

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Conducting a Baseline Study on Women's Safety in the Tea Sector in Assam

October 2020

#### BACKGROUND

Gender equality or the lack of it has a direct impact on businesses' commercial and social performance. Studies have shown that gender inequality prevalent in the forms of unequal pay, fewer women in leadership positions, fewer opportunities for growth for women and lack of women's safety in workplaces impact growth of businesses and the economy as a whole. According to the OECD, discriminatory social institutions, including violence against women, cost the global economy approximately \$12 trillion a year. <sup>1</sup>

Assam is one of the 8 states in the North-East region of India. It produces nearly 11% of the world's tea.<sup>2</sup> According to data provided by the Directorate of Social Welfare, Government of Assam, there are 803 tea gardens in Assam. The women workers in the tea garden form the largest women's workforce of Assam. Women constitute about 60% of the total workforce in the tea sector. They work mostly as pluckers at the lowest level of the industry.

Largely labour intensive, the tea industry has several challenges in advancing towards human rights-based business approaches.

Gender based violence and discriminations within the tea industry in Assam are seen in:

- High levels of domestic violence, sexual harassment and trafficking
- Unequal division of labour: women do the lowest level of work in the production process, they do most of the unpaid domestic work and are mostly absent in higher levels of the industry
- Difficult working and living conditions: they often have to work for long hours without facilities for toilet, drinking water and regular supply of electricity, proper housing etc
- Lack of facilities for education and health care and other basic rights
- Lack of women worker's rights linked to provisions like promotions and skill up-gradation, maternity and childcare benefits, separate toilet etc
- Lack of participation in decision making and absence of redressal mechanisms

Several organisations and projects have been working with the tea garden communities of Assam. For instance, the 'Improving the lives of women and children in Assam's tea communities' programme<sup>3</sup> is a collaborative effort between 7 tea buyers and IDH, and is implemented by ETP and UNICEF. It aims to impact 250,000 tea workers and community members across over 200 estates in Assam to address, promote and integrate human rights and mechanisms within the business practices of the tea industry.

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<sup>1</sup> Why addressing gender-based violence is an imperative for businesses today, Chiara Condi, Business Fights Poverty, 2019

<sup>2</sup> Study of Assam's Tea Value Chain, Oxfam Germany, 2019

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ethicalteapartnership.org/improving-the-lives-of-women-and-children-in-assams-tea-communities/>

Many local NGOs are also implementing projects working with children and women from the tea garden communities which aim to address issues like lack of education, health, child marriage, trafficking and livelihood etc

These programmes, however, face challenges in bringing together producers, supply chain partners, workers, communities, civil society and the government to bring change at the sector level. Also, few address the specific challenges of women's safety at workspace for women tea workers, which is especially material given they form most of the workforce. Gaps in using the gender lens to understand specific challenges faced by women workers within on-going programmes exist.

### **About the Women Safety Accelerator Fund (WSAF)**

**The Women's Safety Accelerator Fund (WSAF) is a bold new program to address women's safety and gender-based violence in the Indian tea sector. The fund has been set up in partnership by Unilever and IDH – the Sustainable Trade Initiative.**

Unilever is committed to respecting and promoting women's rights, which includes the right to safety of women and girls - in their workplaces and their extended supply chain. Unilever's aim is to implement policies and processes that women trust, with an emphasis on addressing the harmful social and cultural norms and behaviours that can leave women at risk.

IDH recognises that gender equality - reflected by access to resources, their position in leadership roles and women's workplace safety - is a catalyser for economic growth. Gender is a key impact theme in IDH's global strategic plan. IDH sets out to embed gender equality into its transformation strategies.

In 2017, Unilever and IDH along with other producers, technical experts like UN Women and sector actors in Kericho, Kenya, came together to work on the Gender Empowerment Platform (GEP) in an inclusive approach that extended the engagement to government authorities, tea associations, and women, youth and community groups. The learnings from the Kenya programme informed and provided opportunity to adapt UN Women's Safe Cities/Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative - to agricultural value chains in rural settings, beginning with the tea sector and in the development and launch of the Global Women Safety Framework in Rural Spaces: Informed by Experience in the Tea Sector<sup>4</sup>.

Given Unilever's contribution to development in global value chains, and its strong position in the tea value chain, as one of the largest purchasers of black tea in the world, there is great opportunity to further leverage partnerships to help operationalise the GWSF at scale in the tea sector with additional producers and in other commodity sectors over time.

With this ambition, Unilever and IDH have created the Women's Safety Accelerator Fund to implement the Theory of Change provided by the GWSF – catalysing and accelerating impact at scale. It will build a structure in which local capacities are built in suppliers, CSOs and service providers, and partnerships are fostered with the public sector and producer associations, to drive deeper shifts on safety within the tea supply chain.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.unilever.com/Images/unw-global-safety-framework-final\\_tcm244-529439\\_en.pdf](https://www.unilever.com/Images/unw-global-safety-framework-final_tcm244-529439_en.pdf)

**The WSAF will provide resources, tools, technical assistance, and specialised services for tea producers and workers in the tea sector in Assam. It aims to develop a model that will build a common understanding that is applicable to other commodity sectors in agricultural value chains.**

**Vision:**

All women and girls are socially, economically, and politically empowered in rural spaces that are free from sexual harassment (SH) and other forms of violence.

**Mission and Objectives:**

The Women Safety Accelerator Fund will address gender-based violence in the Indian tea industry. To do this, the Fund will collaborate with a range of stakeholders to promote tangible and continuous improvements for the women workers in the Indian tea industry by:

- Enabling producers and suppliers to implement the Global Women Safety Framework (“GWSF”) developed by UN Women: resulting in strengthened prevention and response mechanisms at tea producer / supplier level.
- Building the capacity of local implementation partners and service providers as well as a supporting network of relevant (civil society) organizations and government authorities, to provide support to producers as technical, training or mobilization partners.
- Embedding continuous improvement by establishing a common platform supported by additional funding and technical partners to support and sustain the changes facilitated through the Fund’s engagement, moving from actions to outcomes.

**Specific Aims:**

- Reduce instances of gender-based violence and addressing root causes to GBV
- Support the strengthening of grievance mechanisms with trusted and credible reporting mechanisms
- Improve understanding of relevant laws, programs, and policies
- Demonstrate the business case for greater gender inclusion and women’s safety in the industry.
- Create safe and empowered spaces for women to live and work
- Influence social norms, attitudes and behaviour that promote women and girls’ rights in rural spaces
- Provide opportunities for women workers to up skill, and have improved representation of women in supervisory & managerial positions
- Facilitate collaborative learning on the effective implementation of the GWSF

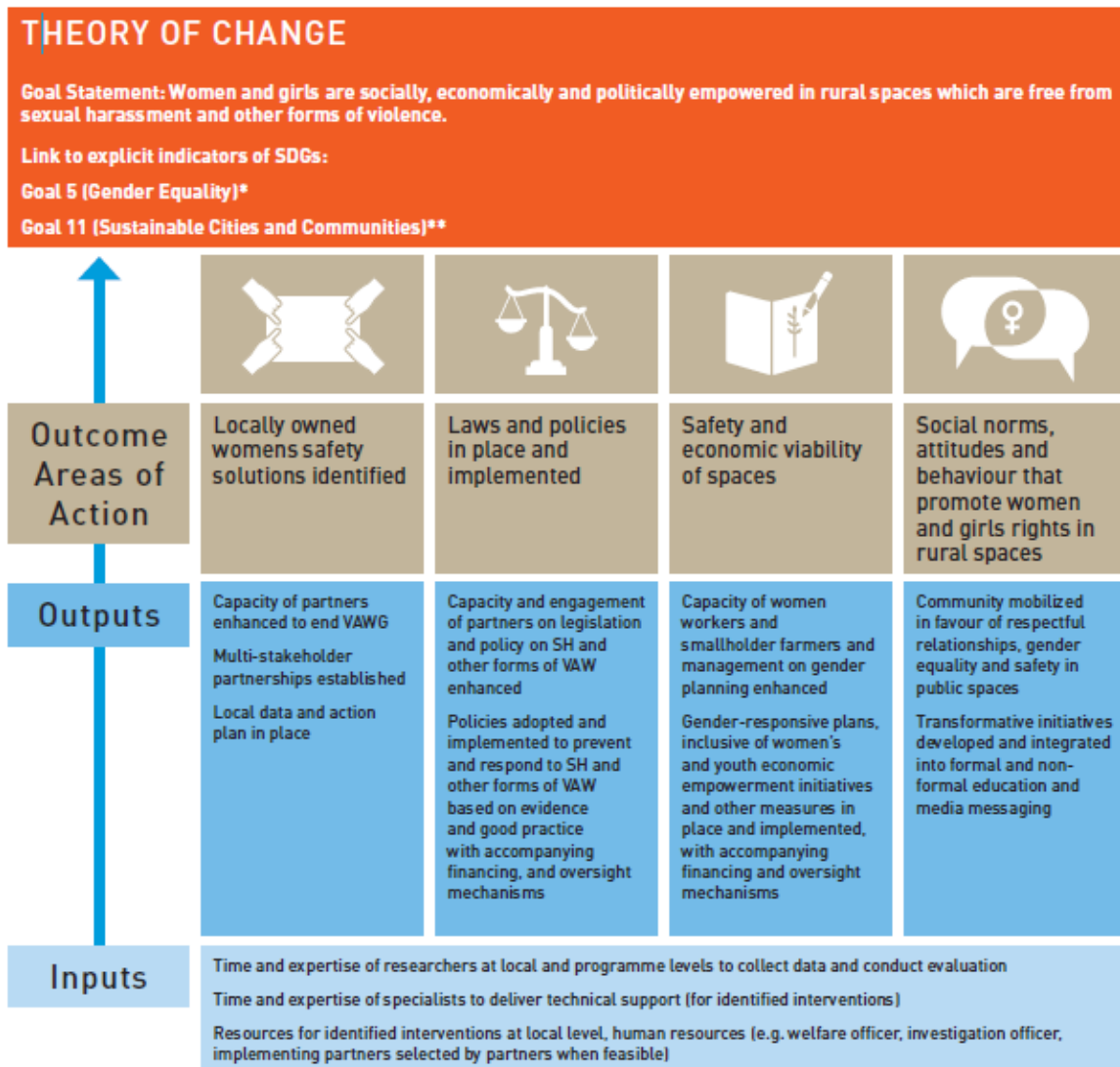
**Impact Indicators:**

The Fund will evaluate the outcomes of the funded/ financed projects by considering some of the following key performance indicators against a baseline:

- % improvement in productivity of women workers
- % increase in women in supervisory/ managerial roles
- % decrease in the wage gap between male and female workers

- % decrease in absenteeism of female workers
- % decrease in gender-based violence or health related incidents (reported)
- Cost-benefit ratio of gender interventions
- # of prevention and response mechanisms in place

**Theory of Change of the GWSF:**



**Purpose and Objectives of the Baseline Study:**

The primary purpose of this baseline study is to provide information on the existing condition and context in the tea sector in Assam vis.a.vis the impact indicators set by the WSAF to measure progress of the programme and evaluate outcomes. The study will provide:

1. Baseline and analysis of end beneficiary i.e. women tea workers & primary grantee i.e. producers - profiling
2. Identify and map the levels of awareness, engagement and change driven by the producers - on the outcomes and proposed interventions of the GWSF
3. Based on outcomes of Point 2, identify the capacity building needs and services, to drive confidence at the producer level to own the delivery of outcomes - as well as map service providers based on the identified needs,
4. Identify challenges and opportunities that exist at the sector level, that inhibit or encourage scale adoption, embedding and systemic change – which warrant multi-stakeholder action (eg: via a public-private platform)

The baseline study, to be designed and delivered by these Terms of Reference will contribute to the development of the implementation strategy and result measurement framework for the WSAF.

#### Outcomes sought from the baselines:

Through this ToR, the WSAF is seeking a consultant to:

- Conduct a baseline study that will provide **quantitative data** and **qualitative insights** of the tea sector in Assam.
- The data will be **logically linked to the 4 outcome areas and the outputs** in the GWSF theory of change
- Data is sought for the **2 primary partners of the programmes – the Workers and the Producers**. The workers will include different categories of workers – permanent, casual and daily wage workers. Producers will include – companies, proprietary and public sector undertakings
- In addition, the baseline will **identify influential stakeholders** for policy, technical expertise and advocacy to achieve women’s safety and end violence against women and girls in the tea gardens of Assam.
- The data will be **gender segregated** at all levels wherever applicable.

The baseline will provide specific and concise information on:

#### 1. Understanding the profile of target groups to be engaged:

For Workers (each category of workers) Socio-economic profile and primary concerns	For Producers (each category of producers): business profile and industry concerns
Socio-economic status: education, health, income and economic status, wage gap between men and women workers, cultural/community practices related to gender, status of employment – permanent, casual, daily wage etc and in different levels of the industry	Business profile: business structure – ownership and management, estate sizes in terms of number of workers, number of women employees at different levels in the organisation, certifications, affiliation to associations etc

Living and Working Conditions - housing, electricity, water, sanitation and hygiene, childcare facilities, maternity benefits, working hours, opportunities, safety and protection at work etc	Production and market eco-system: suppliers, processing, primary buyers etc
Women's participation in decision making processes at home, workplace and community. Women's presence in different levels of the industry etc	Primary industry challenges and labour concerns: productivity measurement against labour inputs, absenteeism, medical leaves etc
Access to govt. entitlements including women specific provisions for maternity and childcare etc	Experiences of GBV and response: challenges and practices – policies, systems, number of cases received and recorded
Experiences and extent of GBV and discriminations at home, workplace, community and public spaces etc	
Access to the justice system - awareness, availability and practice including number of cases reported etc	

**2. Assessment of prior engagement and adoption of recommended interventions/ behaviours proposed by the GWSF:**

<b>For Workers: Validation measures taken on</b>	<b>For Producers: Delivery of a checklist and mapping of</b>
Awareness on GBV and women's safety, laws and policies, response mechanisms and their roles	Awareness of GBV, women's safety and response mechanisms and their roles
Empowered to act - able to follow up and access services	Adoption/action – policies, response mechanisms, recording of cases, investment into programmes, collaborations for action etc
Initiatives within community to address GBV and women's safety	Cost-benefit analysis of programmes
<b>Spotlight on best practices: Actions initiated and continued to address GBV and women's safety</b>	

**3. Needs for capacity building and other services**

<b>For Workers: Awareness of gender and gender programming and readiness for action</b>	<b>For Producers: Awareness of gender and gender programming, policies, resources available and readiness for action</b>
Awareness on women's safety and their roles, gender programming, tea industry functioning	Awareness on women's safety, impact on business, need for intervention, role etc
Policies, laws, structures and mechanisms	Policies, implementation structures, mechanisms and gaps to address
Leadership skills and experiences	Resources available and willingness to invest (financial and non-financial)
	Labour welfare management

**4. Challenges and opportunities sector level:**

- i. Policy and regulation
- ii. Convergence and leverage
- iii. Funding and Financing
- iv. Contributing to macro-goals etc

**5. Stakeholder Mapping:** A list of stakeholders who has an influence and interest in addressing women's safety in the tea gardens at various levels of policy, implementation and practices. Stakeholders can include government agencies and officials, NGOs, UN organisations, businesses, legal and medical practitioners and individuals

- v. Profile of stakeholder
- vi. Areas of expertise
- vii. Level of influence

**6. Recommendations:** the baseline should collect and collate recommendations from stakeholders for specific actions in the above four areas.

**The guidance on data requirement above is indicative, we do expect that the consultant is able guide this exercise further on their expertise and understanding of the Fund's deliverables.**

**Methodology:**

For this assignment, two types of data collection are envisioned, first literature desk research followed by primary data collection. Each should contain at least the following:

**Literature – desk research:**

- Latest studies and reports on women's safety related issues in the tea sector in Assam
- Existing policies and laws

**Data collection:** For this assignment, the consultant should engage in primary data collection. This should at least contain:

- Interview producers, managers and welfare officers. Producers would include companies, family/individual owned gardens, small farmers
- Interview workers at different levels of hierarchies. Focus on women workers.
- Identify the influential stakeholders and conduct interviews. Stakeholders will include CSOs, experts, service providers and govt, agencies
- Conduct discussions with communities
- Do rapid assessment of basic infrastructure with producers and workers

While IDH will provide some contacts from the targeted producers, the consultant is expected to largely use their own network and connections for other stakeholder groups.

Consultants will submit a work plan and timeline at the beginning of the assignment.

Regular calls will be held between IDH and the consultant, and the consultant is expected to provide written updates every week.

### Expected Deliverables

- Draft and Final Report (50 pages max). The findings will inform the Implementation and M&E plan for WSAF and will not be published. The report is expected to:
  - Be concise and clear on insights existing situation on women's safety, challenges and recommendations: across each outcome area of the Theory of Change
  - Provide clear lean quantitative data on workers and producers condition
- Checklist to assess producer readiness for implementing women's safety programmes in future for producers
- List of stakeholders identified
- Executive summary (max. 10 pages)
- A slide-deck with synthesis of findings. Deck should include only non-sensitive information. (max 20 slides)

### Proposal guidelines and timeline:

IDH is seeking proposals from consultancy firms and organisations with deep and wide experience to deliver the expected outcomes. The proposal must include the following:

- A succinct, well-documented approach and methodology.
- A proposed work plan with indicative milestones from inception to delivery
- Inclusion of a budget with a break-down of working days/rate per consultant and other anticipated expenses such as travel.
- Clear description of the project team, relevant experience of team members and time allocation per team member
- Description of sub-contractors (if applicable).
- Statement of experience on similar work
- References
- Sample of previous work.

**To note:** Proposals may be independent or collaborative projects. You may choose to collaborate with other organizations in your application and propose a joint application – however, you must have 1 lead organization to engage with the Programme.

### Selection Criteria and Steps

**The consultant will have to have expertise and experience in:**

- Conducting such studies
- Understanding of gender, human rights and business
- Understanding of the context of the tea sector in Assam
- Collecting and producing high quality data
- Deep analytical skill to collate information into concise clear suggestions



Your proposal will specially be assessed on the following Criteria:

<b>Organisation Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of experience – similar baseline projects conducted before (list and reports etc)</li> <li>• Relevant network in India, tea sector and Assam both in public and private sector (details of engagement in brief)</li> <li>• Experience working with actors relevant to the tea sector and women’s safety</li> <li>• Strong ability to analyse quantitative and qualitative data</li> </ul>
<b>Team Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good English verbal and written skills</li> <li>• Strong research and analytical skills</li> <li>• Good understanding of the sector, geography and beneficiary profile</li> <li>• A track record of similar work and previous working experience</li> </ul>
<b>Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robustness of methodology and tools proposed</li> <li>• Project Management Approach for smooth collection of data and mapping and</li> <li>• Efficiency and quality of data collection, cleaning and presentation tools and systems</li> </ul>
<b>Work Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of activities &amp; deliverables for the data collection approach and plan, considering the different types of data collection (as requested for the budget) and the assignment schedule</li> <li>• Progress tracking and reporting plan</li> </ul>
<b>Presentation (50 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of organisation and team</li> <li>• Presentation of proposal + work plan</li> <li>• Response to comments</li> </ul>

**PROPOSED TIMELINE:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Deadline for submission of proposals	20 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2020
Selection of consultant	30 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2020
Presentation Inception meeting with the selected consultant	7 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2020
Finalisation of work plan	16 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2020
First Draft of Report + Communication Deck	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
IDH review and comments	15 <sup>th</sup> January
Final Draft of Report + Communication Deck	25 <sup>th</sup> January
IDH review and approval of report	31 <sup>st</sup> January
Weekly written updates / cadence calls	Weekly
Monthly review meetings	Monthly

**Submission of proposals**

Please send a proposal (maximum 10 pages), including a proposed approach, timeline and budget (in INR and EUR), before 20 October, 2020 to Banamallika Choudhury, Fund Manager, WSAF - [choudhury@idhtrade.org](mailto:choudhury@idhtrade.org); cc: Jasmer Dhingra, Senior Manager - [dhingra@idhtrade.org](mailto:dhingra@idhtrade.org) . Any inquiries can also be directed to these email addresses.

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**Annexure:**

1. **Reading:** [Global Women's Safety Framework](#)
2. **Women's Safety definition:**

Women's safety involves **strategies, practices and policies** which aim to **reduce gender-based violence (or violence against women), including women's fear of crime.**

Women's safety **involves safe spaces.** Space which causes fear restricts movement and thus the community's use of the space. Conversely, space can also create a sensation of safety and comfort, and can serve to discourage violence. It includes **safe workplaces.**

Women's safety involves **freedom from poverty.** This includes **safe access to water, toilets, healthcare, education, childcare, housing** etc

Women's safety involves financial security and autonomy. Women's economic empowerment reduces their vulnerability to situations of violence as they become less dependent on men and better able to make their own decisions.

Women's safety involves safe homes and communities where women have the right to value themselves, to be empowered, to be respected, to be independent, to have their rights valued, to be loved, to have solidarity with other family and community members, and to be recognized as equal members in society

Women's safety involves strategies and policies that take place before violence has occurred to prevent perpetration or victimization.

Women's safety means a safer, healthier community for everyone. This is a participatory process focused on changing community norms, patterns of social interaction, values, customs and institutions in ways that will significantly improve the quality of life in a community for all of its members. - Jagori, India, Understanding Women's Safety, Towards a Gender Inclusive City (<http://www.jagori.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/01/Handbook1.pdf>)