



PROJET
D'AUTONOMISATION DES
FEMMES ET DIVIDENDE
DÉMOGRAPHIQUE EN
AFRIQUE SUBSAHARIENNE

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT AND
DEMOGRAPHIC
DIVIDEND PROJECT



SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND PLUS PROJECT (SWEDD+)

Title of the Terms of Reference

RECRUITMENT OF A CONSULTING FIRM TO CONDUCT A MAPPING STUDY ON GENDER DISPARITIES IN THE NATIONAL LAWS OF WEST AFRICAN STATES AND TO DEVELOP A ROADMAP FOR THE HARMONISATION OF THOSE LAWS WITH THE REGIONAL STRATEGIES ON SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE AND IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE WEST AFRICAN REGION.

October 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

West Africa, like other parts of the world, experiences stark gender disparities. In education, although progress has been made in access to primary education, girls are still less likely than boys to complete secondary school and to enter higher education. Child marriage affects approximately 40% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa, and adolescent pregnancies, together with cultural expectations regarding girls' domestic roles, contribute significantly to these disparities.

In the labour market, women are often confined to informal, precarious and poorly paid jobs. They make up 70% of the agricultural workforce in sub-Saharan Africa, yet own less than 20% of agricultural land. They are under-represented in management and decision-making positions, and on average earn less than their male counterparts for equivalent work. Barriers to women's employment include the lack of childcare services, discrimination in hiring, and restrictive gender norms.

Women in sub-Saharan Africa face specific health challenges, including limited access to reproductive and maternal health services. Maternal mortality rates remain high, and women are often the worst affected by disease epidemics such as HIV/AIDS. Access to healthcare is often hindered by economic, geographical and social barriers.

Women's representation in political and decision-making bodies also remains low. Although some countries have introduced quotas to increase women's participation, women continue to face significant obstacles, such as lack of financial support, gender-based violence, and sexist prejudice.

A recurrence of sexual and gender-based violence in both private and public spaces is also observed. Sexual violence, which is an integral part of violence against women and girls, is a violation of women's fundamental rights and constitutes a major public health problem throughout the world, in virtually all regions and countries. Sexual harassment is also a major problem in our region. In most cases, it occurs in the workplace or in educational institutions.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the economic impact of gender disparities and gender-based violence costs sub-Saharan Africa approximately USD 95 billion per year on average.

In response to this situation, measures are being taken by ECOWAS Member States, including the dissemination of texts and laws on the care of victims of gender-based violence through integrated centres; access to justice; awareness-raising; the involvement of men through the establishment of "Husbands' Schools" (men engage); psychosocial assistance and healthcare; legal clinics, etc. to support victims. However, major challenges remain, in particular the culture of silence and the trivialisation of gender-based violence, which mean that perpetrators of violence go unpunished.

Accordingly, to consolidate the efforts of ECOWAS Member States, the ECOWAS Commission adopted in 2021 a "REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND THE

ELIMINATION OF ALL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS” and an “ECOWAS POLICY ON THE PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN WORKPLACES AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS”, accompanied by action plans.

One of the main challenges today remains the harmonisation of national laws with these regional and continental policies. This is essential in order to create a legal and policy environment conducive to gender equality. At present, legislation varies considerably from one country to another, creating disparities in the protection and promotion of women’s rights. Harmonisation of laws would make it possible to standardise legal protections and to ensure that all women, irrespective of their country of residence, benefit from the same rights and opportunities.

This is why ECOWAS, with the support of the World Bank, has committed to continuing and improving the implementation of the Sub-Saharan Africa Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend projects, through SWEDD-1 & 2 (2015-2024) and today through SWEDD+. This project, building on the multisectoral model developed by the governments of the region, seeks, among other things, to address the root causes of child and adolescent marriage, early pregnancies, and early school dropout among girls, particularly adolescent girls.

SWEDD pioneered the first multisectoral programme addressing the root causes of child marriage, adolescent fertility and early school dropout in nine countries.

The new SWEDD+ enables interventions to be scaled up, new countries to be covered, and progress achieved under the SWEDD project to be consolidated. The original SWEDD project, which has become a well-known name in the region, aims to broaden and deepen the impact on adolescent girls and their communities.

SWEDD+ will place greater emphasis on the creation of economic opportunities, the fight against social norms that justify gender-based violence (GBV), and the expansion of the platform for knowledge production, learning and regional capacity-building.

The SWEDD+ project comprises the three components listed below, which will be implemented jointly by the West African Health Organisation (WAHO), the ECOWAS Department of Human Development and Social Affairs (DHDSA) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at regional level, together with the national coordination units in the seven (7) participating SWEDD+ countries:

- Component 1: Design and implement gender-transformative interventions that promote the social and economic autonomy of girls and women;
- Component 2: Increase the utilisation of quality reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and nutrition (RMNCAHN) services and the number of qualified health workers at community level; and
- Component 3: Foster regional and national engagement and capacity for the development of gender equality policies and for project implementation.

SWEDD+ is conceived as a single programme supporting countries, namely Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Chad and Togo. It provides

opportunities for peer learning and collaboration among them. This collaborative approach will require additional coordination efforts to ensure that progress in the countries is achieved in parallel, as well as harmonisation efforts across ECOWAS Member States.

This activity contributes to Component 1 of SWEDD Plus, entitled “**COMPONENT 1: Design and implement gender-transformative interventions that promote the social and economic autonomy of girls and women. Sub-component 1.1: Social and Behavioural Change Communication Campaign – SBCC**”.

2. CONSULTANCY OBJECTIVES

2.1. General Objective

To develop a draft roadmap aimed at harmonising the discriminatory laws identified in the SWEDD+ project participating countries and ECOWAS Member States, with the regional and continental policies on combating Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment in the workplace and in learning environments in West Africa.

2.2. Specific Objectives

- Conducting a mapping of policies and strategies to combat gender-based violence and Sexual Harassment in the ECOWAS region;
- Identifying gender disparities in national laws on sexual and gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the workplace and in educational institutions in the ECOWAS Member States and the SWEDD+ project participating countries, in connection with regional and continental policies and strategies;
- Proposing the necessary corrective actions to address the inequalities observed in the national laws of ECOWAS Member States and SWEDD+ project participating countries;
- Proposing a draft roadmap to support the corrective measures aimed at addressing the inequalities observed in the national laws.

3. FIRM PROFILE

WAHO is recruiting, on behalf of the DHDSA, a consulting firm with solid experience in conducting mapping studies on gender disparities in the national laws of the SWEDD+ project participating countries and ECOWAS Member States, and in drafting roadmaps for the harmonisation of those laws with the regional strategies on the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence and sexual harassment within the regional area.

3.1. Education

The Firm shall ensure that the following profiles are recruited:

- One Lead Consultant with a degree equivalent to BAC+5 or higher in legal sciences;
- 02 Assistant Consultants with a degree in Legal Sciences equivalent at least to a Master's level (BAC+4).

3.2. Experience

The Lead Consultant shall have :

- At least 05 years of experience at the international or regional level, particularly on issues relating to combating gender-based violence and sexual harassment;
- Proven expertise in combating gender-based violence and sexual harassment;
- In-depth knowledge of and familiarity with national laws, regional policies and international conventions on the promotion of gender equality;
- Sound knowledge of the realities of the West African region, particularly on gender equality in the ECOWAS Member States;
- Proven expertise in research and in the development of roadmaps and reports on gender-based violence in the ECOWAS region;
- Experience of collaboration with several Ministries responsible for Justice, Health and Gender in combating Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment;
- Experience of collaboration with regional and continental institutions on Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment;
- Familiarity with social science research and analysis tools and methodology;
- Avoir une bonne connaissance de l'outil informatique : Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, d'un logiciel de SIG, Power Point et tout autre logiciel pertinent ;
- Proficiency in English or French. Working knowledge of a 2nd language would be an asset.

The Assistant Consultants shall:

- Be able to provide administrative, logistical and research assistance to the Lead Consultant. Their responsibilities also include the collection and preparation of the documentation necessary for the mapping of discriminatory laws;
- Have at least 03 years of experience at the regional level, particularly on issues relating to combating gender-based violence and sexual harassment;
- Be familiar with national laws, regional policies and international conventions on the promotion of gender equality;
- Have sound knowledge of the West African context, particularly on gender equality in the ECOWAS Member States;
- Have experience of collaboration with several Ministries responsible for Justice, Health and Gender in combating Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment;
- Have experience of collaboration with regional and continental institutions working on issues of combating GBV;
- Be familiar with social science research and analysis tools and methodology;
- Avoir une bonne connaissance de l'outil informatique : Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, d'un logiciel de SIG, Power Point et tout autre logiciel pertinent ;
- Proficiency in English or French. Working knowledge of a 2nd language would be an asset.

4. METHODOLOGY

The Firm shall carry out a mapping study on gender disparities in the national laws of SWEDD+ project participating countries and ECOWAS Member States, together with a roadmap to harmonise the national laws with the ECOWAS regional policies on the prevention of and response to Gender-Based Violence and sexual harassment in workplaces and educational settings.

Under the direction of the DHDSA, through the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre, the Firm shall carry out the following tasks:

- Methodological note: the Firm shall submit a methodological note setting out its understanding of the assignment, the objectives, the methodological approach, specifying all stakeholders to be involved, and the work plan;
- Design of data collection and analysis tools: the Firm shall propose tools for stakeholder consultation and data collection;
- Collection of quantitative and qualitative data at national and regional level with stakeholders: the Firm shall conduct a desk review and then, as required, collect primary data in selected target countries;
- Conducting the mapping and situational analysis of gender disparities in national laws in connection with the regional policies on the prevention of and response to Gender-Based Violence and sexual harassment in workplaces and educational settings;
- Facilitation of the Technical Validation Workshop for the documents produced;
- Drafting a provisional version (draft) of the study and the roadmap, and submission to the EGDC;
- Finalisation of the revised versions of the mapping study and the roadmap, incorporating the observations and recommendations from the Validation Workshop on the documents produced.

5. DELIVERABLES

The deliverables are as follows:

- A methodological note/report;
- Data collection tools
- An assignment report;
- Draft of the mapping study and the roadmap;
- Report of the validation workshop for the said policy
- Finalised version of the study and the roadmap, incorporating the observations and recommendations from the Validation Workshop.

6. TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

- The Firm may be required to work on site with the EGDC, at its offices based in Dakar, where necessary.
- The assignment has a duration of 60 calendar days, equivalent to 44 person-days, broken down as follows:

Actions	Deadline
Submission of the technical and financial offer	Before the application deadline
Submission of the methodological note demonstrating a sound understanding of the nature and requirements of the assignment, together with a schedule.	5 days after signature of the collaboration contract

Submission of a first draft study and draft roadmap to the EGDC, with copy to WAHO	30 days after validation of the methodological note by the EGDC, WAHO and the World Bank
Submission of the revised version of the draft study report and draft roadmap.	15 days after receipt by the firm of the validation of the first drafts by the EGDC, WAHO and the World Bank.
Preparation and submission of the draft agenda and working documents for the technical validation workshop on the draft study and the Roadmap.	4 days after presentation of the finalised versions of the draft study and Roadmap.
Support for the conduct of the Technical Validation Workshop on the draft study and draft Roadmap.	2 days
Submission of the Final Study Report and the final version of the Roadmap, incorporating inputs from the technical validation workshop, together with the report of the technical validation workshop.	4 days after the validation workshop

- The Firm shall refrain from involving itself in any situation that could place it in a conflict of interest in connection with the assignment.

7. REMUNERATION

Fees shall be payable in several instalments:

- 10% on signature of the contract;
- 20% on submission of the inception report;
- 40% after submission of the 1st draft and incorporation of inputs formulated by the EGDC and its partners;
- 30% on satisfactory submission of the end-of-assignment report and the final consultancy documents validated by the DHDSA, WAHO and the World Bank.

The fees do not include costs relating to travel authorised by the DHDSA within the framework of the project for the coordination/organisation of project-related activities and events. Such costs shall be borne by the Project, where required.

8. DOCUMENTS COMPRISING THE BID

- An expression of interest letter, including the period of availability;
- Recent curricula vitae detailing professional experience and similar assignments;
- Three professional references;
- Certified true copy of the highest diploma or qualification;
- Copies of the employment or service certificates mentioned in the curriculum vitae.

9. RECRUITMENT METHOD

- The Firm shall be selected under the Consultant's Qualifications Selection (CQS) method, as defined in the World Bank's procurement regulations.

10.BUDGET

- The estimated budget for the assignment is USD 30,000 and shall be paid from the SWEDD+ project funds.