

Terms of References

For procurement of External Consultants, Teams or Agencies for development Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment of Rural Women in the Podrinje Region

Background

Vive Žene – Center for Therapy and Rehabilitation has been working for more than two decades with women survivors of war trauma, gender-based violence, and socio-economic marginalization in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through its long-term engagement in the **Podrinje region**, the organization has developed strong cooperation with rural women farmers and women-led associations who face multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities.

The socio-economic position of women in Podrinje is shaped not only by **structural gender inequality and rural poverty**, but also by the **long-term consequences of the 1992–1995 war**, including displacement, loss of property, destruction of infrastructure, demographic changes, and the lasting psychological and social impacts of conflict.

Many women in the region are **widows of war, returnees, survivors of violence, or single heads of households**, and continue to face barriers in accessing land, markets, public services, and financial resources. Rural infrastructure limitations such as **poor transport connectivity, limited irrigation systems, insufficient storage facilities, weak market infrastructure, and limited digital connectivity** further constrain economic opportunities for women farmers.

In addition, traditional gender norms often restrict women's ownership of property, decision-making power within households and communities, and participation in economic activities and local governance.

Within this context, Vive Žene is developing a broader **women's economic empowerment framework in Podrinje**, including initiatives such as **Podrinjska kuća**, aimed at strengthening women-led agricultural production, value chain integration, and market access.

To ensure that future interventions are **evidence-based, inclusive, and tailored to the real needs of rural women**, Vive Žene will conduct a comprehensive **Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment**.

This assessment will generate **detailed, gender-disaggregated and context-sensitive data** on the living conditions, economic capacities, vulnerabilities, and resilience factors affecting rural women farmers in Podrinje. The findings will provide a clear and systematic understanding of the situation of each participating woman at both **individual and community levels**, while also capturing the broader structural barriers affecting women in this post-conflict rural region.

This activity is part of Project: „Seeds of Cooperation: Podrinjska Kuća Initiative“ supported by Embassy of Switzerland in Bosnia and Herzegovina/SDC and We Effect Europe.

Objective of the assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to conduct a **comprehensive socio-economic vulnerability assessment of rural women farmers in the Podrinje region** in order to:

- Confirm and document their socio-economic status and living conditions
- Identify economic challenges and livelihood barriers affecting rural women
- Identify gender-based barriers related to access to land, property, employment, and decision-making
- Assess the impact of **war legacies and post-conflict recovery challenges** on women's livelihoods
- Assess access to **health services, education, and social protection systems**
- Assess access to **land, agricultural resources, markets, financial services, and advisory support**
- Identify **infrastructure constraints** affecting agricultural production and market access
- Map exposure to **social, environmental, and economic risks**
- Assess the impacts of **gender-based violence, social exclusion, and caregiving burdens** on women's economic participation
- Identify resilience capacities and development potential among rural women farmers
- Provide **evidence-based recommendations for targeted support measures**

The assessment will serve as a **strategic evidence base** for strengthening women's resilience, economic empowerment, cooperative engagement, and access to essential services, while contributing to long-term recovery and inclusive rural development in the Podrinje region.

The specific objectives are:

1. To develop a **robust, gender-sensitive and conflict-aware assessment methodology**.
2. To collect reliable **quantitative and qualitative data** on the socio-economic position of rural women farmers.
3. To assess **individual and household-level vulnerability indicators**, including post-conflict and gender dimensions.
4. To identify **structural barriers related to gender inequality, rural isolation, and infrastructure limitations**.
5. To analyze the **long-term socio-economic consequences of war and displacement** on women's livelihoods.
6. To generate **individual vulnerability profiles where relevant**.
7. To produce **practical recommendations for tailored interventions** at individual, group, and community levels.

A key outcome of the assessment is to support the development and operationalization of the Podrinjska kuća initiative by identifying women producers who may become part of this joint platform and by defining the types of support required for their successful participation.

The assessment will therefore contribute to:

- Evidence-based selection of potential participants for Podrinjska kuća

- Identification of training and capacity-building needs for rural women producers
- Development of sustainable value-chain opportunities for women-led agricultural production
- Strengthening the long-term economic empowerment of rural women in Podrinje.

III . Scope of Work

The Consultant / Assessment Team will be responsible for the following tasks:

3.1. Methodology Design

- Develop a **gender-sensitive and post-conflict aware assessment framework**
- Define **socio-economic and vulnerability indicators**, including gender, infrastructure, and conflict-related indicators
- Prepare **questionnaires, survey tools, interview guides, and focus group discussion guidelines**
- Integrate indicators on **gender roles, unpaid care work, access to property, and decision-making power**
- Integrate indicators capturing **war consequences, displacement history, trauma exposure, and social exclusion**
- Ensure ethical research standards, especially when working with **vulnerable and trauma-affected populations**
- Conduct consultations with **Vive Žene** during the development of the assessment methodology and data collection questionnaires.
- Submit the **draft methodology and questionnaires to Vive Žene** for review and comments.
- Revise and finalize the methodology and questionnaires **incorporating feedback from Vive Žene and upon their formal approval** before the start of data collection.

3.2 Data Collection

- Conduct structured surveys with rural women farmers
- Facilitate focus group discussions with women farmers and women's associations
- Conduct semi-structured interviews with selected women to capture **life histories, war-related impacts, and economic pathways**
- Interview key stakeholders including:
 - Local authorities
 - Agricultural extension services
 - Cooperatives and producer associations
 - Financial institutions
 - Women's NGOs and civil society organizations
- Review relevant **secondary data, development strategies, agricultural reports, and post-conflict recovery documentation**

The methodology should also enable the identification of women with the potential and interest to participate in the Podrinjska kuća initiative, while capturing the diversity of socio-economic conditions among rural women.

3.3 Data Analysis

- Analyze quantitative and qualitative data
- Develop **individual vulnerability profiles** where applicable
- Identify patterns of **economic exclusion, gender inequality, and structural barriers**
- Map the **impact of infrastructure limitations on agricultural production and market access**
- Analyze **gender roles in agricultural value chains**
- Identify key economic sectors with development potential (e.g., dairy, fruits and vegetables, berries, livestock)
 - Identify women producers with the potential to participate in the Podrinjska kuća initiative.
 - Identify capacity-building, infrastructure, and market access needs required for their successful participation.
 - Identify opportunities for **value-chain integration within the Podrinjska kuća model**

3.4 Reporting

- Prepare a **Draft Vulnerability Assessment Report**
- Present preliminary findings to the **Vive Žene team and key stakeholders**
- Facilitate a discussion workshop to validate findings
- Finalize the report incorporating feedback
- Provide **practical, actionable recommendations for programmatic interventions**

The final report should include practical and actionable recommendations for:

- strengthening rural women's economic resilience,
- addressing socio-economic vulnerabilities, and
- supporting the development and expansion of the Podrinjska kuća initiative.

3.5. Key Assessment Areas

The assessment should cover, but not be limited to, the following dimensions:

Demographic and Household Characteristics

- Age, household composition, dependency ratios
- Marital status (including widows of war and single mothers)
- Migration and displacement history

Gender and Social Position

- Gender roles in agriculture and household economy
- Decision-making power within households
- Access to property and inheritance rights
- Exposure to gender-based violence or discrimination

Economic and Agricultural Capacity

- Land ownership and land use
- Agricultural production capacity
- Access to inputs, machinery, and equipment
- Livestock ownership and agricultural diversification

Income and Market Access

- Income sources and diversification
- Access to markets and value chains
- Participation in cooperatives or producer groups

Infrastructure Constraints

- Transport infrastructure and road access
- Storage and cold chain infrastructure
- Irrigation systems and water access
- Market infrastructure and logistics
- Internet access and digital connectivity

Access to Services

- Access to healthcare services
- Access to education and vocational training
- Access to financial services and credit
- Access to agricultural advisory services

Social and Conflict-Related Vulnerability

- Impact of war and displacement on livelihoods
- Property loss or unresolved property rights
- Trauma and psychosocial consequences
- Social isolation and marginalization

Environmental and Climate Risks

- Exposure to climate change impacts
- Floods, droughts, and land degradation
- Environmental sustainability challenges

Community Participation

- Participation in women's associations and networks
- Participation in local decision-making processes

IV. Deliverables and Time frame

Deliverables and Timeline

Until 7th of April 2026 submitting application.

Duration phase: 20th of April- 20.December 2026.

1. Inception Report including methodology and work plan (20 April – 20 May)

During the initial phase, the Consultant/Assessment Team will prepare an **Inception Report** outlining the detailed assessment methodology, research framework, sampling approach, work plan, and timeline for the assignment. The report will also describe key vulnerability indicators, ethical considerations, and proposed data collection methods. The Inception Report will be submitted to **Vive Žene** for review and approval before further implementation.

2. Finalized data collection instruments (20 May – 30 June)

Following consultations with **Vive Žene**, the Consultant/Assessment Team will develop and finalize the data collection tools. These will include structured survey questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussion guidelines, and data collection templates. Draft instruments will be reviewed by **Vive Žene**, and the final versions will be approved before the start of field data collection.

3. Database of collected data (anonymized) (1 July – 15 October)

During the field research phase, the Consultant/Assessment Team will conduct surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions with rural women farmers and relevant stakeholders. All collected data will be compiled, organized, and anonymized to ensure confidentiality and compliance with ethical research standards. The finalized database will be submitted to **Vive Žene** as part of the deliverables.

4. Draft Vulnerability Assessment Report (15 October – 15 November)

Based on the analyzed quantitative and qualitative data, the Consultant/Assessment Team will prepare a **Draft Vulnerability Assessment Report**. The report will present key findings on socio-economic conditions, gender-related barriers, infrastructure challenges, and post-conflict vulnerabilities affecting rural women in Podrinje. The draft report will be submitted to **Vive Žene** for review and feedback, as well as will be organised the presettation of the findings to stakeholders.

5. Presentation of findings to stakeholders (15 November – 20 November)

The Consultant/Assessment Team will present the key findings of the assessment to **Vive Žene and relevant stakeholders**, including representatives of institutions, rural women's associations, and development partners. The presentation will highlight major results, policy implications, and recommendations for future interventions supporting rural women in Podrinje.

6. Final Vulnerability Assessment Report (20 November – 10 December)

Following comments and recommendations from Vive Žene, the Consultant/Assessment Team will revise and finalize the assessment report. The final report will include detailed analysis, conclusions, and practical recommendations for targeted interventions supporting women's economic empowerment and resilience in the Podrinje region.

7. Executive Summary (short standalone version) (10 December – 15 December)

A concise **Executive Summary** will be prepared as a standalone document summarizing the key findings, conclusions, and strategic recommendations of the assessment. This version will be suitable for sharing with donors, institutions, and other stakeholders.

All deliverables will be submitted in English in editable electronic format and will require formal approval from Vive Žene.

VI. Duty travel & accommodation

Assessment will be organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina and all additional cost of travel of the consultant are included in honorary. Costs of accommodation will be included in honorary if there is a need for it.

VII. Coordination & reporting

The contact person for the implementation of this assignment will be **Mima Dahić, Project Coordinator at Vive Žene**. Her role will be to oversee and monitor the overall process, ensure coordination with the Vive Žene team, and provide guidance during the implementation of the assessment.

The engaged Consultant/Assessment Team will maintain regular communication with Vive Žene throughout the assignment and will submit the required deliverables in accordance with the agreed timeline.

Following the completion of the activities, the Consultant/Assessment Team will submit the following documentation:

- Detailed **work plan and time schedule**
- Developed **assessment methodology and data collection instruments**
- **Transcripts or summaries of interviews and focus group discussions**

- **Database of collected data (anonymized)**
- **Draft and Final Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment Report**
- **Executive Summary of key findings and recommendations**
- **Presentation of findings and recommendations to stakeholders**

All reports and documents will be submitted in **electronic editable format** and will be subject to review and approval by **Vive Žene**.

VIII. Qualification requirements

- 2. Education:**
 - A graduate degree in **agriculture, business development, rural development, gender studies**, or a related field.
- 3. Experience:**
 - Proven experience in **agricultural business development** (dairy, vegetables, wool), **market analysis**, and working with rural women at least 3 years.
 - Experience in **gender analysis** and integrating **gender-sensitive strategies** in rural development projects at least 3 years.
- 4. Skills:**
 - Strong research, analytical, and facilitation skills.
 - Familiarity with the agricultural sector and local customs.

IX. Application procedure:

- The deadline for submission is 20th of April 2026.
- Applicants should submit the following by email to: mima@vivezene.ba
- Specific document which should be submitted: offer including the proposed methodology, financial plan and CV. Costs should be specified by external consultants
- Declaration of relationship with Vive Zene or with staff of Vive Zene.
- Financial offer and details on what it should contain fee per hour, divided on preparation, implantation and reporting.
- For any additional information you can contact Vive Zene through mail mima@vivezene.ba

X. Evaluation of the offers

Vive Zene will form evaluation committee consisted by three persons where the best offer will be chosen.

Best value for money principle will be taken into account by using a weighted scoring method to evaluate the combination of the applicants' qualification (60%) and financial proposal (40%).

- **Technical evaluation (60points):**

The technical evaluation of the received offers will consist of: [List criteria upon which the technical evaluation will be assessed and graded. Have in mind that they should be the same or closely connected to the qualifications set forth in section V. *Qualification requirements*]

Evaluation Criteria for Selection of Consultant / Assessment Team

The evaluation of proposals will be conducted based on **two main criteria with a maximum score of 60 points**:

- **Professional experience – 40 points**
- **Proposed methodology and approach – 20 points**

The consultant or assessment team receiving the highest score will be recommended for contract award.

1. Evaluation of Professional Experience (Maximum 40 Points)

The professional experience of the consultant/team will be assessed based on relevant expertise in **agriculture, rural development, socio-economic research, and gender equality.**

1.1 Experience in Agriculture and Rural Development (10 points)

Relevant experience working with agricultural production systems, rural livelihoods, farmers' organizations, agricultural value chains, or rural development initiatives.

1.2 Experience in Developing Feasibility Studies or Sector Analyses in Agriculture (10 points)

Experience in preparing feasibility studies, value chain studies, agricultural sector analyses, or market studies related to rural economic development.

1.3 Experience in Conducting Socio-Economic Assessments or Research Studies (10 points)

Experience in conducting baseline studies, socio-economic assessments, vulnerability assessments, or similar analytical research related to rural development, agriculture, or community development.

1.4 Experience in Gender Equality, Research, and Capacity Building (10 points)

Relevant experience in gender equality programs, development of analytical studies and reports, and implementation of training or capacity-building activities related to women's empowerment or rural development.

2. Evaluation of Proposed Methodology and Approach (Maximum 20 Points)

The technical proposal will be evaluated based on the **quality, clarity, and feasibility of the proposed methodology for conducting the socio-economic vulnerability assessment.**

The methodology should demonstrate:

- Understanding of **rural socio-economic conditions and gender inequalities**
- Clear research design combining **quantitative and qualitative data collection methods**
- Explanation of **sampling strategy and participant selection**
- Inclusion of **gender-sensitive and post-conflict analysis approaches**
- Consideration of **agricultural production systems, infrastructure constraints, and market access**
- Clear **data analysis framework and vulnerability assessment indicators**
- Ethical standards and data protection procedures

Only the candidates which will reach the threshold of 60 % (min 48 points out of 100 points) of the technical qualification will be considered for the financial evaluation.

○ **Financial evaluation (40points)**

The evaluation of the financial offers will be conducted in the following manner:

The offer with the lowest price shall receive the total of 40 points

The other offers with higher prices shall receive the respective score according to the following formula: $40 * (\text{Lowest Price} / \text{Proposed Price})$.

XI. Terms of payment

The engaged Consultant/Assessment Team will be contracted through a **temporary service contract**.

Payment will be made in **three instalments** based on the completion of agreed deliverables:

• **30% of the total contract amount** will be paid upon signing the contract and prior to the start of the assignment.

• **30% of the total contract amount** will be paid upon submission and approval of the following deliverables:

- Inception Report including methodology and work plan
- Finalized data collection instruments

• **40% of the total contract amount** will be paid upon submission and approval of all final deliverables, including:

- Database of collected data (anonymized)
- Draft and Final Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment Report
- Executive Summary
- Presentation of findings to stakeholders

All payments will be made after **review and formal approval of deliverables by Vive Žene**.

i) Declaration of relationships

The Applicant shall describe if their organization/employees have any business or personal relationships with closely associated party from Vive Zene, its governing bodies and employees or with similar bodies/persons of the Vive zene.

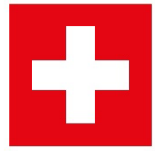
Closely associated party (persons, physical or legal) as per We Effect's definition is considered person who has the possibility to exert control over, or significant influence on, the other person when it comes to financial and operative decision-making concerning an activity. The purpose of the Declaration is to disclose such information which makes the application and evaluation process more transparent and supports the bids in its relevance according to conditions on the open market.



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Projekat: Sjeme saradnje – inicijativa „Podrinjska kuća“

Project: Seeds of Cooperation: Podrinjska Kuća



Švicarska.