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**Terms of Reference (TOR)**

Provision of Research on the gendered implications of Artificial Intelligence on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Southeast Asia

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1. **Background**

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.

Cybersecurity and the security of women and girls online has emerged as a critical area of work within the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an integral part of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), from every-day digital tools to military technologies. While AI offers innovative technological solutions to countless issues, it also carries risks and pitfalls which may have serious implications on gender equality and peace and security if left unaddressed. Numerous studies have shown that many AI-powered systems carry gender and racial biases, where existing and historical inequalities are maintained or exacerbated, often bearing negative consequences for women and girls. The lack of disaggregated data, gender-sensitive programming on AI algorithms and the underrepresentation of women in tech and AI development are contributing to these bias issues.

While this carries risks for individual users, it also carries wider security risks with military technologies increasingly incorporating AI and as social media platforms are increasingly weaponised and used to disrupt social cohesion and incite violence. Disinformation campaigns are a growing issue on social media platforms and may fuel conflict by inciting hate-speech, spreading radical thought and encouraging violence. AI-powered filter mechanisms and digital echo-chambers carry the risk of exacerbating these issues, and have shown to be a fertile breeding ground for misogyny. This, coupled with a lack of awareness of technological vulnerabilities, risks related to AI biases and the lack of policies and regulations ensuring ethical and inclusive application of AI, and poor cyberhygiene practices is constituting a hinder for peacebuilders, women in particular, to use digital technologies to facilitate peace efforts and civic engagement.

While carrying risks to peace and security that need to be better understood, AI also has the potential to enhance and strengthen peacebuilding efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the extent to which women peacebuilders use ICTs and digital solutions to support their work. However, while mediators and peacebuilders are increasingly using ICTs and AI to enhance their engagements, women peacebuilders are less likely to, particularly when it comes to AI. Nevertheless, these technologies carry considerable potential for inclusive peacebuilding and civic engagement, including: a) *Enhancing conflict analysis* through automated analysis of social media narratives, geographical information data, and outputs from big-data text mining; b) *Facilitating early warning and response* by allowing real-time analysis of data relevant to identifying imminent violence, such as an increase in misogynistic language; c) *Informing peaceful counter-narratives* by allowing analysis and trend identification across a large material of data, and; d) *Mobilising engagement for peace and activism* by offering innovative services and guidance to peacebuilders, activists and human rights defenders. For more information on UN Women's approach to the issue, please see the brief “From Warfare to Peacebuilding: Employing Artificial Intelligence for Women, Peace and Security” available on the following webpage: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/04/from-warfare-to-peacebuilding>

Within this context, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific is undertaking a programme on Women, Peace and Cybersecurity, with the aim of enhancing gender-inclusive cybersecurity and supporting a digital environment where the human and digital rights of women and girls are promoted and protected. In the current phase of programming, UN Women is seeking to expand the knowledgebase on the risks and opportunities of AI in the context of implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in Southeast Asia.

1. **Objectives and Scope of Work**

The engaged service provider will work under the supervision of the Regional Adviser for Governance, Peace and Security of UN Women Asia Pacific Regional Office to undertake research on “Implications of Artificial Intelligence on the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Southeast Asia”, which is part of UN Women’s programme on *Women, Peace and Cybersecurity: Promoting Women’s Peace and Security in the Digital World.*

Under this scope of work, the service provider is expected to undertake the following key activities:

1. **Data collection on Gender and AI**
2. **Organize an expert group meeting on Gender and AI to present and validate the key findings of the research**
3. **Produce a research report and summary on Gender and AI and other knowledge products (as further specified below)**
4. **Development of an e-learning module on Gender and AI**

**a) Data collection on Gender and AI**

UN Women expects the service provider to suggest the most appropriate data collection methodology with the view to have solid evidence on Gender and AI in the region. This could include a big-data analysis users’ interaction with AI-powered systems, understood through a peace and security lens, among women and men across Southeast Asia, or other as determined and suggested by the service provider. This could also include key informant interviews and focus group discussions with policy makers, government officials, think tank, NGOs, peacebuilders, journalists, cyberdefenders, women human rights defenders, private sector/social media/tech company representatives and others. It will also include a desk review of the literature on this topic.

The objective of the data collection will be to answer the following questions (to be further sharpened and adapted in consultation with the service provider):

* To what extent do women meaningfully participate and lead in AI decision and policy-making, development and audit in Southeast Asia?
* What are the key peace and security risks, threats and issues related to Gender and AI in the region?
* What is the level of exposure to and awareness of women and men on the risks and opportunities relating to AI in the context of peace and security considerations?
* To what extent do women and men use AI for peacebuilding/civic engagement purposes, and what are the most significant obstacles for women and men to use digital technologies for said purposes?
* What are the mitigation strategies that can be put in place by NGOs, Women’s rights Defenders, Peacebuilders to use technologies and AI-powered systems in a safe manner, and how can these processes best be supported by decision- and policy-makers?
* What are the entry points to support women’s positive engagement with said technologies for civic engagement and peacebuilding purposes?

The engaged service provider should conduct a thorough **literature review** to outline key knowledge gaps in the intersection of AI and WPS in Southeast Asia and identify country-specific examples that highlight risks and opportunities of AI from a peace and conflict lens. The engaged service provider may want to perform of **big data analysis (optional) or other methodology that the contract can suggest.**  The **qualitative interviews,** should capture views and sentiments of a broad range of stakeholder groups, including Women’s rights and digital rights NGOs, tech professionals, policy- and decision-makers etc.

The methodology will be designed by the research team in consultation with UN Women. Peer review of the survey is recommended. The technical proposal should detail the proposed methodology and sample size.

**b) Organize an expert group meeting on Gender and AI to present and validate the key findings of the research**

The service provider will, together with UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, co-organize an expert group meeting on Gender and AI where the initial findings of the research will be shared with key stakeholders who have been interviewed or who has otherwise contributed to the data which was collected under this research.The inputs from the expert group meeting will be integrated in the final research documents. The expert group meeting will be conducted virtually through a two-hour session.

**c) Produce a research report and research summary on Gender and AI, as well as other related knowledge management products**

Building on the results from the data collection and the expert group meeting, the service provider will write a **research report and research summary** on gender and AI, and its implications for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Southeast Asia,

The final research report should address the implications of AI across all four pillars of the WPS agenda: participation, prevention, protection, and recovery and resilience, and provide tangible recommendations for a wide range of stakeholders, including Governments/policymakers, International Organisations, Social Media/Tech Companies, CSOs, and others as the engaged service provider deems relevant.

The full report should be approx. 50-60 pages and should be accompanied with standalone summary of approximately 10-15 pages. The documents will be copy-edited, designed, and disseminated by UN Women.

In addition, the service provider will develop a **2-page brief** highlighting the key findings and recommendations and a **script for a succinct informative animated video** that will be created by UN Women and another contracted partner.

**e) Develop and pilot an e-learning module on Gender and AI**

The Service provider will, together with UN Women and another contracted partner, co- create **an e-learning module on Gender and AI** to be included in a UN Women-led e-learning platform, which to date houses training modules on gender, disinformation and other cybersecurity concerns. The Service provider will be responsible for the development of the content of the e-module, drawing from the research findings and incorporating inputs and comments from UN Women and other partners involved in the development and management of the e-module. UN Women will review and approve the content provided by the service provider, while another partner of UN Women will provide technical guidance on the format of the e-module and upload the material on the online platform. The e-learning module will be available online, but will also be used as a tool to support and conduct in-person trainings and capacity building sessions.

Once the first draft of the content of the e-module is approved, the Service provider will pilot the proposed module by having a cohort of 20 participants (women from NGOs, peacebuilders and other relevant groups in Southeast Asia) undertaking the course online and 10 participants undertaking the training in person with the support of a facilitator to be identified and covered by the Service provider. The participants will be required to provide detailed feedback to improve the content of the module.

Following the testing of the module the Service provider will revise the contents accounting for participant feedback, and submit the final version of the module to UN Women and its partner.

1. **Expected Deliverables, Activities and Timelines**

The total duration of the engagement is for a period of **12 months**, from **31 July 2022 – 31 July 2023 June 2023**. The Service provider can be located in any UN Member States, with ability to organize consultations, including any preparatory calls or interviews, in time-zones compatible with working hours in Asia and the Pacific. Target dates are provisional and will be confirmed with the successful service provider.

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| **No.** | **Deliverables** | **Activity descriptions** | **Target dates** |
| 1 | Project workplan | - Develop a workplan for the project with timelines and final | 15 August 2022 |
| 2. | Inception report methodological note on the research that integrates UN Women’s comments | After conducting the Literature review, produce an inception report and a  survey tools and a research methodology | 15 September 2022 |
| 3 | Draft research report and draft ppt presentation with key findings | - Conduct data collection and submit draft report and Ppt summarizing the key findings to be presented at the Expert group meeting and validation workshop | 30 November 2022 |
| 5 | Expert group meeting/ Validation workshop | - Conduct Expert group meeting/ Validation workshop to validate the findings | 20 December 2022 |
| 6 | Research report and summary report | - Finalize and submit the full report and summary report, video script for animated video and 2-page brief | 31 January 2023 |
| 7 | Module on Gender and AI | Development, test and finalize a module on Gender and AI | 15July 2023 |

1. **Ethical Code of Conduct**

The research is to be carried out according to ethical principles and standards established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).

* Anonymity and confidentiality: The research must respect the rights of individuals who provide information, ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality.
* Responsibility: The report must mention any dispute or difference of opinion that may have arisen among the consultants or between the consultant and the heads of the Project in connection with the findings and/or recommendations. The team must corroborate all assertions, or disagreement with them noted.
* Integrity: The researchers will be responsible for highlighting issues not specifically mentioned in the TOR, if this is needed to obtain a more complete analysis of the intervention.
* Independence: The researchers should ensure their independence from the intervention under review, and they must not be associated with its management or any element thereof.
* Incidents: If problems arise during the fieldwork, or at any other stage of the research, they must be reported immediately. If this is not done, the existence of such problems may in no case be used to justify the failure to obtain the results stipulated by the terms of reference.
* Validation of information: The researcher’s will be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information collected while preparing the reports and will be ultimately responsible for the information presented in the report.
* Intellectual property: In handling information sources, the consultant shall respect the intellectual property rights of the institutions and communities that are under review.
* Delivery of reports: If delivery of the reports is delayed, or in the event that the quality of the reports delivered is clearly lower than what was agreed, the penalties stipulated in these terms of reference will be applicable.

**V. Minimum Requirements**

**Qualifications of the Organization**

The Service provider engaged to undertake the assignment must fulfil the following requirements;

* Must be a legally registered entity;
* Must have a minimum of 2 years of experience on gender, AI and peace and security issues;
* Proven track record of conducting key informant interviews, big data analysis if the proposal includes this option, surveys and research on issues relating to AI and Women, Peace and Security. Experience with gender-responsive research and programming is desirable;
* Experience working in Southeast Asia;
* Must demonstrate strong network with academia, regional NGOs, national NGOs and tech companies;
* Applying entity must not be politically affiliated;
* Registered for profit or not-for-profit entities are eligible to submit proposals.

**Qualifications of Key Personnel**

**The overall Team Leader should have:**

* Master’s degree(s) in International Development, Social Sciences, Political Science, Law, Human Rights, Gender Studies, Statistics, Mathematics, Econometrics, Computer Science or related fields;
  + A first-level university degree in combination with two additional years of qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the Master’s university degree.
* Minimum of 5 years relevant experience in conducting key informant interviews, big data analysis, and research on issues is required. Experience in the areas of policy and/ or programming in Women, Peace, and Security, AI and cybersecurity is desired.
* Demonstrated experience designing and conducting research on gender equality, women’s empowerment and cybersecurity with a focus on AI, with a track record of successfully leading teams of researchers an asset.
* Experience from Southeast Asia is an advantage
* Excellent communication and writing skills in English is required. Knowledge of a language of a Southeast Asia country is an asset.

The Team leader will be assessed on the following:

* General professional and educational qualifications
* Knowledge of the region
* Technical expertise on Gender, AI and peace and security
* International working experience, with a focus on Southeast Asia
* Professional experience in the area of specialization as required by the ToR
* Language qualifications

The team composition may include additional team member(s), who should fulfil the following criteria:

* Minimum Bachelor’s degree in International Development, Social Sciences, Political Science, Law, Human Rights, Gender Studies, Statistics, Mathematics, Econometrics, Computer Science or related fields.
* Minimum of 1-3 years demonstrated experience in research on Women, Peace, Security, AI and other cybersecurity related fields.
* Experience working with academia, NGOs, tech companies and International Organizations.
* Strong English writing skills

Team members will be assessed on the following:

* General professional and educational qualifications
* Knowledge of the region
* Technical expertise on Gender, AI and peace and security
* International working experience, with a focus on Southeast Asia
* Professional experience in the area of specialization as required by the ToR
* Language qualifications

**VI. Roles and Responsibilities of the Parties**

UN Women will provide technical guidance and coordination where possible. The service provider shall be required to bear all the related costs and work independently to successfully achieve the end results.

The service provider will be responsible for the following costs:

* + Professional fees must be quoted in the lumpsum amount per deliverable. The lumpsum amount must be detailed on how the professional fee of each team member is calculated.
  + Indirect costs such as printing, stationeries, communications in relation to the scope of work of services must be included in the financial proposal.
  + Travel costs for technical team members of service providers: all envisaged travel costs such as most direct and most economic local travel, living allowance, terminal expenses, etc. must be included in the financial proposal. In the case of unforeseeable travel, payment of travel costs including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses shall be agreed upon, between UN Women and Service provider, prior to travel and will be reimbursed upon Contract Amendment.
  + Logistics arrangement for trainings for staff, volunteers, and interpreters, etc.
  + All costs related to the workshop, including any materials and any logistics costs (any costs for online/virtual logistics, translation services and any other service provision).
  + All costs related to the development of the report including logistics arrangements for data collection, field visits, interviews, etc.
  + All costs related to quality assurance, data entry, data cleaning and data processing.
  + All cost related to internal copy editing. however, UN Women will also professionally copy edit the documents that will be published.

**VII. Communication and Reporting Obligations**

The supplier will on a regular basis report to the UN Women Programme Specialist – Governance, Peace and Security with a technical reporting line to the Regional Policy Advisor on Governance, Peace and Security. The supplier will also work closely with the Governance, Peace and Security Unit of the UN Women team.

**VIII. Submission of Application**

* Technical proposal
* Financial Proposal/ Quotation with breakdown of budget lines as per required deliverables. The quotation shall specify a lump sum amount breaking down the professional fee for each deliverable, travel and other related cost.
* Updated CVs for the team members
* Company/organisation profile
* Company/organisation registration
* Names of three former clients for reference checks
* Sample of previous work undertaken: For the proposal to be considered, the company must submit two (2) samples of similar or relevant work.

**EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND CRITERIA**

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**I. Preliminary Evaluation**

A preliminary evaluation will be carried out to determine whether the offers meet the administrative requirements and Eligibility Criteria of the RFP. The standard eligibility criteria for suppliers wishing to engage in a contract are laid out below. Further information on doing business with UN Women/ how to become UN Women vendor can be found on [UN Women’s website.](http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/procurement/how-to-become-a-un-women-supplier)

**Legal Capacity**: Bidders may be a private, public or government-owned legal entity or any association with legal capacity to enter into a binding Contract with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

**Conflict of Interest**: Bidders must disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest and they shall be deemed ineligible for this procurement process unless such conflict of interest is resolved in a manner acceptable to UN Women. Conflict of interest is present when:

* A Bidder has a close business or family relationship with a UN Women personnel who: (I) are directly or indirectly involved in the preparation of the bidding documents or specifications of the contract, and/or the bid evaluation process of such contract; or (ii) would be involved in the implementation or supervision of such contract;
* A Bidder is associated, or has been associated in the past, directly or indirectly, with a firm or any of its affiliates which have been engaged by UN Women to provide consulting services for the preparation of the design, specifications, Terms of Reference, and other documents to be used for the procurement of the goods, services or works required in the present procurement process;
* A Bidder has an interest in other bidders, including when they have common ownership and/or management. Bidders shall not submit more than one bid, except for alternative offers, if permitted. This will result in the disqualification of all bids in which the Bidder is involved. This includes situations where a firm is the Bidder in one bid and a sub-service provider on another; however, this does not limit the inclusion of a firm as a sub-service provider in more than one bid.

Failure to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest may lead to the Bidder being sanctioned further by UN Women.

**Ineligibility Lists**: A Bidder shall not be eligible to submit an offer if and when at the time of quotation submission, the Bidder:

* is included in the Ineligibility List, hosted by [UNGM](https://www.ungm.org/), that aggregates information disclosed by Agencies, Funds or Programs of the UN System;
* is included in the [Consolidated United Nations Security Council Sanctions List](https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/un-sc-consolidated-list), including the [UN Security Council Resolution 1267/1989 list](https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list);
* is included in any other Ineligibility List from a UN Women partner and if so listed in the RFP Instructions;
* is currently suspended from doing business with UN Women and removed from its vendor database(s).

**Code of Conduct**: All Bidders are expected to embrace the principles of the [United Nations Supplier Code of Conduct](https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list), reflecting the core values of the Charter of the United Nations. UN Women also expects all its suppliers to adhere to the principles of the [United Nations Global Compact](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/) and recommends signing up to the [Women Empowerment Principles.](http://weprinciples.org/)

**II. Cumulative Analysis Methodology**

A proposal is selected on the basis of *cumulative analysis*; the total score is obtained by combining technical and financial attributes.

A two-stage procedure will be utilized in evaluating the proposals; the technical proposal will be evaluated with a minimum pass requirement of [70%] of the obtainable **700** points assigned for technical proposal. A proposal shall be rejected at this stage if it fails to achieve the minimum technical threshold of [70%] of the obtainable score of **700** points prior to any price proposal being opened and compared. The financial proposal will be opened only for those entities whose technical proposal achieved the minimum technical threshold of [70%] of the obtainable score of **700** points and are determined to be compliant. Non-compliant proposals will not be eligible for further consideration.

The total number of points (“maximum number of points”) which a firm/institution may obtain for its proposal is as follows:

Technical proposal: [700 points] Financial proposal: [300 points]  
Total number of points: [1000 points]   
  
**Evaluation of financial proposal:**   
In this methodology, the maximum number of points assigned to the financial proposal is allocated to the lowest price proposal. All other price proposals receive points in inverse proportion.

A formula is as follows:  
p = y (μ/z)  
Where:  
p = points for the financial proposal being evaluated  
y = maximum number of points for the financial proposal μ = price of the lowest priced proposal

z = price of the proposal being evaluated

The contract shall be awarded to the proposal obtaining the overall highest score after adding the score of the technical proposal and the financial proposal.

**Evaluation of technical proposal:**The technical proposal is evaluated and examined to determine its responsiveness and compliancy with the requirements specified in this solicitation documents. The quality of each technical proposal will be evaluated in accordance with the following technical evaluation criteria and the associated weighting (total possible value of 700 points):

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| **Criteria 1. Expertise and Capability of Proposer** (Expertise of organization submitting proposal) | | **Points obtainable** |
| 1.1 | Organizational Architecture | 10 |
| 1.2 | Adverse judgments or awards: • The proposer is in sound financial condition based on the financial documentation and information furnished in their proposal which should not show any financial concerns, such as negative net worth, bankruptcy proceedings, insolvency, receivership, major litigation, liens, judgments or bad credit or payment history.  • The proposer has not declared bankruptcy, are not involved in bankruptcy or receivership proceedings, and there is no judgment or pending legal action against them that could impair their operations in the foreseeable future. | 10 |
| 1.3 | General Organizational Capability which is likely to affect performance (i.e. size of the organization, strength of management support) | 10 |
| 1.4 | Extent to which any work would be subcontracted (subcontracting carries additional risks which may affect delivery, but properly done it offers a chance to access specialized skills.) | 10 |
| 1.5 | Quality assurance procedures, warranty | 20 |
| 1.6 | Demonstrated relevant knowledge and experience:  • Must be a legally registered entity; • Applying entity must not be politically affiliated; • Registered for profit or not-for-profit entities are eligible to submit proposals;  • At least 5 years previous experience in conducting surveys, research and studies on issues related to gender equality, Women Peace and Security, humanitarian action, and disaster risk reduction at the local, national, and/or international level | 100 |
| **Total Points** for Criteria 1. Expertise and Capability of Proposer | | **160 Points** |
| **Criteria 2. Proposed Work Plan and Approach** (Proposed methodology) | | **Points obtainable** |
| 2.1 | Analysis Approach, Methodology – including Proposer’s understanding of UN Women’s work, adherence to procurement principles and TOR | 320 |
| 2.2 | Management Services – Timeline and deliverables | 80 |
| 2.3 | Environmental Considerations:  Compliance Certificates, Accreditations, Marketing’s/Labels, and other evidences of the Bidder’s practices which contributes to the ecological sustainability and reduction of adverse environmental impact (e.g. the use of non-toxic substances, recucled raw materials, energy-efficient equipment, reduced carbon emission, etc.), either in its business practices or in the goods it manufactures | 10 |
| **Total Points** for Criteria 2. Proposed Work Plan and approach | | **410 Points** |
| **Criteria 3. Resource Plan, Key Personnel** (Qualification and competencies of proposed personnel) | | **Points obtainable** |
| 3.1 | Composition of the team proposed to provide, and the work tasks (including supervisory)  Curriculum vitae of the proposed team that will be involved either full or part time.  **The overall team Leader should have:** • Master’s degree(s) in gender studies, disaster management, humanitarian action, development, international relations, social science, or related fields;  o A first-level university degree in combination with two additional years   of qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the Master’s   university degree. • Minimum of 5 years relevant experience in the area of policy and/ or programming in Women, Peace, and Security and/or humanitarian action required, with field experience in ASEAN Member States strongly preferred. • Demonstrated experience designing and conducting research on gender equality and women’s empowerment, with a track record of successfully leading teams of researchers an asset. • Excellent communication and writing skills in English. | 90 |
| **Any team members should have:** • At least secondary education. • Demonstrated experience in research on Women, Peace, Security and/or humanitarian action. | 40 |
| **Total Points** for Criteria 3. Resource Plan, Key Personnel | | **130 Points** |
| **70% of 700 points = 490 points needed to pass technical evaluation** | | **700 Points** |

**Pass score: Bidders should score at least [*490 Points*] in their technical proposal in order to be considered for the next stage of the evaluation. Bidders with a score below the minimum required for any given LOT will be disqualified**