

Statement of Objectives under RFP INVEST-081 Incorporating Gender-Based Violence in Assessing Investment Risk

Introduction

Through the INVEST mechanism, USAID seeks to unlock the potential of private capital to drive inclusive growth in countries around the world. Increasingly, private investors and businesses are looking to emerging markets for better returns and new market opportunities. Encouraging investment in high-impact areas important to USAID such as agriculture, financial services, infrastructure, energy, clean water, health, and education, requires new forms of collaboration between USAID and the investment and business community.

USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (USAID/GenDev) has engaged INVEST to increase women's economic empowerment and equality (WEEE) through a range of activities including expanding financial services through technological innovation, strengthening secured lending regimes to improve access to basic financial services, and supporting capital providers leading the field of gender lens investing (GLI) to increase capital flows to benefit women as investors, entrepreneurs, employees, and customers. Under this activity, USAID seeks to increase women's economic empowerment by providing improved tools that incorporate gender considerations to better assess investment risks.

Development Hypothesis

IF political risk insurance providers and investors are equipped with the tools and resources to:

- understand the investment risks correlated with gender-based violence¹;
- collect, measure, and analyze data on gender-based violence for specific market segments;
- accurately price and/or mitigate these risks;
- integrate tools/strategies into their existing risk assessments;

THEN, political risk insurance providers and investors can better assess investment risks in emerging markets, leading to stronger investments, and elevating gender-based violence as a critical issue for investors. This will help influence capital markets to incorporate gender-smart strategies at scale. As investors consider gender-based violence a key issue, governments and government agencies will also see gender-based violence as a critical issue in achieving economic growth.

Purpose and Background

USAID seeks to equip political risk insurance providers, investors, and other financial institutions with resources and tools to incorporate gender-based violence into political risk assessments and improve investment decisions.

¹ Gender-Based violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. GBV can include sexual, physical, mental and economic harm inflicted in public or in private. It also includes threats of violence, coercion and manipulation. This can take many forms such as intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation and so-called 'honour crimes'. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/gender-based-violence.html#:~:text=Gender%2DBased%20violence%20refers%20to,o%20power%20and%20harmful%20norms.>

Investors – both impact- and commercially-oriented – continue to develop and strengthen tools to address issues of gender equity through Gender Lens Investing (GLI) – also known as gender-smart investing. Defined as a “strategy or fund that seeks to invest in gender smart businesses,” commercial companies actively participate in GLI through investing in women-owned or women-led businesses, in workplaces or supply chains that support gender equity, or in enterprises that produce products that substantially improve the lives of women and girls. Additionally, engaging in approaches that inform investment decisions, such as a process or strategy that focus on gender, are practices of GLI.

Given the business and social impacts of GLI, the field continues to grow in both private and public capital markets but continues to represent a small portion of the \$74 trillion in global assets under management², and private commercial investors are not adopting gender smart investing practices as swiftly as expected. The reasons behind this are complex, but may include unconscious biases in investment decision making, a lack of data on investing in gender diverse businesses, difficulty finding the right opportunity to invest in, high cost associated with technical assistance facilities, and/or the perception of gender lens investing as a “niche” space. Gender lens investing is most commonly referenced among the impact investing and development finance communities; however, the practice has huge untapped commercial potential as well and gaps remain.

One such gap is incorporating gender-based violence into political risk assessments, a concept developed by Criterion Institute, a leader in the field of gender lens investing. Violence against women and girls is estimated to cost the world economy approximately USD1.5 trillion each year, roughly the equivalent of 2% of the global GDP.³ Intimate partner violence and domestic abuse alone cause more deaths and cost the economy far more than homicides or civil war. Productivity is negatively impacted from absenteeism, exclusion from particular sectors or industries due to high levels of violence or preventing women from entering the workforce at all. Furthermore, there is a documented correlation between levels of violence against women and state instability for those countries not experiencing active conflict. In fact, violence against women⁴ can be a better indicator of state fragility than the level of democracy or wealth in a country.⁵ Yet the methodologies currently used to measure risk – which guide investors, corporations, insurers, and governments in assessing conditions that may impact the profitability of investments in a country – do not include indicators measuring violence against women as they do for other types of violence, such as civil war, riots, and terrorism.⁶

Adequately measuring, analyzing, and mitigating an investment’s exposure to political risk is crucial to increasing investment in emerging economies. Incorporating gender into assessing the risk of investing in

² “Private Equity and Value Creation: A Fund Manager’s Guide to Gender-Smart Investing,” CDC Group plc and IFC. November 2020.

https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/gender+at+ifc/resources/gender+smart+investing+guide

³ “The economic costs of violence against women,” UN Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/9/speech-by-lakshmi-puri-on-economic-costs-of-violence-against-women>

⁴ The [United Nations defines](#) violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” <https://www.who.int/health-topics/violence-against-women>

⁵ Hudson, Valerie M. “Evidence: Security of Women & Security of States.” *Linking Security of Women and Security of States* (May 2017): 26-31. <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/security-of-women-and-states/>

⁶ “Gender-based Violence and Political Risk Analysis.” Criterion Institute, <https://criterioninstitute.org/roadmap/gender-based-violence-and-political-risk-analysis>.

a particular country—and developing tools and methodologies that can be incorporated into the *fundamentals* of investment decisions—have potential to influence capital markets at greater scale, such as by encouraging trillion-dollar investment firms to bring broader gender-smart strategies throughout their investment analysis; and by elevating gender-based violence as a critical issue in achieving economic growth with governments and government agencies.

Objective and Activities

Under this statement of objectives, USAID seeks a firm or consortium to demonstrate to political risk insurers and investors the risks associated with high levels of gender-based violence; develop methodologies and tools to examine, price, and/or mitigate that risk; and pilot the methodologies and tools with one or more influential market actors. Through the activities outlined below, it is anticipated that the selected firm will build a convincing case to incorporate gender-based violence into political risk assessments and share open-source tools applicable to different types of investors (pension funds, commercial investors, impact investors, etc.), political risk insurance providers (including the U.S. Development Finance Corporation), and others. To the extent practicable the firm or consortium should build on existing tools and processes to encourage early and wide adaptation.

The selected firm will organize their approach around three specific objectives: 1) Building the business case; 2) Developing methodologies and tools; and 3) Piloting methodologies and tools.

1. Build the Business Case

The selected firm will build upon existing research to clarify for investors and political risk insurance providers the risks to investments associated with high-levels of gender-based violence. To ensure the business case applies to different types of investors, the selected firm(s) should propose how to address a broad audience of investors and target specific, influential actors in the market. The business case should be directly linked to the methodologies/tools to be developed. It's anticipated that the selected firm(s) will:

- Articulate the links that connect gender-based violence to investment risk.
- Provide a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to illustrate risks for investors.
- Develop tailored products to demonstrate the business case with investors and political risk insurance providers.
- Develop and execute an outreach strategy to build awareness among influential stakeholders (may include political risk insurance providers, IFIs, DFIs, etc.).
- Identify potential networks and outlets to share the business case (i.e. publications, trade journals, industry events, etc.).
- Share through identified network, which may include but is not limited to publishing articles, participating in webinars or conferences, etc.

2. Develop Methodologies and Tools

Under this activity, the firm will develop methodologies and practical, open source tools that investors and political risk insurance providers can use to assess and price risk. The methodology should clearly outline the conceptual framework for the tools, and the process through which the tools are to be applied, including

how tools can be incorporated into existing risk assessment processes. Given the broad applicability, the selected firm may develop more than one methodology. The development of such resources may include:

- Confirm the number of methodologies to be developed and targeted user(s).
- Refine conceptual framework to address business and impact case.
- Identify existing data sources that could be used to measure levels of gender-based violence at various levels (country, region, sector, etc.).
- Define metrics for assessing gender-based violence.
- Outline clear processes applicable to a wide variety of investors and political risk insurance providers. Processes may include adaptations to apply to a specific subset of investors.
- Gather feedback from industry to better understand existing processes and practices and how those can be adjusted.
- Consider how tools may best be accessed and where tools should be hosted.

3. Pilot Methodologies and Tools

The selected firm will work with one or more investors or political risk insurers (or both) to conduct a pilot program to introduce tools and methodologies to risk analysis and risk response by the pilot organizations. It is anticipated that the selected firm will:

- Activate its networks to identify potential organizations to pilot the developed methodologies and tools.
- Engage and familiarize potential organizations with the overall objective of the activity and the methodologies with support from USAID.
- With USAID input, select organizations to pilot the methodologies and tools.
- Develop program for pilot organizations to apply and test methodologies and tools, which should include timeline for pilot, materials on gender-based violence and the conceptual framework, guides for implementation of processes and application of tools.
- Outline an approach to collect and incorporate feedback. Should more than one firm be included in the pilot, there may be the opportunity to arrange joint sessions to receive feedback.
- Revise methodologies and tools based on the results of the pilot.
- Share revised methodologies and tools with the industry

The selected firm must be willing to share their findings and make data and other information available to INVEST and USAID for purposes of learning throughout the activity. This may include development of a case study, fact sheet, resource guide, other materials, or participation in a learning event.

Please note that while there is not a specific geographic focus for this SOO, the activity aims to influence capital markets with the goal of improving investments in [USAID-presence countries](#) by helping investors and insurers more accurately assess risks.

Anticipated Deliverables

The selected firm will provide the following deliverables and/or others that reflect the proposed approach:

- Inception report and/or work plan to validate the proposed approach, timeline, expected results, and reporting.
- Informational materials such as studies, fact sheets, articles, press releases and others that promote the importance of addressing gender-based violence as a standard element of risk assessments
- Methodology or targeted methodologies that outline the conceptual framework, processes, and application of approach.
- Tools that can be used by different stakeholders to assess and value risk.
- Training program for uptake and use of methodology and tools.
- Revised Methodology (or methodologies) and tools that incorporate feedback from pilot organization.

Role of INVEST

INVEST will work closely with the selected subcontractor during all stages of this work. DAI will subcontract the successful offeror directly and provide review and oversight throughout the life of the activity in accordance with INVEST's lean management approach. The INVEST team will administer periodic check-ins, reporting, deliverable review prior to client presentation and approval, and manage an ongoing monitoring, evaluation and learning framework.

- Subcontractor Onboarding: INVEST will provide the successful offeror(s) with all necessary context, and work with the successful offeror(s) to develop work plan(s)
- Project Implementation: The selected subcontractor(s) will implement the work as prescribed by the work plan(s). INVEST will provide management support and ensure periodic check-ins/reporting
- Ongoing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning: INVEST will support the successful offeror in defining indicators in inception report/work plan that align with USAID Learning Agenda(s), collect and review M&E data from subcontractors for requisite reporting to USAID, and will conduct data quality assessments as necessary.

Duration and Place of Performance

This engagement is expected to commence in May 2021 and is expected to conclude in July 2022. Work will take place remotely.

To: Offerors

Date: March 25, 2021

From: Procurement and Partnerships Team, INVEST Project; Implemented by DAI Global LLC

Subject: Request for Proposals (RFP) INVEST-081: Incorporating Gender-Based Violence in Assessing Investment Risk

Due: 1:00pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on **April 22, 2021**

Dear Offerors:

Enclosed is a Request for Proposals (RFP) to support the implementation of DAI's INVEST project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). DAI invites organizations to submit a proposal for work under USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub.

- I. **RFP Process and deadlines:** This solicitation will result in the award of a firm fixed price subcontract. We anticipate issuing a single subcontract award expected to be between \$250,000 - \$300,000 resulting from the implementation of this agreement.
 - a. **Submission of Questions** – Questions must be submitted no later than **1:00pm EST on April 1, 2021** via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com. DAI will respond to these questions in approximately one to two (1-2) business days.
 - b. **Submission of Proposal** – Proposal must be submitted no later than **1:00pm EDT on April 22, 2021** via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com, copying Katherine_Tilahun@dai.com and Carly_Gorelick@dai.com. The subject line of the email should be your organization name, followed by “Submission under RFP INVEST-081: Incorporating Gender-Based Violence in Assessing Investment Risk.” Please certify in your submission email a validity period of 60 days for the price(s) provided and include your organization's DUNS number. Please limit file submissions to 10 megabytes or less. Proposals must be submitted in English.
- II. **Composition of Proposal:** The proposal should comprise the following submission documents. The Technical Proposal and Cost Proposal should be prepared as separate files for independent evaluation, as follows below. Technical proposals should be submitted as a ten (10) slide presentation, using 12-point standard font size. Graphics may be included, so long as text is clearly legible. If text or graphics are of poor resolution, the information provided may be excluded from consideration. Submissions in PowerPoint or PDF are acceptable, although PDF is preferred along with an accompanying PowerPoint document. Please provide a copy of your cost proposal in Excel format; offerors should use the attached cost/budget template.

Part 1 – Technical Proposal

The technical proposal is composed of the following three (3) sections:

1. **Technical Approach** – Offerors will detail their approach to fulfilling the accompanying Statement of Objectives (SOO). The approach will clearly indicate how the proposed activities will result in the successful completion of all deliverables and milestones.
2. **Institutional Capacity** – Offerors should provide details about the experience, expertise, and capacity of their firm (or firms if partners are proposed) to implement the proposed approach and complete the work as described. This should also include past performance information for similar activities.
3. **Management Plan/Staffing Structure** – Offerors should include details of personnel who will be assigned to activities as proposed in the technical approach, as well as a clear management plan in narrative form for the development, review, and submission of all associated deliverables, including a milestone schedule. Offerors are permitted to engage in partnering arrangements if it will aid in providing best value to USAID. If a partnering arrangement is being proposed, please describe the nature of the arrangement, the specific technical value being contributed by each organization, and the appropriate management controls to ensure successful delivery.

In addition to the above, please include the following inputs, which will not be counted as part of the 10-slide limit and format may be PDF or Word:

- Two (2) case study examples of past performance relevant to this activity (limited to two (2) pages per example).
- CV(s) of any individuals proposed in the staffing structure to conduct this activity (limited to two (2) pages per individual).

A cover page will be considered a non-counting page, should offerors choose to include one with the list of all firms participating in the bid. No additional annexes or documentation are requested nor should be submitted.

Part 2 – Price Proposal

The contract type for the presumptive task order will be Fixed Price, awarded as a subcontract by DAI Global, LLC. Please include your total proposed fixed price along with details for specific deliverable pricing.

Offerors must also include a cost breakdown of the hourly rates for proposed personnel, any other direct costs, indirect costs, and fees if applicable, with a build-up to their total proposed price or include substantiating price reasonableness documentation/justification. Cost breakdowns included will be utilized to determine price reasonableness. Offerors should use the attached cost/budget template; please limit file submissions to 10 megabytes or less.

III. Evaluation of Proposal: DAI will use best value determination for the award of this Request for Proposals. A best value determination means that, in DAI's estimation, the selected offer will provide the greatest overall benefit to USAID in response to the requirements stated in this RFP. DAI may also exclude an offer from consideration if it determines that an Offeror is "not responsible", i.e., that it does not have the management and financial capabilities required to perform the work required. DAI reserves the right to check the past performance, references, and other pertinent offeror information in making award decisions. Proposals will be evaluated against a stated number of factors including: the overall proposed approach, past performance, specific qualifications in the identified approach and sectors, and other evidence substantiating the bidder's ability to deliver, including budget and time frame considerations.

1. Technical Proposal: The Technical Proposal will be scored and evaluated separately from the cost proposal. Technical panel reviewers will evaluate offerors on the following factors, consistent with the offerors' technical proposal. The Technical Proposal will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- a. **Technical Approach (35 Points):** Points for this section will be awarded based on the information presented in the technical approach. The offeror will be scored based on its presentation of a cohesive approach that addresses the three specific objectives and reflects the requirements of the SOO. The successful offeror shall clearly demonstrate how they will develop and pilot methodologies and tools to incorporate gender-based violence into political risk assessments. Offerors are expected to build upon existing research, incorporate existing tools and processes, and identify entities to pilot the methodologies and tools developed. The successful offeror shall demonstrate how they will creatively and effectively engage influential market actors to advocate for the use of these methodologies and tools with investors and insurers.
- b. **Institutional Capacity (35 Points):** Points for this section will be based on information presented in the corresponding section and any submitted case studies. The successful offeror should demonstrate its institutional experience to develop, test, and refine practical tools for investors, insurers and/or financial institutions, ideally related to issues of gender and gender-based violence. Relevant experience developing open-source processes and tools widely used and/or cited will be taken into consideration. Offeror should demonstrate its understanding of how investors and insurers assess risks, highlighting its access to and familiarity with relevant networks that will be targeted through this activity with informational materials or as pilot organizations. Offerors should have experience developing and disseminating evidence-based products to advocate for adoption of new strategies, processes, and tools among the investment and finance community.
- c. **Management Plan / Staffing Structure (30 Points):** Points for this section will be based on the qualifications of proposed staff, clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of each proposed staff and each proposed firm (if firms are partnering), and the demonstrated efficacy and clarity of the

management plan. Proposals should provide a clear management plan in narrative form for the development, review, and submission of all associated deliverables, including a proposed milestone schedule. If the offeror is submitting a consortium-based proposal, the proposal should describe the nature of the arrangement (i.e., added technical value), the division of labor among the partners, and the appropriate management controls to ensure successful delivery. The offeror should clearly demonstrate that their proposed staff have the requisite experience in developing, testing, and refining methodologies and tools targeting investors and insurers. Proposed staff should have experience working on issues of gender-based violence.

2. **Price Proposal:** Price and associated cost build-up will be evaluated separately from the technical approach, with due consideration for realism, price reasonableness, and allowability consistent with US government cost principles. Evaluation for this section will be dependent upon all information presented by the Offeror in their deliverable table and supporting cost information, as well as its alignment with the proposed technical approach.
- IV. Offeror's Agreement with Terms and Conditions:** The completion of all RFP requirements in accordance with the instructions in this RFP and submission to DAI of the technical and price proposals will constitute an offer and indicate the Offeror's agreement to the terms and conditions in this RFP and any attachments hereto. DAI is not required to accept and/or evaluate proposals that do not conform to the instructions of the RFP, and additionally, DAI may reject all proposals and not award a subcontract for this RFP. DAI reserves the right to award a subcontract without discussion and/or negotiation; however, DAI also reserves the right to conduct discussions and/or negotiations, which among other things may require an Offeror(s) to revise its proposal (technical and/or price). By submitting an offer, Offerors agree to comply with the general terms and conditions for an award, including [Representations and Certifications](#) compliance. Offerors must provide full, accurate, and complete information in response to this solicitation. By submitting an offer, Offerors certify that they have not/will not attempt to bribe or make any payment to DAI employees in return for preference. Issuance of this RFP in no way obligates DAI to award a subcontract, nor does it commit DAI to pay any costs incurred by the Offeror in preparing and submitting the proposal. DAI reserves the right to award a subcontract to one organization or to issue multiple awards to different organizations based on the results of our evaluation.

Thank you,
DAI INVEST Procurement and Partnerships Team
INVEST_Procurement@dai.com