

TERMS OF REFERENCE: CONSULTANCY ASSIGNMENT

Assignment Title	Peer Review, Scientific Publication and Dissemination of the THRIVE Multi-Country Operational Research on New and Evolving Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls Living with HIV in Eastern Africa
Commissioning Organisation	International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA), in partnership with the International Community of Women Living with HIV – Kenya (ICW-K) and Dignity and Wellbeing for Women Living with HIV and AIDS Tanzania (DWWT)
Funder	United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund/UNTF)
Project	THRIVE — Together Halting Violence and Inequality
Countries of Focus	Uganda, Kenya, and the United Republic of Tanzania
Engagement Modality	Individual or Institutional Consultancy (competitive selection)
Duration & Level of Effort	Twelve (12) working days.
Duty Station	Virtual engagement with ICWEA Secretariat
Reference Number	ICWEA/THRIVE/UNTF/CONS/2026/01

ICWEA seeks a Peer Review and Scientific Publication Consultant to convert the approved report into a publication-ready manuscript, manage peer review with a target journal such as the Journal of the International AIDS Society. This will validate the evidence and inform policy, programming, and global commitments on HIV and Violence.

1. BACKGROUND AND STRATEGIC JUSTIFICATION

The International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA) is a regional network for and by women living with HIV with a mission to advancing the rights and leadership of women living with HIV. With ICW-Kenya and DWWT-Tanzania, ICWEA implements the THRIVE Project, supported by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women. ICWEA and partners under the THRIVE Project conducted multi-country research in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania on new and evolving forms of violence affecting women and girls living with HIV. Findings cover institutional, workplace, economic, digital and health-system violence, plus survivor-led coping strategies.

2. PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

To publish the THRIVE multi-country research in a peer reviewed indexed journal and build a lasting scientific publication capacity for ICWEA.

2.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The Consultant will:

- 1) Review and assess the research: Review the approved THRIVE report, data, and ethical documents, and recommend the best publication pathway.
- 2) Develop a ready-to-ready manuscript: Convert the report into a scientific manuscript that meets JIAS or equivalent journal standards, while keeping the Community-led, and rights-based focus.
- 3) Manage journal submission and peer review: Identify target journals, submit the manuscript, and lead responses to reviewers through to final acceptance.
- 4) Build internal capacity: Provide mentorship to ICWEA, ICW-K and DWWT staff on scientific writing, journal selection, and publication ethics.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Consultant shall deliver the assignment through two integrated components which together cover the full continuum from manuscript development to journal submission, peer-review management and dissemination.

Component I: Scientific Manuscript Development and Academic Editing

The Consultant will review the approved THRIVE multi-country research report, transcripts, and analysis to ensure coherence, rigor, and alignment with the study objectives. They will restructure the report into a full research manuscript that meets international standards and the requirements of the target journal. The manuscript will include a clear abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusions, and references. The Consultant will ensure the manuscript maintains the rights-based, and Community-led framing of the research. They will also ensure proper authorship, ethical approvals, consent procedures, and data statements are included in line with ICMJE, COPE, WHO, and Good Participatory Practice guidelines.

Component II: Journal Submission, Peer Review and Publication Support

The Consultant will identify the most suitable journal for publication, with Journal of the International AIDS Society as the first choice and 2–3 alternatives. They will prepare and submit the full manuscript package and manage the entire peer-review process on behalf of ICWEA. This includes responding to reviewers, coordinating revisions with the authorship team, and re-submitting to alternative journals if needed.

4. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The assignment will be participatory, ethical, and evidence driven. The Consultant will start with an inception phase to review the research report, transcripts, and ethics documents, and hold a meeting with ICWEA, ICW-K and DWWT to agree on scope, publication strategy, authorship and timelines. Manuscript development will be iterative and done in close consultation with the authorship team, including country and community researchers. The Consultant will use accepted scientific writing practices and follow relevant reporting standards.

5. KEY DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINES

The Consultant shall produce the deliverables set out in the table below:

#	Deliverable	Description and Acceptance Criteria	Working Days
1	Inception Report, Publication Strategy and Workplan	Inception meeting held with ICWEA, ICW-K and DWWT; comprehensive review of approved research report and datasets completed; inception report with detailed workplan, publication strategy, risk log and authorship framework submitted and approved.	2
2	Journal Targeting Matrix	Structured matrix ranking JIAS and 2–3 alternative peer-reviewed journals against scope, indexing, impact factor, open-access policy, Article Processing Charges, time-to-decision and thematic fit; target journal formally selected and approved.	0.5
3	First Scientific Manuscript Draft	Full-length manuscript draft (abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusions, references, tables, figures) prepared in the citation and formatting style of the target journal, as applicable, and screened for similarity	5.5

		index below 15%.	
4	Final Publication-Ready Manuscript	Manuscript revised on the basis of authorship team and ICWEA feedback; language, structure, references and reporting standards fully compliant; ICMJE-compliant authorship and contributorship statements agreed and signed.	3
5	Journal Submission Package	Complete submission package including cover letter, conflict of interest and funding statements, data availability statement, ethical approval documentation, suggested reviewers and supplementary files; manuscript submitted through the target journal's editorial management system.	1
6	Submission Confirmation and Editorial Tracking Report	Official submission acknowledgement from the target journal; editorial tracking log established; initial responses to any pre-review editorial queries drafted and submitted; commitment to manage the full peer-review cycle after the assignment period documented.	1

The Consultant acknowledges that the peer-review cycle typically extends beyond the assignment window and shall accordingly commit to managing reviewer correspondence, revised submissions and final editorial exchanges until publication or a definitive editorial decision is obtained, at no additional cost to ICWEA beyond the agreed contract value.

6. CONSULTANT PROFILE: QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

6.1 Academic Qualifications

The Consultant shall hold a minimum a doctoral degree (PhD) in Public Health, Epidemiology, Social Sciences, Gender Studies, Global Health, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, HIV&AIDS or a directly related discipline. A postdoctoral affiliation with a recognised academic or research institution, and formal training in scientific writing or editing, shall be considered a strong added advantage.

6.2 Professional Experience

a) A minimum of seven (10) years of experience in operational, implementation or public health research, of which at least five (5) years shall have been dedicated to scientific writing, peer-reviewed publication and journal editorial engagement.

b) Verifiable evidence of at least five (5) first-author or corresponding-author publications in reputable, indexed peer-reviewed journals within the past five years, with a demonstrable track record of publications at the intersection of HIV, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health, or human rights.

c) Prior experience in publishing evidence generated by Community-led or civil-society-led organisations, and prior work with UN Trust Fund or other UN-financed programmes, shall be considered a strong added advantage.

6.3 Technical and Ethical Competencies

The Consultant shall demonstrate expert knowledge of ICMJE authorship criteria, COPE core practices, the WHO ethical and safety recommendations for research on violence against women, the UNAIDS Good Participatory Practice guidelines, and the STROBE, SRQR and COREQ reporting standards. Advanced competence in reference management software, plagiarism screening tools and manuscript submission systems (including Editorial Manager, ScholarOne and equivalent platforms) is required.

Strong intercultural communication skills, experience working across Eastern African contexts, and full working proficiency in written and spoken English are essential.

7. CONTRACT VALUE AND PAYMENT TERMS

The total professional fee payable to the Consultant shall be determined through a competitive procurement process on the basis of a technical and financial evaluation. The professional fee shall be inclusive of all taxes, statutory deductions, communication costs and any incidental expenses of the Consultant. The Article Processing Charge (APC) of the target journal shall be borne separately by ICWEA and shall not form part of the Consultant's professional fee.

8. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals shall be evaluated on the basis of a combined scoring system with a technical weight of eighty per cent (80%) and a financial weight of twenty per cent (20%). Only proposals achieving a minimum technical score of seventy per cent (85%) shall be considered for financial evaluation.

Criterion	Description	Weight
Academic Qualifications	PhD in a relevant discipline; postdoctoral affiliation; formal training in scientific writing.	15%
Publication Track Record	At least five first-/corresponding-author publications in indexed journals within the past five years, in relevant thematic areas.	25%
Thematic Expertise	Demonstrated expertise in HIV, gender-based violence, SRHR and human rights, with sensitivity to feminist and community-led research.	25%
Methodological Approach	Quality, coherence and feasibility of the proposed methodology, workplan and quality-assurance framework.	25%
Understanding of ToR	Clarity of understanding of the assignment, target journal(s) and expected outputs.	15%

9. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All transcripts, draft and final manuscripts, correspondence, editorial materials and derivative products developed under this assignment shall remain the intellectual property of ICWEA, ICW-K and DWWT jointly.

10. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Interested consultants should submit proposals by 24, July 2026 quoting reference ICWEA/THRIVE/UNTF/CONS/2026/01 in the subject line. The proposal must include:

- 1) Technical proposal: Understanding of assignment, methodology, workplan, and quality assurance among other key components
- 2) Financial proposal: in USD, with all taxes and costs
- 3) CVs of Consultant
- 4) Publication record: at least 5 first/corresponding author papers in indexed journals in the last 5 years
- 5) Two (2) professional references

a. Application Process

The contract will be awarded to the consultant offering best value for money or, as appropriate, to the consultant offering the lowest price. ICWEA will evaluate the Proposals received against objective criteria which enable measuring the quality of the Proposals and which take into account the price.

Proposals will be examined and evaluated by the Evaluation Committee appointed by ICWEA. All Proposals will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria outlined in section 10 of this call:

1. Opening and administrative checks: Proposals will be assessed on whether the deadline was met, if all the requested information was presented and correct, and if the supporting documents requested for submission have been fully provided.
2. Cumulative Analysis and selection criteria for best offer. Upon the advertisement of the Procurement Notice, qualified Consultant is expected to submit both the Technical and Financial Proposals. Accordingly; Consultants will be evaluated based on Cumulative Analysis as per criteria in section 10 of this call.

Submission Instructions

Interested consultants must submit **both a Technical and Financial Proposal** in **two separate soft copy files** clearly labelled. Both files should be addressed to:

The Procurement Committee

International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA)

Plot 1106, Ssenge – Kawanda Road, Off Kayunga

Kampala – Hoima Road

P.O. Box 32252, Kampala, Uganda

Submission Email: admin@icwea.org and cc info@icwea.org

*Deadline for applications will be **22nd July 2026** at 5:00 pm*