
CONSULTANCY SERVICES: Gender, Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Performance Audit

ABOUT US:

Practical Action is an international development organization putting ingenious ideas to work so people in poverty can change their world.

We help people find solutions to some of the world's toughest problems — challenges made worse by catastrophic climate change and persistent gender inequality. We work with communities to develop lasting and locally owned solutions for agriculture, water and waste management, climate resilience and clean energy. And we share what works with others, so answers that start small can grow big.

We consist of a UK registered charity with community projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, alongside an independent development publishing company and a technical consulting service. We combine these specialisms to multiply our impact and help shape a world that works better for everyone.

In Kenya, we've been active for three decades, driving meaningful change in the systems that shape people's lives. We are a trusted partner to the government, funders, private sector, and communities. For more information, visit www.practicalaction.org

ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Practical Action is implementing a four-and-a-half-year project in Kakamega County. The Circular Economy for Household Organic Waste (CE4HOW) in Kenya aims to create a commercially viable, circular economy model for household organic waste that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, improves household waste services and transforms the lives of informal waste workers. CE4HOW is implemented through a partnership of Practical Action and Regen Organics in Kakamega County in collaboration with the County Government of Kakamega. The project is now in the third year of implementation.

Purpose of the Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Audit.

The purpose of this gender responsive audit is to provide an independent, evidence-based reflection on how gender equality, disability, and social inclusion considerations are being translated into practice within the CE4HOW project implementation. It will support accountability and learning by examining how inclusive principles are embedded across planning, delivery, and resourcing, and how these are experienced by different population groups within low-income settlements.

Specifically, the audit is intended to:

1. Conduct a project-based GEDSI audit by assessing GEDSI integration progress on project strategies, technical approaches, activities and budgets against GEDSI commitments in the implementation curve and Gender Action Plan.
2. Determine the degree to which women, youth and PWDs and other marginalized groups in low-income settlements have participated and benefited from the project's activities against the gender and inclusion targets set at project onset.
3. Analyze the project response towards safeguarding risks-Identify exclusion patterns, Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment.
4. Documenting Learning - Capture good practices challenges and lessons learnt on curricular economy programming and provide specific recommendations time bound, costed outcomes to strengthen GEDSI in year 3-5.
5. Review disability and inclusion best practices to inform meaningful engagement of PWDs in circular economy.
6. Review progress on Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) obligations on project and partners related social and environmental impacts

Overall Objective

The GEDSI audit seeks to assess how effectively the CE4HOW project is implementing its GEDSI commitments at, identify inclusion and safeguarding strengths and gaps, and generate evidence-based, practical guidance to improve equity, accountability, and impact for marginalized groups in the remaining project period.

Specific Objectives

1. Progress Assessment
 - a. Assess progress made in implementing the GEDSI Action Plan across all project outcomes, outputs, and activities.
 - b. Review performance against GEDSI-related indicators, targets, and commitments in the results framework and annual reports.
2. Effectiveness and Quality
 - a. Examine the effectiveness of interventions in promoting:
 - i. Women's economic empowerment and decent work
 - ii. Inclusive participation and leadership (women, youth, PWDs)
 - iii. Safe, dignified, and safeguarded working conditions
 - iv. Equitable access to project benefits across the waste value chain.

- b. Assess the extent to which participation has been translated into voice, influence, decision-making power, and livelihood improvements.
- 3. SBCC and Norms Change
 - a. Review how SBCC interventions are contributing to shifts in gender norms, behavior, and power relations at household, community, and institutional levels.
 - b. Assess alignment and reinforcement between SBCC and GEDSI objectives.
- 4. Enabling Environment and Systems
 - a. Examine the functionality of policies, institutional arrangements, associations, and multi-stakeholder platforms in enabling inclusive participation and leadership.
 - b. Assess progress on safeguarding, Responsible Business Conduct (RBC), and accountability mechanisms.
- 5. Learning, Adaptation, and Forward Planning
 - a. Identify key lessons, good practices, and emerging risks.
 - b. Propose clear, achievable actions and strategies to strengthen GEDSI outcomes and ensure targets are met by project end.
 - c. Provide guidance on prioritization, sequencing, and integration of GEDSI actions for the remaining implementation period.

Methodology

The consultant will apply a learning-oriented, gender-transformative, and participatory methodology, using a mixed-methods approach appropriate for a Performance Audit.

Methods may include:

- 1. Desk review of project documents (GEDSI Analysis, GEDSI Action Plan, SBCC Strategy, Annual Reports, MEL data)
- 2. Key informant interviews with project staff, partners, county officials, waste collectors' leadership, and key stakeholders
- 3. Focus Group Discussions (targeted and purposive) with women, men, youth, and PWDs where necessary to validate findings
- 4. Review of available quantitative data on GEDSI indicators and participation trends
- 5. Validation and sense-making sessions with the project team.

Expected deliverables

The consultant will deliver the following:

- 1. Inception Report
 - a. Detailed methodology and workplan
 - b. Refined review questions and tools
 - c. Ethical and safeguarding approach
- 2. GEDSI Performance Audit Draft Report
 - a. Progress analysis of GEDSI commitments
 - b. Findings on effectiveness, gaps, and risks
 - c. Preliminary recommendations
- 3. Final GEDSI Audit Report
 - a. Clear conclusions

- b. Prioritized, actionable recommendations and strategies for Years 3–5
 - c. Practical implementation guidance linked to targets
- 4. Presentation Materials
 - a. PowerPoint summarizing findings and recommendations
 - b. Validation workshop presentation
- 5. Annexes
 - a. Data collection tools
 - b. List of respondents
 - c. Summary of disaggregated findings where applicable

Requirements of the Consultant

The GEDSI Performance Audit shall be conducted by an individual consultant or consulting team with demonstrated expertise in gender equality and social inclusion reviews, evaluations, and learning-oriented assessments. The consultant(s) should meet the following criteria:

1. Education
 - a. Postgraduate degree (master’s or higher) in Gender Studies, Social Sciences, Development Studies, Evaluation, Public Policy, or a related field.
 - b. Formal training or certification in gender and social inclusion, evaluation, or results-based management is an added advantage.
2. Professional Experience
 - a. Minimum of 7 years’ experience conducting GEDSI reviews, evaluations, or learning assessments in development programmes.
 - b. Proven experience leading or contributing to Performance Audits, outcome reviews, or thematic evaluations, preferably for multi-year projects.
 - c. Demonstrated experience assessing:
 - i. Implementation of GEDSI action plans
 - ii. Progress against gender and inclusion indicators
 - iii. Institutional and behavioral change, not only participation metrics.
3. Thematic and Sector Experience
 - a. Strong understanding of gender-transformative approaches, safeguarding, Responsible Business Conduct (RBC), and intersectionality.
 - b. Experience working in one or more of the following areas:
 - i. Urban services or waste management
 - ii. Livelihoods, informal economy, or circular economy initiatives
 - iii. Social and behavior change communication (SBCC)
 - c. Familiarity with Kenya’s gender, disability, labor, and decentralized governance context is highly desirable.
4. Methodological Competence
 - a. Demonstrated ability to use mixed methods approaches appropriate for Performance Audits, including:
 - i. Desk review and secondary data analysis
 - ii. Key informant interviews and targeted FGDs

- iii. Review of indicator trends and implementation fidelity
 - b. Strong analytical and synthesis skills, with the ability to:
 - i. Distinguish between outputs, outcomes, and early impacts
 - ii. Translate findings into actionable, prioritized recommendations
5. Reporting and Facilitation Skills
- a. Proven ability to produce clear, concise, and decision-oriented reports for programme management and donors.
 - b. Experience facilitating validation and learning workshops with diverse stakeholders.
 - c. Excellent written and oral communication skills in English.

Timelines

The consultancy will be implemented over a 15-day period between April and June 2026. Final report is expected at the latest by 30th June 2026. A detailed workplan with milestones will be agreed upon during the signing of contract agreement.

This assignment will be conducted in accordance with international best practice standards for evaluations and thematic reviews, including principles of independence, impartiality, transparency, credibility, and ethical conduct.

1. Independence and Impartiality
 - a. The consultant(s) shall carry out the GEDSI Performance Audit independently and impartially, without undue influence from project staff, partners, or other stakeholders.
 - b. While Practical Action and project partners will facilitate access to documentation and stakeholders, final judgments, findings, and recommendations shall remain the responsibility of the consultant.
 - c. Any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest must be declared at the proposal stage and throughout the assignment.
2. Ethical Standards and Safeguarding
 - a. The consultant(s) must adhere to do-no-harm principles, informed consent, confidentiality, and respectful engagement with all participants.
 - b. All data collection must comply with Practical Action's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct, particularly when engaging women, youth, persons with disabilities, and informal workers.
 - c. The consultant is responsible for ensuring that all team members understand and comply with safeguarding requirements before and during fieldwork.
3. Use and Ownership of Findings
 - a. Findings will be used primarily for learning, decision-making, and adaptive management, not for performance appraisal of individuals.
 - b. Draft findings will be shared with Practical Action for factual validation, not for approval or alteration of analytical judgments.
 - c. All data, reports, and outputs produced under this assignment shall remain the property of Practical Action.

4. Collaboration and Learning Orientation
 - a. The assignment is expected to adopt a learning-oriented and utilitarian approach, ensuring recommendations are:
 - i. Practically actionable,
 - ii. Prioritized,
 - iii. Aligned with the project's remaining timeframe and capacity.
 - b. The consultant will actively support sense-making and validation workshops to enhance uptake of findings.

Reporting and Payment

Payment for the study shall be made in three tranches as indicated below

- Inception Report: Upon successful submission of an acceptable inception report.
- Monthly Progress Updates: submission and acceptance of the 1st draft of the report
- Final Report: Submission and acceptance of the final report (Comprehensive documentation of achievements, lessons, and recommendations)

Payment Terms

Financial proposal detailing the workplan, the budget breakdown and consultancy fees in Kenya Shillings. If the team consists of several members, the professional fees should be based on clearly shown time allocation for each member of the team to the various activities.

All payments shall be inclusive of applicable taxes and subject to Practical Action's financial procedures and timelines.

NOTE

1. Practical Action reserves the right to accept or reject any application.
2. All outputs, including the strategy, creative materials and raw data, will become the sole property of Practical Action and its partners.
3. Consultants must declare any existing or potential conflict of interest with or competing projects.
4. The consultants shall comply with Practical Action's Safeguarding and Data Protection policies and obtain informed consent from all research participants.
5. Payments will be made subject to the consulting entity meeting quality and timely delivery of stated task.