



Terms of Reference: **Gender Assessment of the socio-economic response and recovery initiatives related to COVID-19 in Rwanda**

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## **1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a socioeconomic and health threatening issue globally where millions of people have lost their lives, hundreds of thousands of businesses severely affected leading many people to forced unemployment. Many governments have moved with speed to address COVID-19 effects. A raft of measures have been put in place including but not limited to closing of schools and learning institutions; total or partial lock downs; quarantine; halt to international flights except for cargo; shutting down of some markets; telecommuting for employees; border points closure which severely affected Cross Border Traders of which majority is made of women; night curfews, social distancing; testing, isolating and treatment among others. While these measures are meant to mitigate and curb the spread of the virus, the socio-economic impacts are likely to be severe for several countries in developing countries including Rwanda threatens to reverse the development trajectory that was underway before Covid-19 pandemic.

According to UNECA, Africa's economic growth was projected to shrink from 3.2% to 1.8% in 2020 equivalent to USD 29 billion losses.<sup>1</sup> This translates into job and business losses impacting on the livelihoods of millions of people in the continent particularly for women and youth. Pest infestations is also common with the Horn of Africa currently dealing with impacts of locust infestations likely to affect over 10 million people in the region according to FAO. Also, in 2019, it was reported that over 33 million people were food insecure, a situation that contributes to malnutrition especially amongst children, pregnant and lactating women and elderly making them

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<sup>1</sup> 200320ECA analysis-impact of COVID-19 on Africa

more vulnerable to COVID-19 infection<sup>2</sup>. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) notes that the current crisis has affected SMEs disproportionately, and has revealed their vulnerability to the supply and demand shock (in particular with regard to their liquidity) with a serious risk that over 50% of SMEs will not survive the next few months<sup>3</sup>.

In Rwanda, different assessments and studies have continued to show that women are the most affected by COVID-19 both in terms of economic activities due to overrepresentation in the most severely hit informal sector, they suffer from gender digital divide (including mobile banking and ICT facilities), unsecure employment and increased unpaid care work and care burden exacerbated by the pandemic . According to the Labour Force Survey conducted by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) in May 2020, the unemployment rate among women over the age of 16 increased to 25% from 14% in February 2020, compared to 19% from 13% for men. The same survey found the female labour force participation rate is at 47% , much lower than the rate of men (64.3%).

In addition, in Rwanda, women represent 60.7% in subsistence farming (with limited literacy rate) and 39.3% market-oriented agriculture and 52.1% in wholesale and retail trade. The later include but not limited to shops and markets except for those selling essential products (food, medicine, hygiene and cleaning products, fuel, and other essential goods), beauty shops including hair salons and spas, restaurants and cafes. These related women businesses among others are among those that feel the harshest economic effects of the measures to contain the spread of the pandemic. In addition, the budding women producers, processors and exporters have been suffering from restrictions to air travels and much higher transaction costs due to COVID-19 prevention measures.

Different COVID 19 response and recovery measures and initiatives have been put in place by the Government of Rwanda including the Economic Recovery Fund adopted by the Cabinet in April 2020 to mitigate, restore and recover from the effects COVID 19 and build back better socioeconomic and business fabrics. With the above context, an economic analysis of the gendered effects of COVID-19 and the response mechanisms is very paramount especially in light of the initially unexpected longer duration of the pandemic and its hazards.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/2019-climate-shocks-claim-more-1200-live-across-east-and-southern-africa>

<sup>3</sup> OECD, "Tackling Coronavirus (Covid-19) contributing to a global effort", SME Policy Responses, April 2020.

It is in within this background that UN Women Rwanda Office is looking for the service of a competent individual consultant to conduct the gender assessment of the socio-economic response and recovery initiatives related to COVID-19 already in place in Rwanda.

## **2. ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVES**

The specific objectives of the assessment are as follows:

- Identify and assess the gender responsiveness of the existing socioeconomic response and recovery initiatives put in place in Rwanda
- Assess the extent to which women led businesses including women in informal sector and those in SMEs are accessing the economic recovery fund.
- Identify key challenges faced by women led businesses in accessing the economic recovery fund as well as barriers inhibiting women from benefitting from existing response and recovery initiatives and opportunities equally as men.
- Conduct a gender analysis of the employment dynamics in public and private sector during COVID-19 pandemic and the extent to which the national response and recovery plan is contributing to mitigating risk factors.
- Make key policy and concrete recommendations for decision making and advocacy

## **3. SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The assessment will mainly focus on gender dimensions on the socioeconomic response and recovery initiatives put in place by the Government of Rwanda

## **4. DESCRIPTION OF REQUIRED SERVICES/RESULTS:**

UN Women seeks to commission an experienced individual consultant to undertake a gender assessment of the socioeconomic response and recovery initiatives related to COVID 19 in Rwanda and understand the issues and constraints women and women led businesses are facing which limit full access to those opportunities.

## **5. ASSIGNMENT DURATION**

The assignment will be conducted for a period not exceeding one month from the date of contract signature. Interested parties are called to submit their technical proposals to UN WOMEN **not later than 02<sup>nd</sup> April 2021.**

## **6. REQUIRED EDUCATION BACKGROUD AND TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES**

- Advanced degree in Economics and other related social sciences;
- Strong track record on producing high quality research and analytical studies at country, region or international level preferably including gender analysis ;
- Should have at least 7 years of experience in conducting analytical studies, research/assessments, surveys, and experience working with public and private sector institutions in Rwanda;
- Experience on quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis;
- Previous collaboration and/or partnerships with development partners and Government Institutions.
- Ability to produce high quality reports under a tight deadline;
- Excellent report writing abilities;
- Prior experience analysing data collected through electronic methods, such as mobile phone surveys are an asset.

