gender and human rights principles and adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct and UN Women Evaluation Policy and guidelines.

The evaluation methodology will follow a Theory of Change approach and employ mixed methods including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches.

Methods may include but are not limited to:

- Desk review of relevant documents such as project documents, progress reports, financial records, meeting minutes and monitoring reports, and secondary data or studies relating to the regional and country context;
- Semi-structured interviews focus group discussions, surveys with direct and indirect beneficiaries, implementing partners, donor and other key stakeholders;
- Field visits and observation at selected project sites.
- Interviews with key stakeholders to ensure further triangulation.

Data from different research sources will be triangulated to increase its validity. The proposed approach and methodology must be considered as flexible guidelines rather than final requirements, and the evaluators will have to revise and make a refined methodological proposal at the inception phase of the evaluation. It is expected that the Evaluation Team, the service provider for this evaluation, will further refine the approach and methodology and submit a detailed description in the inception report. The methodology and approach must, however, incorporate human rights and gender equality perspectives.

3.3. Evaluation questions

Relevance

- To what extent was the design of the intervention and its results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries?
- To what extent the project addresses the main needs of the project's target groups?
- To what extent is the intervention consistent with the national and rural development strategies in the area of rural women empowerment?
- To what extent key national and local level partners were involved in the project's conceptualization and design process?
- To what extent have gender and human rights principles and strategies been integrated into the project design and implementation?
- To what extent UN Women possess a comparative advantage in the project's area of work in comparison with other UN entities and relevant stakeholders?

Coherence:

- To what extent does the project fit within UN Women's Strategic Plan and interrelated threefold mandate?
- Are there any synergies and inter-linkages between the project and other interventions of UN Women?
- To what extent the project is in complementarity, harmonization and coordination with the interventions of other actors' interventions in the same context and in the women economic empowerment area?
- To what extent the implementation of project ensures synergies and coordination with Government's and key partners relevant efforts while avoiding duplications?
- To what extent are the interventions achieving synergies with the work of the UN Country Team?

Effectiveness

- To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on both objectives and results levels?
- Has the project achieved any unforeseen results, either positive or negative? For whom? What are the good practices and the obstacles or shortcomings encountered? How were they overcome?
- How effective have the selected strategies and approaches been in achieving project results?
- How well did the intervention succeed in involving and building the capacities of the project partners?
- To what extent are the project approaches and strategies innovative for implementation of rural women empowerment strategies? What-if any-types of innovative good practices have been introduced in the project for the achievement of the results?

Impact

- What evidence exist that the project has delivered longer term results?
- Is there a potential measurable impact of the project intervention on the target group across all dimensions of empowerment?
- To what extent is the project changing the dynamics of power in relationships between different groups?
- To what extent is the project bringing about gender transformative changes that address the root causes of gender inequalities?

Efficiency

- Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes?
- Has there been effective leadership and management of the project including the structuring of management and administration roles to maximize results? Where does accountability lie?
- Have the project's results been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent has the project's management structure facilitated (or hindered) good results and efficient delivery?

Sustainability

- What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time after the project phase out?
- How effectively has the project generated country ownership of the results achieved, the establishment of partnerships with relevant stakeholders and the development of in-country capacities to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits?
- To what extent the project fostered the participation of relevant CSOs and women's organizations?
- To what extent has the project been able to promote replication and/or up-scaling of successful practices?
- What factors are/will be critical to maintain project results in the long term?

The above outlined evaluation questions are tentative, and the evaluation team is expected to refine those in the context of the inception phase of the evaluation. The evaluation team will propose final evaluation questions in the evaluation inception report.

4. Evaluation governance structure and process

4.1 Evaluation governance structure

The evaluation will be a consultative, inclusive and participatory process and will include a threefold management structure to ensure an effective evaluation process and maximize evaluation use.

The evaluation will be managed by the UN Women Albania Country Office. The UN Women Albania Evaluation Focal Point will be the task manager of the evaluation process in close coordination with the programme team. The evaluation process will be closely supported and quality assured by the UN Women Regional Evaluation Specialist for Europe and Central Asia (ECARES) who is a member of the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service. UN Women Albania Country Representative will endorse the final evaluation report and related evaluation management response.

An External Evaluation Reference Group (EERG) that will include key stakeholders including national central and local level institutions/partners, civil society organizations participating in the Programme, and other relevant UN agencies, as well as relevant donor partners. The EERG will also include FAO as an important actor in the project implementation. The purpose of the ERG will be to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in the design and scope of the evaluation, raising awareness of the different information needs and supporting quality assurance throughout the process. The reference group will provide input and relevant information at key stages of the evaluation: inception report, draft and final reports and will support UN Women with the dissemination of the results.

4.2 Phases of the evaluation process

The evaluation process has five phases:

1) Preparation: gathering and analyzing project data, conceptualizing the evaluation approach, internal consultations on the approach, preparing the TOR, establishment of the evaluation management's structure, stakeholders mapping and selection of evaluation team.

2) Inception: consultations between the evaluation team and the Steering Committee, programme portfolio review, finalization of stakeholder mapping, inception meetings with the ERG, review of the result logics, analysis of information relevant to the initiative, finalization of evaluation methodology and preparation and validation of inception report.

3) Data collection and analysis: in-depth desk research, in-depth review of the Programme documents and monitoring frameworks, in-depth online interviews as necessary, staff and partner survey/s, and field visits.

4) Analysis, validation and synthesis stage: analysis of data and interpretation of findings and drafting and validation of an evaluation report and other communication products.

5) Dissemination and follow-up: once the evaluation is completed UN Women is responsible for the development of a Management Response to evaluation recommendations within 6 weeks after the final approval of the evaluation report, publishing the evaluation report, uploading the final evaluation report on the UN Women GATE website and the dissemination of evaluation findings amongst key stakeholders.

The evaluation team will be responsible for phases 2, 3 and 4 with the support of UN Women while UN Women is entirely responsible for phases 1 and 5.

5.1 Evaluation deliverables

The evaluation team is responsible for the following deliverables:

- **An inception report:** The evaluation team will present a refined scope, a detailed outline of the evaluation design and methodology, evaluation questions, and criteria for the approach for in-depth desk review and field work to be conducted in the data collection phase. The report will include an evaluation matrix and detailed work plan.

- **Presentation of preliminary findings:** A PowerPoint presentation detailing the emerging findings of the evaluation will be shared with the evaluation task manager for feedback. The revised presentation will be delivered to the reference groups for comments and validation. The evaluation team will incorporate the feedback received into the draft report.

- **A draft evaluation report:** the first draft report which structure will be defined in the inception phase of the evaluation and will include a background, methodology, limitations, findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations sections.

- **The final evaluation report:** The final report will include a concise Executive Summary and annexes detailing the methodological approach and any analytical products developed during the course of the evaluation.

Regarding the validation process of all products, those will be shared with the evaluation reference groups for feedback and validation. All products will be quality assured by the UN Women Albania Country Office and the UN Women ECARES. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the final inception report. Final evaluation report will be approved by the ESC.

Evaluation Team Composition and Description of Responsibilities

An evaluation team consisting of an international consultant acting as the evaluation Team Leader who will be the main responsible person for the satisfactory delivery of main deliverables of the evaluation team, and a national consultant who will support all substantive aspects of the evaluation. The international consultant, as Team Leader, is responsible for overall coordination of the production of deliverables during all phases of the evaluation process, ensuring the quality of outputs and application of methodology as well as timely delivery of all evaluation products in close collaboration with the evaluation team, the evaluation task manager and the evaluation management group. The Team Leader is expected to coordinate remotely the field missions that will be conducted by the national consultant and will join the first mission of national consultant. The national consultant will conduct the field missions and will be responsible for arranging his/her agenda for the field work.

The profile of the international consultant will be complemented by the profile of the national Consultant and will be responsible for the following deliverables:

- **An inception report:** The team leader will present a refined scope, a detailed outline of the evaluation design and methodology, evaluation questions, and criteria for the approach for in-depth desk review and field work to be conducted in the data collection phase. The desk review of background documentation and the inception meeting with EERG will be completed and the data extracted from these resources will be incorporated into the inception report. The report will include an evaluation matrix and detailed work plan. A first draft report will be shared with the evaluation management group and, based upon the comments received the evaluation team will revise the draft. An audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the final inception report.
- **Presentation of preliminary findings:** The team leader is expected to review additional documents, conduct online interviews organize visit to program sites, hold debriefing with ERG for preparing the preliminary findings. A PowerPoint presentation detailing the emerging findings of the evaluation will be shared with the evaluation management group for feedback. The revised presentation will be delivered to the reference group for comment and validation.
- **A draft evaluation report:** A first draft report will be shared with the evaluation management group for initial feedback. The second draft report will incorporate evaluation management group feedback and will be shared with the evaluation reference group for identification of factual errors, errors of omission and/or misinterpretation of information. The third draft report will incorporate this feedback and then be shared with the reference group for final validation. An audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the revised drafts will be maintained
- **The final evaluation report:** The final report will include a concise Executive Summary and annexes detailing the methodological approach and any analytical products developed during the course of the evaluation. The structure of the report will be defined in the inception report.
- **Evaluation communication products:** A PowerPoint/Prezi presentation of the final key evaluation findings and recommendations, and a 2-pager/infographics on the final key findings, lessons learned and recommendations.

To ensure the greatest degree of independency of the evaluation process the Task Manager (TM) for the evaluation will be the UN Women focal point in the Country Office. The TM will oversee the evaluation process and will be responsible to quality assure the different deliverables and for the day-to-day management of the evaluation (in close coordination with relevant program/project managers) and for ensuring that the evaluation is conducted in accordance with the UN Women Evaluation Policy, and UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation in the UN System. The incumbent will also liaise with the Regional Evaluation Specialist and will work closely with the Programme Analyst/Evaluation task manager who will be the point of contact on the contract and payment issues.

Description of Responsibilities/ Scope of Work and timelines

DELIVERABLE	DUE DATE	AMOUNT / CURRENCY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review of all relevant materials such as reports, assessments, studies, draft laws, etc. drawing from the inputs from the local consultant • Draft the desk review • Inception meetings with UN Women staff Deliverable #1: A brief narrative report on fulfilment of all the tasks during inception phase with a detailed work plan including the timetable for the data collection phase.	5 working days- by 28 October 2024	2,241.4 USD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend meetings, interviews and focus group discussions arranged with the local consultant • Compile and organize data gathered during the meetings • Prepare mission reports 	10 working days- by 13 December 2024	4,482.8 USD

Deliverable #2: A brief narrative report on fulfilment of all the tasks during data collection phase including also the meeting notes, focus group discussion notes and other data collected to be shared with the international consultant.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the evidence Prepare draft evaluation report, including the main findings, recommendations, lessons learned and conclusions Address feedback and comments by UN Women team Develop the final evaluation report Prepare a summary presentation of the evaluation process, findings, recommendations, lessons learned and conclusions Inputs and clarifications provided to the evaluation report as requested by the team leader <p>Deliverable #3: A brief narrative report on fulfilment of all the tasks during analysis and reporting phase.</p>	20 working days- by 28 February 2025	8,965.6 USD

Consultant's Workplace and Official Travel

This is a home-based consultancy.

As part of this assignment, there will be a maximum of 2 trips to Albania, of which at least one will include visit to the geographical areas of the project.

III. Competencies
<p>Core Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for Diversity • Integrity • Professionalism <p>Core Competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and Sensitivity Regarding Gender Issues • Accountability • Creative Problem Solving • Effective Communication • Inclusive Collaboration • Stakeholder Engagement • Leading by Example <p>Please visit this link for more information on UN Women’s Core Values and Competencies: https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/employment/application-process# Values</p> <p>FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong analytical, writing and reporting abilities; • Strong interpersonal and communication skills, ability to lead a team and negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders; • Commitment to quality products and deadlines; • Builds strong relationships; • Focuses on impact and results and responds positively to feedback; • Approaches work with energy and a positive, constructive attitude; • Demonstrates/safeguards ethics and integrity; • Demonstrated corporate knowledge and sound judgment; • Acts as a team player and facilitates team work; • Facilitates and encourages open communication in the team, communicating effectively; • Learns and shares knowledge and encourages learning of others; • Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling UN values and ethical standards; • Demonstrates professional competence and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments; observing deadlines and achieving results; • Displays cultural, gender, nationality, religion and age sensitivity and adaptability.
IV. Required Qualifications
<p>Education and Certification: At least a master’s degree related to one or more of the following: social sciences, development studies, gender studies or a related area;</p> <p>Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 7 years of proven experience acting as an evaluation team lead managing teams of diverse composition; • Proven experience of gender-responsive and human rights-based approaches to evaluation conducting gender-responsive evaluations and/or applied research utilizing a wide range of approaches and methods; • At least 4 years of relevant experience in the area of women empowerment and women’s economic empowerment; • At least 7 years of proven experience in producing well written evaluation reports; • Sound experience and knowledge of women’s human rights and gender equality;

- Experience in liaising / working with women led civil society organizations, women's rights groups will be considered a strong asset;
- Previous experience with development agencies in the United Nations system will be considered an asset

Languages:

Proficiency in English.