

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Tender No: KCO/13/02/FY26 - Research on Leveraging the Role of Rural Youth as Pillars of Resilience through Comprehensive Climate Education

1. About Plan International

Plan International is a global child-centred international development organization founded over 85 years ago and is currently operating in 76 countries throughout the world, including Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. As an organization, we strive for a just world that advances children's rights and equality for girls worldwide. We do this in collaboration with governments, communities, and partners at all levels. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, supporters, and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until adulthood, preparing them to respond to crises and adversity, while driving changes in practice and policy at local, national, and global levels. Plan International has built powerful partnerships for children.

Within the Plan's vision, the empowerment of adolescent girls and young women is central. In many societies, they carry the heaviest burdens of inequality, denied equal access to education, decent work, health services, and participation in decision-making. Climate change magnifies these challenges, and rural youth are more exposed and vulnerable. For example, when droughts, floods, or cyclones strike, girls are often the first to be pulled out of school to help their families cope, and the last to benefit from recovery efforts. Plan International believes that unless children and youth, particularly girls, are at the centre of climate justice solutions, the intergenerational cycle of vulnerability and gender injustice will deepen. This study is firmly anchored within the MEESA Climate Justice Agenda and Plan International's Global Strategy (2022–2027). It reflects our conviction that climate education, when comprehensive and inclusive, is not only about knowledge transfer but also about building resilience, shaping attitudes, and creating pathways to dignified livelihoods for the next generation.

1.1. About the Commissioning Office

The Middle East, East and Southern Africa (MEESA) Hub of Plan International is commissioning this research. The Hub provides technical leadership across the region, supporting country offices in advancing climate justice, gender equality, child rights, and social inclusion. This research aligns with the MEESA Climate Justice agenda and contributes to strengthening the evidence base for youth-led climate resilience and education programming.

2. Study Background

Youth are the largest demographic in the MEESA region, and their potential is both immense and underutilised. Yet, they face disproportionate climate impacts, persistently high unemployment, and inadequate access to education that prepares them for a rapidly changing world. For rural youth in particular, opportunities are often limited to subsistence farming or informal work, leaving them vulnerable to both economic and environmental shocks. This study recognises that these young people are not merely beneficiaries of aid, but powerful agents of change. By documenting how climate education can equip rural youth especially girls and young women with the skills, confidence, and platforms to lead, the research will position them at the forefront of resilience building for their households, communities, and countries.

Rural communities in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are experiencing intensified climate shocks, including floods, droughts, and cyclones. These events undermine livelihoods, particularly for youth reliant on agriculture and informal labour. At the same time, national education systems remain slow to integrate climate risk awareness and green skills, leaving youth ill-prepared for resilience roles. Young people are not passive

victims. Across the region, youth-led climate action from tree planting to awareness campaigns and innovation in green enterprises is emerging. However, these efforts are fragmented, underfunded, and not mainstreamed into policy frameworks. Adolescent girls and young women face socio-cultural and gendered barriers that limit their participation. The study will fill this evidence gap by documenting best practices, mapping barriers, and providing actionable recommendations. Findings will inform Plan International's regional programming and advocacy, support youth economic empowerment, and strengthen national and regional climate policies.

3. Rationale and Study Objectives

Climate change is intensifying across the MEESA region, disproportionately impacting communities, including rural areas where youth and girls are among the most vulnerable. Droughts, floods, and unpredictable weather patterns are undermining livelihoods, food systems, and educational opportunities, further exacerbating poverty and social exclusion. Nevertheless, young people, particularly girls and young women, have shown a strong commitment to engaging in environmental protection and climate action. Despite this potential, there is a lack of evidence on effectively harnessing and sustaining youth-led initiatives for resilience building, especially among rural youth.

Research and programming often compartmentalize “green skills” and climate education from “climate risk awareness” and community adaptation. Consequently, youth are seldom positioned as central actors in resilience-building efforts, despite their willingness and capacity to make meaningful contributions. This fragmented approach has resulted in a structural disconnect between livelihood skills and adaptation practices, diminishing opportunities for youth to translate their learning into actionable local climate initiatives.

To address these gaps in evidence and programming, this study aims to explore how comprehensive, gender-responsive climate education can integrate both “green skills” and “climate risk awareness.” This integration will empower rural youth, especially girls and young women, to become leaders in climate resilience rather than being viewed solely as beneficiaries. The study will not only analyse existing approaches but also highlight successful models that can be adapted and scaled across the MEESA region, ensuring that lessons learned from effective youth-led initiatives are replicated and institutionalized.

Specifically, the research will focus on three interlinked pathways:

a. Integrating climate realities into formal and informal education

This component examines how school curricula, vocational training, and community-based learning platforms can be aligned with local climatic realities. This includes identifying entry points for embedding climate adaptation, risk management, and sustainable livelihood skills into both formal education systems and informal learning networks. The goal is to ensure that education equips young people with practical, locally relevant knowledge that directly responds to the challenges they encounter in their daily lives.

b. Strengthening youth-led and community-based climate action

The research will document and strengthen existing youth-led and community-based climate initiatives, recognizing that many young people are already driving localized adaptation and mitigation efforts, often with limited support or visibility. By mapping and analysing these grassroots initiatives, the study will identify what works, where, and why, providing a foundation for scaling up successful models and integrating them into broader resilience and development frameworks

c. Informing scalable and gender-responsive solutions and influencing

Finally, the study will generate actionable insights and policy recommendations to guide governments, NGOs, and development partners in designing inclusive, youth-centred climate programs. The focus will be on ensuring that youth-driven resilience is not confined to small-scale pilots but embedded within national and regional systems, influencing education, employment, and climate policy. By emphasizing gender equity, the study will also seek to ensure that young women and girls gain equal access to resources, leadership opportunities, and decision-making spaces within climate action frameworks.

In summary, this research will contribute to a growing body of evidence on how to equip rural youth, especially girls, with the integrated skills, confidence, and recognition needed to lead climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. By connecting climate education, green skills development, and community resilience, the study aims to inform replicable, scalable, and policy-aligned models for sustainable youth engagement across the MEESA region.

3.1. Research Focus

Purpose

To generate actionable evidence on how rural youth can be effectively engaged and supported through comprehensive climate education to strengthen household and community resilience in the face of climate shocks in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, identify similarities and differences across the four countries by geography, age and gender among other intersectionalities. This comparative lens will provide a broader evidence base to inform the development of cross-country strategies that advance youth empowerment and climate resilience across diverse contexts in the MEESA region.

Objectives

Objective 1:

- i. Systematically document and analyse at least 20 youth-led or youth-targeted interventions and good practices of youth engagement in climate action and resilience across Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, highlighting successful models and replicable actions that can be adapted or scaled across the MEESA region and measurable outcomes that demonstrate youth contribution to community resilience.

This objective seeks to identify, document, and analyse existing youth-led and youth-focused initiatives that have effectively contributed to climate adaptation, mitigation, and community resilience in the MEESA region. The focus is on drawing lessons from both formal and informal interventions, ranging from education and livelihood programs to grassroots movements and innovation hubs that demonstrate tangible outcomes in building local resilience.

By examining these good practices, the study will:

- Map and categorize diverse models of youth engagement, including those led by young women, community groups, and educational institutions;
- Assess enabling factors such as institutional support, funding mechanisms, gender inclusivity, and policy linkages that contribute to the success or sustainability of these models;
- Identify barriers and capacity gaps that hinder replication or scaling; and
- Highlight scalable frameworks and actionable strategies that can inform policy and program design across the MEESA region.

Ultimately, this objective aims to generate evidence that not only celebrates youth leadership but also provides a foundation for integrating successful, gender-responsive, and locally adaptable models into broader climate resilience programming and policy frameworks.

Objective 2:

- ii. Identify and categorise key structural, policy, and socio-cultural barriers and enabling factors affecting rural youth participation in climate action, climate education, and resilience building, disaggregated by gender, age, country, and consider power dynamics and socio-cultural constraints to inform inclusive programming.

This objective aims to examine the systemic, institutional, and cultural factors that shape how young people, particularly girls and young women, engage in climate-related education, decision-making, and action. It recognizes that youth participation is not uniform and that gender, location, access to resources, and social norms often determine who participates, how, and to what extent.

The study will:

- Map existing education systems, curricula, and community-based learning structures in all four countries, identifying gaps and opportunities for integrating climate education and resilience competencies within both formal and informal learning platforms, and understand how they either facilitate or limit involvement in climate adaptation, mitigation, and leadership.
- Identify barriers such as restrictive gender norms, limited access to training, weak institutional support, or exclusion from policy processes that hinder meaningful youth participation.
- Analyse enabling factors, including mentorship networks, gender-sensitive education programs, policy frameworks, and youth leadership platforms that promote equitable engagement; and
- Examine intersectional gendered differences and socio-cultural dynamics to ensure that findings and recommendations are inclusive, context-specific, and transformative.

By understanding these barriers and enablers, the study will provide evidence to inform more inclusive, gender-responsive, and youth-centred climate policies and programs that dismantle structural inequalities and amplify the leadership potential of young people across the MEESA region.

Objective 3:

- iii. Identify and validate strategic entry points (institutional, policy, or community-level) for integrating youth-led climate resilience models within school and community programs across the four target countries and develop a set of actionable, evidence-based, gender-responsive policy and programmatic recommendations tailored for Plan International, partners, and governments to support uptake and advocacy across the MEESA Region on youth-driven climate resilience.

This objective focuses on translating the study's findings into actionable recommendations that can guide institutional, policy, and programmatic reforms across the MEESA region. The goal is to ensure that youth-led climate resilience is not confined to small-scale projects but becomes an integral part of systemic climate governance, education, and development frameworks.

The study will:

- Synthesize lessons and best practices from documented initiatives and case studies to inform policy design, resource allocation, and programmatic approaches that prioritize youth and gender inclusion.
- Develop evidence-based recommendations that support Plan International, governments, and development partners in strengthening national and regional strategies for climate resilience.
- Advocate for policy integration of youth-led models into education, livelihood, and climate adaptation frameworks; and

- Promote institutional learning by providing practical pathways for scaling up successful models through partnerships, financing mechanisms, and multi-sectoral collaboration.

Through this objective, the research will contribute to a broader policy dialogue on climate justice, ensuring that the perspectives and leadership of young people, especially girls and young women, are embedded within the design, implementation, and monitoring of climate resilience programs across MEESA.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following key research questions, designed to explore how youth, particularly girls and young women, can be positioned as central actors in climate resilience and environmental protection across the MEESA region:

1. What models and interventions have proven most effective in fostering meaningful youth engagement in climate action, resilience-building, and environmental protection across rural contexts?

This question seeks to identify and analyse youth-led or youth-targeted high-impact initiatives, highlighting scalable and contextually relevant practices that successfully engage youth in local climate solutions. It further seeks to assess specific interventions implemented in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe that have measurably strengthened rural community resilience or environmental protection outcomes.

2. What outcomes and added value result from youth-led climate engagement across environmental, educational, social, gender equality, and community resilience dimensions?

The study will examine the multidimensional benefits of youth participation, focusing on how such engagement strengthens both individual empowerment and collective community resilience.

3. What structural, socio-cultural, gendered, policy, and resource-related barriers constrain rural youth participation in climate resilience in different countries, and what enabling factors allow them to overcome these challenges?

This question explores how intersecting inequalities, institutional limitations, and cultural norms shape youth involvement, while identifying practical enablers that promote inclusive and equitable participation. It further seeks to identify structural, gender, and policy barriers that most constrain the effective participation of rural youth, especially adolescent girls and young women in climate education and resilience programming, and how these vary by context.

4. How do existing education systems, curricula, vocational pathways, and community structures equip or fail to equip rural youth, particularly girls and young women, with the knowledge, green skills, and adaptive capacities needed for resilience roles?

The research will assess how education and training systems integrate climate realities and whether they empower youth with relevant competencies to lead adaptation and mitigation efforts and provide comparative analysis across the four countries.

5. To what extent are governments in the selected MEESA countries advancing policies and frameworks that link youth empowerment, gender equality, climate education, and climate action, and where are the gaps or opportunities for strengthening these linkages?

This question evaluates the policy environment to understand the degree of institutional commitment to youth-led climate resilience and identify opportunities for scaling and policy alignment.

3.2. Expected Deliverables

The consultant will be expected to produce the following key deliverables within the agreed contractual period. All outputs must adhere to Plan International's quality assurance standards, gender-responsive research principles, and ethical protocols.

Table 1: Expected Deliverables

Deliverable	Description	Expected Length / Format	Timeline
Inception Report	A comprehensive report outlining the study rationale, detailed research design, methodology, and sampling strategy. It should include a fully developed research matrix, stakeholder and intervention mapping, a detailed work plan, draft data-collection tools.	15 – 20 pages	Within 3 weeks of contract signing
Draft Research Report	A preliminary analytical report presenting initial findings, emerging patterns, and early recommendations for review by Plan International and partners. The report should reflect progress on data analysis and triangulation of qualitative and quantitative findings.	40 – 50 pages	Month 4
Validation Workshop Report	A synthesis of discussions, stakeholder feedback, and consensus achieved during the validation workshop, including recommendations for refining findings and actionable insights.	10 – 15 pages	Month 5
Final Research Report	A comprehensive, polished report incorporating stakeholder feedback and validation outcomes. It must include an Executive Summary, detailed analysis, conclusions, and evidence-based policy and programmatic recommendations.	50 – 60 pages	Month 5
Cleaned Dataset and Data Collection Tools	Finalized, anonymized, and quality-assured dataset accompanied by all data-collection tools (questionnaires, interview guides, and FGD tools) used in the study.	Digital format	Month 5
Consent Forms and Ethical Documentation	Signed consent forms and supporting documentation confirming adherence to ethical standards, data-protection protocols, and informed-consent requirements.	Digital / scanned format	Month 5
Policy Brief and PowerPoint Presentation	A concise Policy Brief summarizing key findings, strategic messages, and policy recommendations, alongside a PowerPoint Presentation for dissemination to partners, governments, and stakeholders.	6 – 8 pages (brief) / 20 slides (presentation)	Month 6
Youth-Friendly Dissemination Material	A creative and accessible youth-oriented product (e.g., comic strip, infographic series, or illustrated summary) translating research findings into actionable messages. Designed for dissemination through Plan International's Country Offices and youth networks,	Digital / print format	Month 6

	this product will enhance accountability, learning, and advocacy, inspiring young people to take climate action.		
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3.3. Users of the Research

- **Plan International MEESA Hub & Country Offices:** for programme design and advocacy.
- **Youth, educators, and community stakeholders:** to strengthen local resilience.
- **Donors and funding partners:** for informed investment decisions.
- **National governments:** to guide youth-responsive climate policies and education frameworks.

3.4. Scope of Work

The consultancy will be conducted across four countries, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, with a particular emphasis on rural youth between the ages of 15 and 24. The study will take a comprehensive approach, examining the multiple layers that shape how young people engage with climate education and resilience. This will include an assessment of both formal education systems (schools, vocational training, and curricula) and informal or community-based learning spaces where young people acquire skills and knowledge outside traditional classrooms.

In addition, the study will document and analyse youth-led climate actions and adaptation initiatives, highlighting innovative practices, opportunities for replication, and barriers to scaling. Attention will also be given to the policy and institutional frameworks that link education, skills development, youth participation, and climate resilience, assessing the extent to which these frameworks are enabling or limiting meaningful youth engagement.

Additionally, the consultancy will examine policy and institutional frameworks that link education, skills development, youth participation, and climate resilience. This will include assessing how effective these frameworks are in integrating gender and youth perspectives, and the extent to which they enable or constrain meaningful youth engagement in national and local climate agendas.

3.5. Stakeholder Engagement

Sustained stakeholder engagement will be ensured throughout the research process via a participatory approach. The consultancy will establish continuous consultation mechanisms at all stages from design and data collection to analysis and dissemination to foster ownership and inclusion. Plan's Country Offices will facilitate collaboration with national and local governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), youth groups, academic institutions, and community organizations. Periodic feedback loops, e.g., regular briefings and participatory validation workshops, will be used so that stakeholders can validate interim findings and influence the direction of the study. This approach will help ensure the practical uptake of findings into programmatic and policy actions.

Key elements of the participatory stakeholder engagement strategy include:

- **Youth Involvement:** Engaging young people not merely as research subjects but as active contributors. Youth representatives, including both young women and young men from rural areas, will be involved through youth-led focus group discussions and feedback sessions. This ensures the research reflects youth perspectives and empowers young participants as co-creators of knowledge.
- **Government Collaboration:** Working closely with relevant government ministries and local authorities, e.g., those responsible for education, environment, youth, and agriculture in each country. Government stakeholders will be consulted during the inception phase to align the research with policy needs, kept informed during data collection, and invited to validation workshops. Their engagement will promote

policy relevance of the findings and facilitate the integration of recommendations into government strategies such as climate change policies, education curriculum development, or youth empowerment programs.

- **TVETs, Academic and Research Partnerships:** Drawing on the expertise of local universities, research institutes, technical and vocational centres, and think tanks working on climate change, education, or youth development. Where feasible, the consultant will coordinate with academic partners for technical advice on methodology, ensuring rigor and alignment with global research standards, and for peer review of preliminary results. Involvement of academia will also help situate this study within broader research efforts and may create opportunities for future collaboration or publication of results.
- **Civil Society and Community Engagement:** Collaborating with civil society organizations, community leaders, and grassroots groups throughout the study. Local NGOs and community-based organizations, including those focusing on women's empowerment, environmental conservation, or youth skills, can assist in mobilizing participants, providing contextual insights, and disseminating findings at the community level. Engaging these actors will enhance the study's inclusivity and ensure that the research is grounded in local realities and interventions already underway.

As part of the Inception Report, the consultant will undertake a comprehensive stakeholder and intervention mapping exercise across all participating countries. Informed by a detailed desk review, this mapping will identify key actors, ongoing projects, and institutional linkages related to youth engagement, climate education, and resilience building in each context. The findings from the mapping will help contextualize the research, guide sampling and fieldwork planning by showing where relevant activities or networks exist and strengthen coordination with Plan International's Country Offices and implementing partners.

4. Methods for Data Collection and Analysis

4.1. Scope of Coverage

The consultant will propose a rigorous mixed-methods design, incorporating desk review of global, regional, and country-level evidence, policies, and curricula, as well as quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

Quantitative Component

The rural youth-focused study will comprise a detailed youth survey to capture youth perceptions, barriers, and opportunities in addressing climate change and resilience. The consultant will ensure that the data collection tools **clearly define age bands** (for example, 15–17, 18–24, and 25–29 years) and includes **youth** at school and out of school, employed and unemployed, as well as **youth living with disabilities among other intersectionalities**. This approach will allow for inclusive representation and meaningful disaggregation of results by **age, gender, disability, and geography**. The instruments should also capture variables related to education, livelihood sources, and access to climate information, enabling comparative analysis across demographic groups and countries.

Qualitative component

The qualitative component of the study will employ a range of participatory and evidence-based methods to generate rich, contextual insights into how youth across **rural settings** engage in climate education, adaptation, and resilience building. The approach will ensure that **youth voices are central** to the inquiry, shaping not only the findings but also the interpretation and recommendations of the study.

The consultant will use comprehensive data collection tools targeting a diverse group of stakeholders, including young women and young men, out of school youth, youth living with disabilities, informal enterprises, technical and vocational education training institutions, educators/teachers, environmental activists, policymakers, and

community leaders. The consultant should also conduct participatory validation sessions, and feedback loops to enhance the legitimacy, inclusivity, and accountability of the study outcomes. These methods will further facilitate an in-depth understanding of perceptions, lived experiences, institutional dynamics, and opportunities for strengthening youth participation in climate resilience.

A comprehensive document review will also form an integral part of the qualitative process. This review should encompass both internal documentations shared by Country Offices (COs), including reports from past interventions, project evaluations, and learning briefs, and external documentation from other organizations and research institutions active in this field. Relevant global and regional literature will also be accessed online to ensure a comprehensive mapping of good practices and evidence gaps across the MEESA region. COs will support the identification and access of these materials at the country level.

4.2. Sample design, selection, and analysis

The Plan International team will ensure that the methodology aligns with Plan International's Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) Standards, and integrates principles of ethics, safeguarding, gender-lens approach, and social inclusion throughout the study processes. The sampling design will ensure that the data collected are representative and adequately disaggregated to allow meaningful analysis across gender, age, geography, and other social dimensions such as school going, employment and disability. The research will apply a gender lens approach and adopt intersectional analysis, systematically examining gender dynamics, power relations, and social norms at each stage from sample selection to data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The methodology will align with Plan International's MERL Standards and integrate ethics, safeguarding, gender-lens, and social inclusion principles throughout.

Primary data collection approach by country

- Countries A & B (specify at inception): In-depth fieldwork including youth surveys, FGDs, and KIIs.
- Countries C & D (specify at inception): Desk review, remote KIIs (Zoom/phone), and limited field visits for validation workshops.

Rationale for allocating countries to A/B vs C/D

Allocation will be agreed at inception based on:

1. **Geographic factors** (e.g., climate exposure, livelihood zones, rural/(sub)urban mix),
2. **Security and access** (including ethical feasibility for youth engagement),
3. **Resource efficiency** (budget, timeline, team capacity), while preserving cross-country comparability.

Sampling framework and disaggregation

- **Target population:** Youth in rural areas and (sub)urban settings can be considered.
- **Inclusion:** Out-of-school youth and youth with disabilities (using an accepted short screening tool).
- **Stratification:** By gender, age bands (e.g., 15–17, 18–24, 25–29), and geography (rural vs (sub)urban; province/district or livelihood zone).
- **Comparability:** Core instruments and indicators will be standardised to **enable cross-country** analysis.

Sample size determination

The consultant will calculate country-specific sample sizes based on agreed effect sizes, 95% confidence, and $\pm 5\%$ margin of error (or justified alternatives), and will present and agree these with Plan International (PII) at

inception. Calculations must account for design effect, finite population correction (if applicable), and anticipated non-response. The consultant should ensure adequate power for sex-disaggregation and age bands per key subgroup in survey countries A/B; consultant to finalise via power analysis and design effect assumptions). The consultant will propose final country- and subgroup-specific sample sizes, including any oversamples needed for rural/peri-urban, sex, age bands, and disability. and agree on them with PII at inception, documenting all assumptions, adjustments (DEFF, non-response, FPC, and any weighting plan

Data Analysis

The consultant will be responsible for generating robust mixed-methods evidence on youth engagement in climate education, adaptation, and resilience, integrating quantitative estimates of impact with qualitative narratives to provide both breadth and depth of understanding. This will include the design and implementation of quantitative and qualitative data collection tools (surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and desk reviews) to document youth practices, assess barriers and enablers to participation, and map education systems and institutional approaches supporting youth climate resilience. The consultant is expected to apply appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, alongside rigorous qualitative thematic and content analysis, to identify patterns, differences, and underlying drivers across gender, age, disability, geography, and country contexts, including comparative analysis across the four countries. Findings will be triangulated and synthesised into clear, actionable insights to inform programme design and adaptation, strengthen inclusive and gender-responsive youth engagement strategies, and support curriculum reform, policy dialogue, and targeted advocacy for systemic change

5. Study Implementation Timelines and Outputs

The consultancy is anticipated to run for a period of six months. This duration is designed to provide adequate time for inception, data collection, analysis, and the validation of findings, while also ensuring meaningful engagement with stakeholders across the four focus countries.

The timeline is intentionally phased to allow for flexibility in adapting to contextual realities, including rural access constraints, seasonal agricultural cycles, and the availability of youth participants. The consultant is expected to develop a detailed workplan for the study.

5.1. Risk Management

Given the multi-country and predominantly rural context of this assignment, proactive risk management is essential to ensure timely and high-quality delivery. The consultant shall maintain a risk register and continuously identify, monitor, and mitigate key risks throughout the study implementation. Some indicative risks and mitigation strategies are outlined below: The consultant should be vigilant about any emerging risks, such as public health issues (e.g., a pandemic resurgence) or changes in partner capacity. Regular risk assessment updates will be provided in project progress reports. The mitigation strategies will be adjusted as needed in collaboration with Plan International. By anticipating challenges and preparing adaptive strategies, the study can minimize disruptions and ensure the safety of participants and the research team, the integrity of data collected, and the overall success of the assignment.

6. Budget

Interested consultants are required to submit a detailed financial proposal. To facilitate comparability and value-for-money assessment, budgets should be structured into clear line items with at least 30-40% being allocated for field work and meetings. Each cost item should include a brief budget narrative explaining key assumptions, such as the number of field visits, workshops, team composition, or remote collaboration tools used to enhance efficiency. A sample budget template or indicative cost breakdown can be provided upon request to guide applicants in preparing realistic financial proposals that align with Plan International's expectations. The financial

proposal will be evaluated on cost-effectiveness, so bidders must ensure that all costs are reasonable, necessary, and proportionate to the proposed approach. Innovative cost-saving measures, for instance, using remote data collection or regional enumerators to minimize travel, are welcome, provided they do not compromise data quality or inclusivity

Payment Schedule

All payments will be tied to the successful completion and approval of deliverables, ensuring accountability for outputs and quality. Plan International's policy is to pay upon delivery of approved deliverables, not in advance.

Table 2: Key Milestones and Deliverables

Milestone	Deliverable(s)	Payment %
Upon approval of the Inception Report (including the Statistical Analysis Plan and tools)	Inception Report	30%
Upon approval of the Draft Research Report after completion of data collection and initial analysis	Draft Research Report	30%
Upon approval of the Final Research Report and Policy Brief, including all supporting deliverables	Final Report, Policy Brief, Dataset, and Dissemination Products	40%

- The consultant is responsible for managing **all expenses** within the agreed total budget.
- Payment tranches above are fixed percentages of the total contract value and will not be adjusted based on actual spending differences.
- The consultant/team must arrange their own insurance coverage (including health and travel insurance) and ensure compliance with national tax laws (e.g., VAT or income tax obligations).
- All financial records and transactions must comply with Plan International's financial management and anti-fraud policies.

7. Qualifications and Experience

The consultant or consulting team should demonstrate a blend of advanced academic qualifications, proven professional expertise, and practical field experience relevant to youth, climate resilience, and education programming. The required qualifications and competencies include:

Academic Qualifications

- Postgraduate degree (Master's or PhD preferred) in climate change, environmental studies, development studies, gender studies, youth empowerment, social sciences, education, or a related discipline.
- Additional certifications in monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MERL), participatory research, or project management will be considered an advantage.

Professional Experience

- At least 10 years of progressive experience conducting mixed-methods research in the areas of climate resilience, youth engagement, education, or livelihoods.
- Demonstrated track record in designing and implementing large-scale, multi-country or regional studies in Sub-Saharan Africa, with familiarity with rural contexts.

- Proven ability to apply gender-transformative and youth-responsive approaches in research and programme design.
- Experience working with international NGOs, UN agencies, donors, or government institutions on climate, youth, and/or education projects.
- Strong knowledge of African climate policies, education systems, and youth empowerment frameworks.

Technical Competencies

- Expertise in participatory research methodologies, including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and youth-led participatory tools.
- Proficiency in both quantitative and qualitative data analysis, with demonstrated ability to use tools such as SPSS, Stata, or NVivo.
- Capacity to ensure high standards of data quality, ethics, safeguarding, and inclusion in line with Plan International's MERL and safeguarding standards.
- Excellent writing skills with a proven record of producing high-quality analytical reports, policy briefs, and advocacy materials for diverse audiences.

Soft Skills and Added Value

- Strong facilitation and stakeholder engagement skills, with the ability to work effectively with young people, governments, and community actors.
- Cultural sensitivity and proven ability to work in multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary teams.
- Fluency in English (written and spoken) is essential; proficiency in Portuguese, or relevant local languages of the focus countries will be an added advantage. Recommendable to have a member in the team with Portuguese proficiency when conducting work in Mozambique.
- Ability to deliver results within tight deadlines while maintaining high quality and professional standards.

8. Data Management

All data collected during this consultancy must adhere to the highest standards of ethical research and data protection. This includes ensuring that data is gathered lawfully, fairly, and transparently, with the informed consent of all participants. Consent must be meaningful and age-appropriate, particularly when engaging with minors or vulnerable groups, and assent must be sought from children in addition to parental or guardian consent where applicable.

Confidentiality and security of participant information must be guaranteed throughout the research process. The consultant will be responsible for putting in place secure data collection, transfer, and storage systems to prevent unauthorised access, misuse, or disclosure. Personal identifiers should be anonymised or pseudonymised wherever possible to protect the privacy and dignity of respondents. Sensitive data, particularly concerning minors or survivors of discrimination or violence, must be handled with extra caution in line with Plan International's Safeguarding Policy.

Data must be retained only for as long as necessary to fulfil the objectives of this study and in compliance with relevant legal frameworks, such as the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection, and national data protection laws in the countries of focus. Any sharing of data with third parties, including Plan International or local partners, will require explicit prior consent and must ensure that safeguards remain intact. At the close of the consultancy, all raw data, cleaned datasets, and analysis files will be securely transferred to Plan International, and no copies may be retained without written approval.

9. Ethics, Child Rights, Gender and Inclusion

The consultant must adhere strictly to Plan International's Ethical MERL Framework and Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy. The study will request that a safeguarding risk assessment be conducted. This is mandatory and if the results indicate high or very high risk, an ethics approval will be sought to conduct the study since the study involves primary data collection. These frameworks emphasise that all research and programme activities must be conducted in a way that respects and protects the rights, dignity, and well-being of children, adolescents, and young people. Ethical principles such as voluntary participation, informed consent, and the right to withdraw at any point must guide the entire study process. Particular attention should be paid to developing age-appropriate consent and assent procedures that are clear, accessible, and culturally sensitive.

Child-friendly and gender-sensitive approaches are non-negotiable. Tools and methodologies must be designed in ways that enable girls, boys, young women, and young men to safely express their views and experiences. This includes creating safe spaces for discussion, ensuring confidentiality, and actively addressing potential power imbalances between researchers and participants. The consultant is expected to adopt inclusive strategies that prioritise the voices of marginalised groups such as adolescent mothers, young people with disabilities, and those living in hard-to-reach rural communities whose perspectives are often excluded from mainstream research and policy dialogues.

The consultant is also responsible for embedding a gender lens approach throughout the study. This means not only documenting differences in experiences between girls and boys, but also analysing and challenging the underlying norms, roles, and structural inequalities that shape those differences. Findings and recommendations should contribute to advancing gender equality, child rights, and social inclusion in both policy and practice. Participation must always be voluntary, respectful, and protective of dignity, with safeguarding mechanisms in place to prevent harm and respond to any ethical concerns that arise during the research.

10. Application Guidelines

Interested and qualified consultants are invited to submit a comprehensive application that demonstrates both technical expertise and practical experience relevant to this assignment. Applications must be written in clear, professional English and should highlight the consultant's understanding of the assignment, the proposed approach, and the unique value they bring to the study. Joint applications from teams or consortia are welcome, provided that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

Applications should include the following:

- i. **Technical Proposal (Maximum 15 pages):** A detailed description of the proposed methodology, data collection tools, analytical framework, and ethical considerations, safeguarding, and inclusion throughout the research processes. The technical proposal should also include a draft workplan aligned with the timeframe outlined in this ToR and a brief description of relevant experience in conducting similar assignments, particularly those related to youth engagement, climate resilience, or gender-responsive research.
- ii. **Curriculum Vitae (CVs):** Full CV(s) of the lead consultant and any supporting team members, outlining academic qualifications, relevant professional experience, and previous consultancies in youth engagement, education, or climate resilience.
- iii. **Examples of Previous Work:** At least two samples of relevant research reports, policy briefs, or evaluation studies authored by the consultant/team within the past five years.
- iv. **Financial Proposal:** A clear and itemised budget in USD, including daily consultancy rates, estimated level of effort (number of days), and all associated costs such as travel, communication, insurance, and applicable taxes.

- v. 3 recommendation letters including contact details from previous organisation where similar work was conducted.
- vi. Demonstrated previous experience in coordinating and administering studies of a similar nature.
- vii. A copy of a previous reports of similar work undertaken
- viii. A profile of Consultant's CVs. In the case of a firm, full names, physical addresses, telephone numbers, and contact person of the firm/company; date of registration, registration number, copy of registration certificate and VAT certificate; names of directors/proprietors.

Submission Instructions:

All interested applicants are invited to submit their complete technical and financial proposal electrically through the email: Kenya.Bids@plan-international.org on or before **Friday 20th February 2026 by 1700hrs EAT**. Late submissions will not be considered. Shortlisted candidates may be invited for an interview or presentation to further discuss their proposed approach. The successful applicant will be selected based on technical expertise, relevant experience, value for money, and demonstrated capacity to comply with Plan International's ethical and safeguarding standards.

Deadline: Friday 20th February 2026 by 1700hrs EAT

Submit to: Kenya.Bids@plan-international.org

Reference: Tender No. KCO/13/02/FY26 Research on Rural Youth and Climate Education

Queries related to the tender should be addressed to KenyaProcurement.Nairobi@planinternational.org

NB: The Technical and Financial proposals must be submitted separately.

"Plan International reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and is not bound to give reasons for its decision."

All the best,
Plan Procurement.