

# Terms of ReferencE

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| Project | UBRAF Project |
| Position | National Consultant to assess the HIV epidemic, context, and response in Tajikistan from a gender perspective using the UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool |
| Type of the contract | National Consultant (SSA) |
| Duty Station | Dushanbe, Tajikistan |
| Application Deadline | 10 June 2024 |
| Duration of the contract: | 24 June 2024 – 30 November 2024 (six months) |
| Start date: | 24 June 2024 |
| Supervision: | UN Women Country Programme Manager |
| Coordination: | UN Women National Portfolio Coordinator and UNAIDS Country Manager |
| Languages required: | Proficiency in Russian, knowledge of English is an advantage |

1. **Background and Context**

UN Women, the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, was established to accelerate progress in meeting the needs of women and girls worldwide. As part of the UN reform agenda, UN Women brings together resources and mandates that have a lasting impact on communities. Gender inequality contributes to the spread of HIV, increasing infection rates and hindering women and girls’ ability to cope with the epidemic. Often, women and girls lack information about HIV and have limited resources for preventive measures. Unequal power dynamics with men create barriers to negotiating safer sex. Sexual violence, a widespread violation of women’s rights, further increases the risk of HIV transmission. Evidence suggests that forced and arranged marriages pose a significant risk, especially for young women and girls. Many women, living with HIV face stigma and exclusion, exacerbated by their lack of rights. Additionally, women widowed by AIDS or living with HIV may encounter property disputes with in-laws, complicated by limited access to justice.

According to the latest data, over the past decade, Tajikistan has experienced an approximate of 20% increase in new HIV cases. This trend is consistent with the broader pattern observed in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the rising number of cases underscores the importance of continued efforts to prevent transmission, improve testing, and enhance access to treatment and care. While progress is being made, the spread of HIV infection remains a serious health problem in Tajikistan. According to the Ministry of Health, there were 587 new HIV cases reported in the first half of 2023 in Tajikistan and the overall number of individuals infected with HIV has surpassed 14,000[[1]](#footnote-1). At the beginning of October 2022, 76% of HIV-infected adults knew their status. Of these informed individuals, 87% were receiving life-saving antiretroviral therapy (ART), and among those undergoing treatment, 88% had successfully achieved viral suppression[[2]](#footnote-2). Therefore, about 30% of people living with HIV do not have access to life-saving treatment, which is approximately 3,400 people. It's

important to emphasize that certain gender groups are more vulnerable to HIV due to a combination of biological, social, and structural factors.

\**About the UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool (GAT)*

The GAT is a structured set of guidelines and questions that can be used to guide and support the process of analyzing to what extent national responses to HIV—in both generalized and concentrated epidemics—consider the critical goal of gender equality. UNAIDS developed the GAT by convening an expert reference group comprising members from around the globe and from government, United Nations agencies and civil society organizations to guide its development.

A planned, systematic and deliberate set of steps and processes, the GAT examines and questions the status of the HIV response (plans and actions undertaken by national governments to address HIV) specifically referring to its gender dimensions: the socially constructed roles, behavior, activities and attributes of a given society consider what is appropriate for women and men, including members of key populations. The GAT enables users to learn the extent to which the national response recognizes gender inequality as a key determinant of the trajectory of the HIV epidemic and then acts based on that recognition. This will help to ensure that the national HIV response has gender equality as a goal.

The gender assessment process of an HIV response involves:

* Knowing your HIV epidemic and country context from a gender perspective.
* Knowing your country response from a gender perspective.
* Using the gender assessment findings to identify evidence-informed gender-transformative interventions to strengthen the HIV response.

Under the auspices of the UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF), the UN Women’s Programme Presence in Tajikistan is preparing to undertake a national assessment of the HIV epidemic, context, and response in Tajikistan from a gender perspective using the UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool (GAT) This assessment aims to identify the needs of divers groups in the context of HIV at the country level and provide strategic recommendations for planning processes, increasing capacities of partners, including the civil society and women’s organizations, and to leverage political commitment to address these needs. To this end, UN Women is actively seeking a National Consultant to provide crucial support in the design and facilitation of comprehensive gender assessment to determine the gender related gaps in the HIV response, thereby aiding in the identification of key barriers and strategic recommendations for effective response to HIV epidemic in Tajikistan.

1. **Goal and objectives:**

The overall goal of the proposed consultancy is to provide crucial support to UN Women in the design and facilitation of comprehensive gender assessment to determine the gender related gaps in the HIV response, thereby aiding in the identification of key barriers and strategic recommendations for effective response to HIV epidemic in Tajikistan.

1. **Scope of Work and Responsibilities**

Under the supervision of the UN Women Country Programme Manager and in close coordination with the National Portfolio Coordinator and the UNAIDS Country Manager, the Consultant will perform, but will not necessarily be limited, to the following tasks:

1. Consultant will be expected to closely familiarize with the GAT and related materials, including but not limited to the online presentations.
2. Deliver 4 (four) online and offline sessions with the gender assessment team and other relevant stakeholders (if needed).
3. Conduct key informant 5-10 interviews, 2 focus group discussions and workshops at national and subnational levels (if needed).
4. Conduct community-level dialogues and subsequently summarize the outcomes of the group discussions held with community representatives.
5. Collect, collate and store documents, including data from databases on epidemiological information, laws, policies and other sources.
6. Carry out gender analysis of the information collected in stages 2 and 3 and validate the data and analysis with the gender assessment team established at the discretion of the consultant from among gender activists, CSO representatives and government officials.
7. Conduct Inception meeting for 40 persons working on gender equality, gender-based-violence and HIV issues, including representatives of government structures, stakeholders, CSOs and relevant gender groups.
8. Support the development and organization of one (1) two-day roundtable discussion and one (1) gender assessment workshop and co-facilitate it.
9. Develop the gender assessment report and advocacy brief.
10. Present the assessment findings to key stakeholders, including the Government, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Development Partners, Donors, and other interested parties at a Round Table discussion.

UN Women will be responsible for the logistics and organization of one (1) roundtable discussion for 40 participants and (1) one gender assessment workshop for 20-25 participants.

1. **Expected deliverables and payment procedures:**

Payment for the services provided will be made upon achievement of expected results and approval of all the deliverables and acceptance of services by the UN Women (PERF) that the services have been satisfactorily performed. Bank charges related to any payment will be borne by the expert. No statement of earnings will be issued by UN Women to the expert. The service provider is responsible for any taxes levied on the monies received under this agreement.

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| **Expected deliverables:** | **Delivery Date** |
| An inception report containing a detailed work plan for the consultancy’s entire duration | 29 June 2024 |
| A draft report of the gender assessment with data collected (stages 2 and 3) before the workshop | 30 September 2024 |
| A final report of the gender assessment with the input from the workshop | 15 November 2024 |
| An advocacy brief consisting of a summary report. | 22 November 2024 |

1. **Ownership:**

The developed product belongs to the UN Women office solely.

1. **Competencies and Qualifications**

Core Values:

* Respect for Diversity
* Integrity
* Professionalism

Core Competencies:

* Awareness and Sensitivity Regarding Gender Issues
* Accountability
* Creative Problem Solving
* Effective Communication
* Inclusive Collaboration
* Good knowledge of the training topic on medical aspects and ethical norms in the field of HIV counselling.

Please, visit this link for more information on UN Women’s Core Values and Competencies: [http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/about%20us/employment/UN Women-employment-values-and-competencies-definitions-en.pdf](http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/about%20us/employment/UN%20Women-employment-values-and-competencies-definitions-en.pdf)

Functional Competencies:

* Possesses the ability to work independently, under pressure and meet deadlines;
* Good knowledge of technical area;
* Good organizational skills and ability to pay close attention to detail;
* Experience in report writing.
* Proven excellent communication and facilitation skills;

1. **Qualifications**

**Education:** Advanced university (Masters) degree in medical studies, gender equality, women’s studies, law, human rights, social studies, development studies or related field;

**Professional experience:**

* At least 5 (five) years’ experience working with government institutions and international or non-governmental organizations supporting gender and development work in the specific area of intervention, and relevant experience in promoting the rights of women living with HIV (WLWH) to overcome stigma and discrimination and the empowerment of WLWH.
* Proven knowledge and experience in HIV-related research, monitoring and analysis, including in analyzing and synthesizing quantitative data and infographics. Experience in writing and editing reports, with a strong track record of producing similar publications for dissemination.
* Experience and substantial knowledge of global health policy, health funding, gender budgeting and universal health coverage, as well as knowledge in sexual and reproductive health and gender aspects.
* A good understanding of the primary audience of the advocacy report resulting from the gender assessment.
* Demonstrated expertise in mainstreaming gender through strong communication and coordination work with state and non-state partners and various stakeholders.

**Knowledge of Languages:**

* Proficiency in written and oral Russian, knowledge of English is an advantage.

1. **Application process:**

UN Women will apply the desk review method due to a shortage of experts in the country on the given issue. The following documents should be submitted as part of the application:

* **Letter of Interest** (maximum length: 1 page), signed copy should be submitted;
* **Personal History Form (P-11 form)** - including past experience in similar assignments; can be downloaded by following link: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/About%20Us/Employment/UN-Women-P11-Personal-History-Form.doc> a signed [scanned] copy should be submitted.

Candidates should have the ability to quickly produce degree certificates and medical certification (of good health) should they be short-listed in consideration of the consultancy post.

1. **Evaluation process**

Candidates will be evaluated taking into consideration the combination of qualifications. Contract will be awarded to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:

1. Responsive/compliant/acceptable.
2. Having received the highest score out of below defined technical criteria.

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|  | **Evaluation Criteria** | **Max points** |
| **TECHNICAL EVALUATION (50 points)** | |  |
| **Education** | Advanced education (diploma) degree in social sciences, law, public policy/administration, economy, development studies, gender studies or similar. | **10**  0: without relevant education  10: relevant degree or equivalent |
| **Professional Experience** | At least 5 (five) years’ experience working with government institutions and international or non-governmental organizations supporting gender and development work in the specific area of intervention, and relevant experience in promoting the rights of women living with HIV (WLWH) to overcome stigma and discrimination and the empowerment of WLWH. | **10**  0: without required experience  10: 3 or more years of relevant experience |
| Proven knowledge and experience in HIV-related research, monitoring and analysis, including in analyzing and synthesizing quantitative data and infographics. Experience in writing and editing reports, with a strong track record of producing similar publications for dissemination. | **10**  0: without relevant experience  10: 3 or more years of relevant experience |
| Experience and substantial knowledge of global health policy, health funding, gender budgeting and universal health coverage, as well as knowledge in sexual and reproductive health and gender aspects. | **10**  0: without relevant experience  10: 5 or more years of relevant experience |
|  | A good understanding of the primary audience of the advocacy report resulting from the gender assessment. | **5**  0: without relevant experience  5: 5 or more years of relevant experience |
|  | Demonstrated expertise in mainstreaming gender through strong communication and coordination work with state and non-state partners and various stakeholders. | **5**  0: without relevant experience  5: 5 or more years of relevant experience |
| **Language Requirements** | Proficiency in written and oral Russian, knowledge of English is an advantage. | **REQUIRED** |

*At UN Women, we are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment of mutual respect. UN Women recruits, employs, trains, compensates, and promotes regardless of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, national origin, or any other basis covered by appropriate law. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, competence, integrity and organizational need.*

*If you need any reasonable accommodation to support your participation in the recruitment and selection process, please include this information in your application.*

*UN Women has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UN Women, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination.  All selected candidates will be expected to adhere to UN Women’s policies and procedures and the standards of conduct expected of UN Women personnel and will therefore undergo rigorous reference and background checks. (Background checks will include the verification of academic credential(s) and employment history. Selected candidates may be required to provide additional information to conduct a background check.*

1. [Empowering communities in Tajikistan to respond to HIV/AIDS | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)](https://www.undp.org/eurasia/stories/empowering-communities-tajikistan-respond-hiv/aids) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [U.S. Government Remains Committed to Ending HIV in Tajikistan | Tajikistan | Press Release | U.S. Agency for International Development (usaid.gov)](https://www.usaid.gov/tajikistan/press-releases/dec-01-2022-us-government-remains-committed-ending-hiv-tajikistan) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)