



# ► Consultancy Opportunity

## Value chain selection study - Selection of two value chains with potential for more and better jobs for women in two border points between Liberia and Sierra Leone

### Terms of Reference – National Researcher (Sierra Leone)

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#### Background

The **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** applies an inclusive value chain development approach as a strategy to create more and better jobs. Through this approach, the ILO seeks to address root constraints that prevent a specific target group from accessing opportunities within a value chain and that hinder inclusive growth. The ILO's value chain development approach takes place in three distinct phases:

- 1. Value Chain Selection:** The first step is to identify value chains with potential for inclusive growth based on three criteria: (1) the relevance of the value chain to the target group, (2) the opportunities that exist in the sector for the target group and (3) the feasibility to stimulate positive change within the value chain. This value chain selection process involves both desk and field research, particularly with key informants and representatives of the target group.
- 2. Value Chain Analysis:** Once a value chain has been selected, a value chain analysis takes place. In this analysis, the entire market system of the selected value chain is taken into account. This includes both the supply and demand functions of the value chain itself, as well as the rules and regulations and supporting functions that impact its functioning. The objective of the value chain analysis is to identify opportunities, as well as constraints and their root causes.
- 3. Design and Implementation of Interventions:** The value chain analysis is then used to inform the design and implementation of market-based interventions. These interventions are often implemented with and through existing market actors, and are either push interventions, which seek to build the capacity of the target group to take advantage of market opportunities, or pull interventions, which seek to develop the value chain and create market opportunities.

***The ILO is looking for a Local Researcher (one in Sierra Leone, one in Liberia) to undertake field research in two border points between Sierra Leone and Liberia as part of a sector selection process (step 1) focused on women cross border traders. Local Researchers will work under the guidance and supervision of a Lead Consultant with experience in the ILO's approach to value chain development.***

## Context

Cross-border trade is an important livelihood strategy for women and men living in border areas of Liberia and Sierra Leone, with traders engaging in the buying and selling of assorted products that range from electronic appliances to food items in order to earn a living. Cross-border trade is characterized by high levels of informality whereby legitimately produced goods and services often go unrecorded or incorrectly recorded into official national statistics of trading countries. The informality of cross-border trade presents challenges related to decent work deficits for cross-border traders such as unreliable incomes, lack of social security, and occupational health and safety risks, and makes collecting evidence on its magnitude challenging. Nonetheless, cross-border trade has been known to encourage entrepreneurial activity and regional trade, contribute to food security, and enhance income-earning and employment opportunities for poor households and particularly women, despite its risks.

However, women cross border traders face significant challenges, both in terms of sustaining their livelihoods through cross border traders and in terms of the risks incurred through trading. Some of these challenges include:

- **Formal trading is lengthy and costly** due to document requirements for exporting agricultural goods, high fees related to export certification and licensing, as well as for inspections, police clearance and administrative fees.
- **More women (65%) are engaged in trade through formal borders** than men, while the reverse is true for informal borders. Despite crossing through formal borders, women still experience some degree of informality.
- **The majority of traders have very low education levels**, with some variation depending on the border crossing and district.
- **Trade for agricultural products is determined by seasonal and price variables**, with volumes increasing significantly during the dry season. This can be attributed to the production cycle and bad road infrastructure.
- **The highest volume of cross-border trade in agricultural goods takes place between Sierra Leone and Guinea.**

## Assignment Objectives and Methodology

The primary objective of this assignment is to **identify two value chains (1 per trade point) that are important to cross border traders and where women's participation and access to decent work could be improved**. In order to arrive at these two value chains, consultants will develop a short-list of between 3-4 value chains per trade point to be further assessed, of which at least one should be within the fisheries sector (if relevant). These 3-4 shortlisted value chains should be identified based on volumes of goods traded and their relevance to women cross border traders.

Once the short list of between 3 and 4 value chains per border point has been identified, consultants will provide an overview (rapid market assessment) of the shortlisted value chains and select one per border point. The value chain selection will be conducted and written following the ILO's [Guide on Value Chain Development for Decent Work](#), while integrating a stronger focus on gender and conflict sensitivity, as informed by the ILO's complementary guidance on gender-sensitive value chain development. Value chains will be selected based on three broad criteria:

4. Relevance to the project's target group, namely women cross border traders
5. Potential for decent job creation for these target groups
6. Feasibility to intervene and stimulate inclusive growth of these sectors

**The focus** of these assessments are women cross border traders operating in two border points between Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, and their respective neighbouring towns: (1) Gendema, Sierra Leone – Bo Waterside, Liberia and (2) Koindu, Sierra Leone –Foya, Liberia

The sector selection process is further expected to be conducted through **stakeholder consultations and validation** (notably with the Mano River Union, private sector actors, representatives from the target group and other project partners) to ensure that the sectors selected are aligned with national priorities, private sector interests, and relevance to the target group.

## Scope of the Work

The overview and selection of the value chains will be undertaken by a research team led by a Lead Consultant who will coordinate research, develop data collection tools, and lead the data collection, analysis and report writing. **Two Local Researchers**, one based in Sierra Leone, one based Liberia, will support the research process, the data analysis, and the organisation of validation workshops. The Local Researchers will work in partnership throughout the assignment.

The anticipated activities of the Local Researcher in contributing to the assignment include the following:

- **Input into Research Plan and Data Collection Tools:** The Local Researcher will review and provide technical input into the Research Plan and Data Collection Tools developed by the Lead Consultant. In particular, the Local Researcher will ensure that the interview questionnaires are appropriate and work given the local context, that the sampling approach is reasonable, and that the stakeholder list is exhaustive.
- **Field Research planning:** Under the supervision of the Lead Consultant, the Local Researchers will work in partnership to plan and mobilize the data collection efforts. This will include:
  - Training: Participate to a fieldwork mobilization training led by the Lead Consultant
  - Pre-fieldwork testing: Test data collection tools with a small sample of respondents
  - Fieldwork planning: Schedule interviews with respondents and plan travel logistics
- **Field Research delivery:** In close coordination with the Lead Consultant, the Local Researchers will lead research efforts on the ground. It is expected that the two researchers will carry out a trip of 1.5 to 2 weeks to each border post (to be decided based on availability of Researchers) to debrief with the Lead Consultant, review the research tools and transcribe fieldwork notes. During the field research delivery, the Local Researcher will be expected to adhere to principles of do-no-harm and good research ethics, taking special consideration of unequal power dynamics between the researcher and respondents. Research should also be conducted in line with covid—19 measures. Field research will include the following tasks:
  - In line with the research plan, administer the interview tools to the stakeholders outlined in the sampling approach.
  - Participate to debriefs with the Lead Consultant once a week to discuss progress and any issues during the delivery of the research,
  - Type up interview notes and observations as the data collection is carried out to the extent possible. Any interview notes that have not been completed during the field research should be finalised within 2 weeks of the end of the field research.
  - Maintain a working list of key stakeholders and their contact details as the research is delivered
  - Participate to two research wrap-up workshops with the Lead Consultant, one at the conclusion of the data collection in each border post, to discuss findings.
- **Workshop with ILO:** Following the completion of data collection through desk and field research, the Local Researchers will participate to a workshop led by the Lead Consultant with the ILO to discuss preliminary findings, in order to receive guidance and feedback for data analysis and to discuss some of the opportunities and limitations for operating in each value chain. The Local Researchers will provide input during the preparation of this workshop.
- **Analysis:** The Local Researcher will support the Lead Consultant during the analysis of the data by participating to internal data interpretation and debrief sessions, clarify any issues or data/information gaps. The Local Researcher will participate to a workshop with the Lead Consultant and the ILO to discuss and input into the sub-sector selection process.
- **Draft Sector Selection Report:** The Local Researchers will review the draft sector selection report and the sector selection matrix prepared by the Lead Consultant. The report will include the identification of two value chain with potential for inclusive growth and providing an overview of the shortlisted value chains' criteria of relevance, opportunities, and feasibility in order to justify the selection.
- **Validation workshop:** The Local Researchers will participate to a validation workshop lead by the Lead Consultant and the ILO's Women's Entrepreneurship Development team with key stakeholders to present and validate the findings, including representatives from women cross border traders and the Manu River Union.

**Deliverables and timeframe - UPDATED!**

The following core deliverables are expected as part of the assignment. The deliverables will be developed in close consultation with the ILO over a 16 week period likely starting at the end of April.

**List of deliverables****1. Inception Report**

- Review of the 6-8 pages/slides (excluding annexes) Inception Report prepared by the Lead Consultant justifying the selection of a short list of between 3-4 value chains to be analysed against the set of sub-criteria during the subsequent phases of research per border point. Annexes should include (1) an initial list of stakeholders to interview during field research, including relevant representatives from women's groups and associations, (2) interview questionnaire guides, (3) draft sector-selection matrices for the 3-4 shortlisted value chains filled out on the basis of desk research and strategic phone interviews and identifying knowledge gaps, and (4) a reference list.

**2. Field Research**

- Participation to a 2-hour fieldwork mobilisation training led by the Lead Consultant
- Facilitation of 2 x 1.5 / 2-week data collection trips, one in each border post, in line with the interview schedule and sampling approach outline in the inception report, and in line with principles of do-no-harm and research ethics.
- Interview notes submitted within two weeks of the completion of the field research
- Database of stakeholders interviewed and met during the field research
- Participation to internal debriefs with the Lead Consultant as needed, including: 1 x 1-hour debrief sessions per week during the data collection, 1 x 2-hour fieldwork wrap-up sessions at the end of the data collection in each border post

**4. Presentation of Preliminary Findings**

- Participation to a 1.5hr online call with ILO (Technical Backstopping Team) where the Lead Consultant will deliver a 45 minute presentation of their preliminary findings (including PowerPoint slides), followed by a 45 minute discussion on preliminary findings.

**5. Analysis**

- Participation to 2 x 2-hour internal analysis workshops led by the Lead Consultant as needed to discuss key findings emerging from the data, clarify any questions and data interpretation issues.
- Participation to a 2-hour internal workshop to discuss the sub-sector selection, sub-sector matrix scores and prioritization.

**6. Value Chain Selection Report**

- Review of a 15-page Draft Value Chain Selection Report prepared by the Lead Consultant. The value chain selection report might include (1) a brief overview of the context in border regions, (2) a summary of the methodology and the criteria and sub-criteria used, and (3) an overview of the 3-4 value chains considered per border point taking into account their relevance to the target group, the opportunities for inclusive growth, and a feasibility to stimulate change (with an emphasis on security and informality). Annexes might include (1) the full sector selection matrices, (2) a reference list, and (3) a list of interviewees and their main roles, highlight which interviewees should be included in the validation workshop.

**7. Validation Workshop**

- Participation to a validation workshop led by the Lead Consultant - ideally face-to-face depending on the evolution of the COVID-19 situation - with the participation of the ILO, AfDB and key stakeholders where consultants present their findings and the justification for selecting value chains.

## **Management Arrangements**

The consultant will work under the supervision of a Lead Consultant and will be contracted by the Women's Entrepreneurship Development team based in ILO HQ.

## **Submit an Application**

**Required Experience:** Local Researchers should have a degree in a field of study related to Development, Economics, Gender and relevant experience conducting qualitative and quantitative research. Researchers should ideally be well connected with key stakeholders that will be important to undertaking research on cross border trade.

**Desired Experience:** Experience with feminist research methods, in value chain development, and in cross-border trade or border areas is desirable. Knowledge of local language spoken at border points is an advantage.

Local Researchers must have access to reliable internet connection.

In order to apply to this position, candidates are invited to submit the following documents to [wed@ilo.org](mailto:wed@ilo.org) by April 15, 2022.

- CV outlining relevant experience, particularly in the application of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and tools, particularly if applied with vulnerable groups.
- Cover letter (1 page) outlining motivation to undertake the assignment and highlighting relevant experience and connections with key stakeholders.
- Daily rate