**THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**



**Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development**

**Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project**

**Terms of Reference (TOR)**

**FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND PRODUCTIVITY IN SELECTED ECONOMIC SECTORS IN UGANDA**

**July 2025**

# **Background**

The 2021 National Labour Force survey (NLFS) showed that female participation rate stood at a paltry 39% in 2021 having declined from 44.4% in 2016/17. The number of females outside the labor force (7347000 in 2021) is almost twice that of males (4700000 in 2021). The draft National Development Plan NDP (IV) shows that the employment-to population ratio is low at 47.5%, with a notable gender disparity of 52% for males and 34% for females. This implies that for every 100 women eligible for employment only 34 are in employment compared to 52 men. Yet augmenting women's labour supply is crucial, considering its beneficial effects on women's empowerment, children's human capital (education health and nutrition), and comprehensive economic growth. The participation of women in the labour force elevates household incomes, thereby enabling families in overcoming poverty and enhancing their consumption of goods and services. Verick (2018) recognized female labour force participation as a primary catalyst for economic growth and development in African nations. Although gender disparities in labour force participation endure globally and more pronounced in Uganda, bridging this gap can result in substantial economic benefits, averaging a 20 percent rise in GDP per capita (Halim, O’Sullivan, & Sahay, 2023).

Uganda continues to face significant challenges from unemployment and low labor productivity, which necessitates immediate action from the government, development partners, and other stakeholders at all levels. The draft NDP (IV) recognizes that accelerated economic growth will result from enhanced factor productivity due to the efficient utilization of factors of production. It is necessary therefore to enhance labour productivity and shift the workforce from low-value to high-value sectors. With the bulging population and the highest youth segment globally, employment and productivity, remain central to Uganda’s development strategies for socioeconomic transformation.

Uganda’s Vision 2040 identifies low productivity and participation especially of females, and competitiveness as one the key factors constraining Uganda’s development process. Uganda’s current National Development Plan prioritizes enhancing human capital development as a key requisite to realizing the country’s long-term goal of “*higher household income, full monetization of the economy and employment for sustainable socio-economic transformation*”. A notable implementation objective to achieve the above being to sustainably increase production, productivity, and value addition in agriculture, industry, minerals, oil & gas, tourism, ICT, and financial services.

Estimates by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2022 revealed that Uganda's labor productivity in 2021 was US$ 3.6 GDP per hour worked, ranking Uganda in the 175th position out of 185 countries. Low labour productivity leads to fewer goods and services produced by a given labor force, and to a decline in economic growth. In turn, the economy loses tax revenue to support necessary social services such as health care, education, and infrastructural development, among others.

A 2024 report produced by the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) on the implications of green transition on the labour market showed that about 48% of the new jobs created during the transition would benefit women. In agriculture, 75% of the jobs created will be for women, with a corresponding 30% in the natural capital sector; 50% in urban development and 30% in the transport and energy sectors. Realizing this benefit however, is dependent on the labour force participation of women in these sectors.

Estimates from the NLFS 2021 and UNHS 2019 showed that female labour force participation in industry sector is just about half that of men. This underscores the gender differences in labour entry and retention for females in male-dominated higher productive and profitable sectors such as ICT, manufacturing, Tourisms, transport and logistics supplies, and commercial agriculture. It is therefore important to examine female worker participation and productivity in Uganda's key economic sectors to understand the existing institutional and structural barriers, and the opportunities for enhancing labour force participation of women in these growth sectors and the labour productivity.

Drawing from its mandate of “*promotion of gender equality, labor administration, social protection and transformation of communities”*, the MGLSD seeks the services of a consultancy firm (or team of researchers) to undertake a study on female labor participation and productivity in Uganda. The study will inform policy reforms and interventions towards female labor participation and productivity enhancement in the four key growth sectors of the economy.

# **Objectives of the assignment**

The overall aim of the assignment is to conduct a study on female labour participation and productivity in manufacturing, ICT, tourism, and commercial agriculture, and draw practical and feasible recommendations to enhance the employment and labour productivity of women in these key sectors of the economy.

## **2.1 Specific Objectives**

1. Examine trends and patterns in female labor force participation rates in the four selected sectors of; manufacturing, ICT, Tourism, and Commercial Agriculture.
2. Estimate the level of female labor force productivity in the selected four sectors of manufacturing, ICT, Tourism, and Commercial Agriculture.
3. To assess the impact of female labour force participation on productivity levels, job creation, and sectoral growth within manufacturing, ICT, tourism, and commercial agriculture, with a view to identifying strategies that enhance women’s economic contributions and drive sustainable industry development.
4. To Identify the binding constraints to, and opportunities (desired interventions) for increasing female labor force participation and labour productivity in the four sectors of; manufacturing, ICT, Tourism, and Commercial Agriculture.
5. To identify the key social-economic, cultural, and institutional factors influencing womens’ participation in the labour market.
6. To examine the impact of existing policies, regulatory frameworks, and support systems (e.g access to finance, safety regulations, gender inclusion policies) on womens’ participation in these sectors.
7. Generate actionable policy recommendations for improving female labour force participation and productivity in the four sectors of the economy.

**2.2 Scope of Work**

The assignment will cover the following areas:

* A literature review on female participation and labor productivity in Uganda and comparison with other countries.
* An analysis of the level, and trend of female labor participation and productivity in Uganda’s key economic sectors.
* Identifying the institutional, policy and structural barrier to, and opportunities for of female labor participation and productivity growth in the four selected sectors and draw implications for other key sectors of the economy.
* Actionable recommendations for improving participation and productivity of women workers in the four sectors under attention.

## **2.3 Key Deliverables**

1. An inception report detailing the methodology, including data collection tools and the.
2. Draft final report: comprehensive study report including findings, analysis, and policy recommendations.
3. **Final Report:** A refined report on female labor force participation and productivity in the key sectorsincorporating feedback from stakeholders
4. **Policy Briefs:** Concise documents summarizing key findings and policy recommendations.
5. **Presentation of Findings:** PowerPoint presentations for dissemination to stakeholders the binding constraints to female labor force participation and productivity in the key sectors.

# **Methodology**

The consulting team is expected to employ a multifaceted approach including:

1. Desk review relevant literature, including national and international policy documents and reports on labour force participation and productivity, with particular focus on women and youths.
2. Conduct stakeholder consultations through interviews, workshops, and surveys.
3. Secondary data analysis to examine the levels, trends and the factors influencing female labor force participation and productivity in the four sectors.
4. Qualitative data collection involving key informant interviews and in-depth interviews with stakeholders for a deeper understanding of the policy, institutional and structural barriers, as well as existing opportunities to enhance female labour force participation and labour productivity in the four selected sectors.

# **Qualification Requirements**

The Consultant will be a firm or a team of researchers with demonstrated experience and capacity to carry out high quality studies on labour markets, development planning and sectoral analysis, and to engage with GOU MDAs, CSOs and development partners. Below is a proposed team of experts for the execution of the assignment.

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| S/N | Required Personnel/Expert | Qualifications & Experience |
| 1 | Development Economist, Public Policy Expert or Labour Economist / Team Leader | A PhD or master’s degree in development economics, Public policy or labour economics with at least ten (10) years’ experience conducting high impact studies with technical competencies in areas including: Development Planning, Project Development, labor market analytics, and Economic Policy.   1. General knowledge of Uganda’s labour market structure and previous work in the four selected sectors; 2. Demonstrated field experience with Governments, social sector planning, gender mainstreaming, and development partners and foundations in the area of inclusive economic planning. 3. Knowledge of the current debates and programmes in the National development planning frameworks on employment and labour productivity, and the private sector role in addressing female employment and gender disparities. 4. Must have authored or co-authored at least two (2) publications in internationally recognized, peer-reviewed journals or high-level academic platforms. These should focus on topics such as women’s economic empowerment, labor market inclusion, or related public policy themes |
| 2 | **Economic Policy Specialist:** | 1. Master’s degree in Economics, Economic policy and planning, public policy with at least 7 years of experience. |
| 3 | **Gender Specialist** | 1. Master’s degree in Gender Studies, Development Studies, or a related field with experience in gender-inclusive policy research and qualitative data collection methodologies. |

# **Supervision and Reporting**

The consulting team will report to the Project Coordinator, GROW Project who will provide technical guidance and oversight of the assignment from the start to end.

1. **Duration and Timeline**

The assignment will be completed within six months from the date of contract signing. A detailed work plan, including timelines for each deliverable, will be discussed and agreed at the time of contract award.

1. **Submission of Proposals**

Interested consultancy firms/ teams of researchers should submit their expressions of interest, including:

1. Company profile
2. Evidence of experience in undertaking similar assignments in form of copies of completed contracts or agreements and reference/recommendation from previous clients.
3. CVs of the proposed core research team.

The expression of interest should be submitted [hand delivered] to the Procurement Unit on 7th Floor at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) by 12th August 2025 at 11:00am, Local time

**8. Notices**

Client’s contact details for reporting purposes are indicated below:

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Gender Labour & Social Development

*Attn: Project Coordinator, GROW Project*

Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project

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