# Terms of Reference

STATEMENT OF NEED

UN Women Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) requires a vendor to conduct a survey on violence against women in politics (VAWP) at local level in four countries of the Arab States region (i.e., Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia).

Background information on the project

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

Women’s leadership and political participation is one of UN Women’s primary areas of work as mandated in its inception, recognizing the integral role of women in strong and stable democratic processes. Through its Leadership and Governance section, UN Women works to implement Output 4 of the Entity’s Strategic Plan 2018-21 “More women of all ages fully participate, lead and engage in political institutions and processes”.

To promote the leadership and participation of women in all levels of decision-making processes, UN Women works with a range of stakeholders including women leaders and aspiring candidates, national parliaments and parliamentarians, political parties, media, civil society organizations, and electoral management bodies, in coordination with UN partner Entities, through a wide range of interventions which include: i) support gender responsive legal reforms, and institutional processes to advance women’s participation and representation (including initiatives to address violence against women in politics); ii) build capacities of women leaders and aspiring candidates; iii) promote change of gender norms through advocacy and outreach initiatives targeting communities, political leaders and the media; iv) support women leaders in gender responsive political institutions; and v) support measurement and monitoring of women’s political participation and its obstacles.

Despite some country case studies and regional initiatives, global data and research on women’s participation and representation in local government lagged, resulting in a major knowledge gap. The integration of SDG indicator 5.5.1b in the SDG monitoring framework, acknowledges the importance of a whole of government approach and women’s voices and leadership at local level. Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia have been reporting on SDG 5.5.1b and the proportion of elected seats held by women in deliberative bodies of local government (%):

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Country | Office holders | Office holders (male) | Office holders (female) | % women |
| Jordan | 3,317 | 2,259 | 1,058 | 32% |
| Lebanon | 14,925 | 14,328 | 597 | 4% |
| Palestine | 3,590 | 2,829 | 761 | 21% |
| Tunisia | 7,210 | 3,713 | 3,497 | 48.5% |

But no indicator reflects on the obstacles women face while being active in the political spheres at local level. One of the main obstacles is the Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWP).

UN Women defines VAWP as:

**“Violence against women in political life is any act** of, or threat of, gender-based violence, resulting in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women, **that prevents them from exercising and realizing their political rights**, whether in public or private spaces, including the right to vote and hold public office, to vote in secret and to freely campaign, to associate and assemble, and to enjoy freedom of opinion and expression. Such violence can be perpetrated by a family member, community member and or by the State...”[[1]](#footnote-1)

VAWP can take many forms, from misogynistic and sexist verbal attacks, psychological to the most commonplace acts of harassment and sexual harassment, and it is also perpetrated online. [[2]](#footnote-2) Types of VAWP range from psychological, sexual, and physical, and, more recently, cyber acts of violence. Assassinations, physical violence, including rape and sexual harassment, sexist remarks, verbal abuse, and threats of reprisal are used as tools to intimidate, humiliate and, worse, put an end to a woman’s political career.

In the Arab States, very limited data is available on VAWP in all its forms, even less so at local level, and whenever available, all forms of VAW are not considered. For instance, it is only recently that studies have started considering VAW conducted online. Anecdotal data from Tunisia found that “80 percent of women in Tunisia have experienced violence on the internet”.[[3]](#footnote-3) Moreover, some groups of women in the region, including human rights defenders, women in politics, journalists, bloggers find themselves targeted by ICT-facilitated violence. With the spread of violent extremist ideas in some countries of the region, and shrinking space for civil society and women’s rights, violence towards women leaders and activists has increased[[4]](#footnote-4):

In most cases, VAWP goes underreported to formal institutions due to the culture of silence, stigma and impunity associated with gender-based violence.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Objectives of the assignment

In this context, the UN Women ROAS seeks to support a multicountry study on VAWP at local level (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia). The study will document and quantify experiences of women in politics at local level, with a particular focus on assessing their obstacles to political participation, including the experiences of violence, forms of violence, risk and protective factors, help-seeking behaviors, and consequences it may have on women’s health, well-being as well as on their political participation and leadership. In view of the increasing use of social media in the region to frustrate women’s political engagement, the study will also have a particular emphasis on this form of violence. This information will be complemented by an assessment of the national legislative and policy frameworks on women’s political participation and VAWP, enabling the identification of entry points for strengthening the monitoring, normative and institutional framework on VAWP.

While ‘women in politics’ is a broader term for women who directly or indirectly participate in different forms of political activity, this study is focused on women elected for public office at local level.

The study will be guided by existing definitions of violence against women (VAW) and VAWP, a series of internationally recommended principles in data collection on VAW, data collection tools on VAWP developed in other UN Women studies, and related regional work carried out by other entities, such as the Ra’edat survey on VAWP in the Arab States (2020).

The data collection method used by the study is quantitative sample surveys targeting women office holders elected at local level. It is anticipated that in three out of four countries covered by the study – Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine - the survey will target all women office holders at local level, while in the fourth country, Tunisia, only a sample (of a comparable size with the other countries).

The study will generate statistics-based evidence on most critical barriers to women’s political participation and leadership to guide efforts of UN Women and its partners to promote and support women’s political empowerment and participation as office holders. Moreover, the technical lessons learned from conducting the study will inform future global quantitative and qualitative research on violence against women office holders.

Scope of work

Working in close consultation and collaboration with UN Women ROAS and UN Women’s focal points in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia, who will assist the vendor in accessing information on women office holders in local government, the vendor will perform the following tasks:

**Component 1**: Propose the survey type (online, phone-based, or hybrid) and develop a data collection plan with timeline of activities.

* Propose the most appropriate remote/virtual modality for conducting the survey. While targeted online surveys have been conducted in the Arab States region, they often required follow-up telephonic interviews conducted by enumerators. A hybrid approach could therefore be considered. The survey type should be consistent with the sample design and the methodological requirements of the survey (please see below). The survey type should also consider the pandemic restrictions, confidentiality, and safety of respondents and staff.
* Develop a data collection plan specifying the timeline of activities, number and selection of interviewers and supervisors, and the quality assurance mechanism for the data collection in the field.

**Component 2**: Prepare the sampling frame for all countries and a sample design for quantitative data collection for at least one country (i.e., Tunisia).

* Prepare sampling frames for all countries included in the study. UN Women country offices will facilitate access to information on current women office holders at local government.
* For Tunisia, a brief sampling note will detail the sample design, including the sampling frame, the principles used in selecting primary sampling units, the location of sampling units, and the respondent selection protocol. The survey sample design will ensure the adequate representation of women by districts or regions, specific positions in local governments (mayors, deputy mayors, ward chairs, ward members), key types of municipalities (for example, urban/rural municipalities), or by available individual characteristics groups (e.g., age, women with disability indigenous groups). The sample size should be large enough to assess, at a minimum, the magnitude and forms of VAWP overall and cyber-VAWP in particular. VAWP and cyber-VAWP for specific groups of women as noted above will be analyzed.

**Component 3**: Review quantitative data collection tools

Draft quantitative data collection tools (i.e., questionnaire and interviewer’s manual) will be prepared by UN Women in English and translation into Arabic will be arranged in due course, and are expected to be reviewed by the vendor to ensure they are consistent with ethical and safety standards, reflect regional and country specificities, and contribute to a high response rate.

The vendor will in particular be expected to:

* Ensure that both the questionnaire and the manual (as well as the field data collection) are consistent with research ethics and confidentiality requirements in line with the principle of Do No Harm and the WHO Ethical and safety recommendations for intervention research on violence against women, as well as considerations for integrating and operationalizing LNOB;

**Component 4**: Conduct the training of supervisors and enumerators

* Prepare training schedule and materials,
* Train enumerators and supervisors on the administration of the survey[[6]](#footnote-6) building on WHO and UNSD guidelines, covering GEWE concepts and concerns as well as research ethics and confidentiality. Given the high sensitivity of the topic, special attention will be paid to the principle of Do No Harm as well as guaranteeing privacy and providing assurance that the information collected will only be used for the purposes of the study. As noted above, UN Women and the research team will provide inputs and quality control throughout the training process to ensure international best practice is met in training on research ethics on VAW and gender-responsive, trauma-informed interview techniques. The Contractor should also budget for and ensure the availability of counsellor(s) on needs basis during the implementation of the survey.

**Component 5**: Conduct the testing of the questionnaire

* Develop a testing/piloting plan to test the designed tools, including specifying the number of respondents and their selection protocol, consistent with the type of survey proposed. The primary purpose is to test the clarity of questions, gaps in questionnaires, skips in responses, data verification and the technical aspects of the administration of the survey. Different testing methods (expert review, cognitive testing, and pretesting) and types of respondents should be considered.
* Conduct the testing, document the results and lessons learned and propose changes in the draft questionnaire.

The vendor will ensure that respondents with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate to the testing of the questionnaire, and will implement all measures required for that purpose (including, but not limited to, conducting the data collection over the phone with whenever required, arranging for sign language interpretation, or closed captioning).

**Component 6**: Conduct field quantitative data collection

In application of the agreed survey type (proposed and discussed under component 1), activities conducted under the field quantitative data collection will be conducted in compliance with public health recommendations and guidance developed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Contractor will ensure that respondents with disabilities have equal opportunities to respond to the survey, and will implement all measures required for that purpose (including, but not limited to, conducting the data collection over the phone with whenever required, arranging for sign language interpretation, or closed captioning).

The field quantitative data collection will be conducted in Arabic. All findings will however be prepared and circulated by the vendor to UN Women in English.

In the context of the field quantitative data collection, its preparation and analysis of results, the vendor will be expected to perform the following tasks:

* Implement the surveys. The vendor will carry out the survey in line with the implementation plan for data collection and quality assurance mechanisms.
* Complete the data entry, using the methodology that has been identified in the implementation plan for data collection.
* Prepare summary statistics and analysis in table format to be agreed upon between the vendor and UN Women.
* Develop a brief report on lessons learned to document the methodological knowledge generated from the implementation of the study (summarizing challenges in approaching respondents, if some questions did not work, etc.) for UN Women’s further use.

Timeframe

The assignment will take place from August 2021 to 30 November 2021.

Expected Deliverables and timeline

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Deliverable** | **Payment Amount** | **Due dates** |
| **Deliverable 1:**  - Data collection implementation plan;  - Sampling frame and sampling note for Tunisia that detail the type of survey, sample design, sampling frame, expected response rate, the principles used in selecting primary sampling units, the location of sampling units, the respondent selection protocol, and enumerators’ recruitment plan.  - Final quantitative data collection tools; | 15% | 31 August 2021 |
| **Deliverable 2:**  - Raw data and results from the quantitative data collection in the format requested by UN Women (for example, stata, spss, cvs, or excel). | 55% | 20 October 2021 |
| **Deliverable 3:**  - Analysis of the data collection findings and statistics in table format to be agreed upon between the vendor and UN Women.  - Conclusions capturing lessons learnt from the data collection methodology and experiences. | 30% | 30 November 2021 |

Coordination

The vendor will work under the overall guidance of the UN Women Regional Policy Advisor on Women’s Political Participation, and direct supervision of the Programme Analyst. Furthermore, the vendor will work closely with colleagues from UN Women’s focal points for Women’s Political Participation in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia, as well as from the Leadership and Governance section in the UN Women Headquarters.

The Contractor’s scope of action is expected to be included in the data collection plan, to be developed under Component 1. Any action not included in the data collection plan must be discussed and agreed upon with UN Women.

Guiding principles

The implementation of the proposed activities should be guided by the following principles:

* Gender equality and social inclusion
* Intersectionality
* Leave No One Behind
* Transparency, accountability, and good governance
* Human rights-based approach
* Conflict sensitivity, confidentiality, and Do-No-Harm
* Result based programming and management
* Confidentiality and privacy

Geographic coverage

The survey will target all women office holders at local level in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine, while, in Tunisia, only a sample (of a comparable size with the other countries) of women office holders at local level will be surveyed. As indicated above, the survey will be conducted in compliance with public health recommendations and guidance developed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, maximum outreach and response rates are expected.

Competencies

Qualifications of the vendor

The Contractor is requested to include in the proposal the organizational CV and **a sample of the deliverables prepared under a similar data collection assignment (preferably conducted in the region).**

Requirements:

* Demonstrated track record of the organization to conduct sample surveys in areas related to gender, political participation, violence against women or other social issues; prior experience in the Arab States region would be a strong advantage;
* Proven ability to use remote/virtual data collection technology for implementing surveys;
* Proven ability to conduct surveys in Arabic;
* Ability to reach women elected officials in LGUs nationwide, either directly or through intermediaries;
* Experience in working with multiple stakeholders: government, civil society, individual communities and community-based organizations, and the UN/multilateral/bilateral institutions;
* Should have gender, population and GBV expert in team composition;
* Should be able to hire a sampling specialist for the sample design;
* Financial Sustainability of the Organization;
* General Organizational Capacity.

Qualifications of the Team

The vendor will ensure the availability of an experienced Team Leader with the following qualifications and competences:

* + - 1. **Qualifications of the Team Leader:**
* Advanced degree in statistics, research or other social science fields;
* A minimum of three years of working experience in the field of gender mainstreaming, population and GBV research;
* Prior work experience with national statistical systems, academia, UN and/or international development-oriented organization on GBV issues in the Arab States region;
* Proven record of communication and analytical skills and extensive experience in the issues of population and gender issues;
* Good understanding of national policies and framework in relation to gender issues;
* Excellent knowledge related to current policies and best practices in the area of VAW/GBV issues;
* Strong knowledge of modalities of UN technical support to member states with a focus on gender equality, especially humanitarian preparedness and response;
* Excellent knowledge and skills on use MS Office tools (Word, Access, Excel, etc) and relevant statistical software;
* Good understanding of gender equality, women's empowerment and GBV issues;
* Ability to establish and foster good relations with government counterparts, UN agencies, and other partners;
* Excellent interpersonal and networking skills, and ability to work in multi-cultural and multi- disciplinary environments;
* Ability to work under pressure on multiple activities whilst maintaining high-quality and timeliness;
* Fluency in English and Arabic. French will be an asset.

The vendor should demonstrate the availability of qualified and competent team of experts. Further, the vendor should provide signed Curriculum Vitae of the proposed core team and Sampling Specialist who will be involved either full time or part time.

* + - 1. **Team composition**

The vendor should plan to designate or hire as needed a core team consisting of a Team Leader, a Statistician/Data Analyst, two Research Assistants for data entry.

The vendor should also budget and ensure the availability of a Sampling Specialist for the sample design, wherever sampling will be required.

The vendor should also plan to recruit an appropriate number of enumerators per country as required, based on the sample size in each country in the scope of the data collection. The vendor should further outline the criteria for selection and also detail how the enumerators will be monitored/supervised.

In addition, the vendor should also budget and plan to hire translator(s) and counsellor(s) on needs basis as per the requirements of the TOR.

The vendor should ensure gender parity when proposing the team.

Similarly, the vendor should budget for telephone top-ups for respondents as deemed necessary.

1. Preventing Violence Against Women in Elections, A Programming Guide, UN Women/UNDP, 2017. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/11/preventing-violence-against-women-in-elections> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rihab Boukhayatia, Tunisia : Women Campaigning Against the Impunity of Cyberviolence, 17 November 2020: <https://nawaat.org/2020/11/17/tunisia-women-campaigning-against-the-impunity-of-cyberviolence/> (accessed on 11 July 2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Gender, Masculinities and Violent Extremism in North Africa; a Research Agenda: <https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/01/gender-equality-and-violent-extremism-in-north-africa-studies> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The exact mode for the administration of the survey will be determined during the review of the quantitative data collection tools (Component 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)