
Terms of Reference (TORs)

Consultant for Civic Intelligence Action Research on Critical Minerals and Mining-Affected Communities in Southern Africa (RISE)

1. Background and Context

The Southern Africa Trust Fund (SATF) works to end poverty and inequality in Southern Africa through deliberate feminist and intersectional lenses, in line with its regional strategy, Seriti (2024-2030), which places people, their humanity, value and desires at the heart of all interventions. Through the RISE initiative (Regenerating Impact, Stewardship and Equity in the Critical Minerals Value Chain in Southern Africa), the Trust Fund is working to reimagine the extractive sector as a driver of gender-just, regenerative and inclusive development.

Southern Africa's mineral wealth is being reshaped by a global rush for critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, chrome and rare earths, driven by the green transition. Yet communities in mineral-rich regions face deepening marginalisation, ecological destruction, unsafe artisanal mining conditions, gender-based violence and elite capture of benefits. Women and youth remain largely excluded from value chains and governance processes, and community voices are missing from regional and global policy spaces on the future of critical minerals.

The Trust Fund now seeks a consultant to conduct community action research that underpins this work, generating credible, disaggregated evidence on the lived realities of mining-affected communities.

2. Objectives

Overall Objective:

To generate rigorous, community-grounded research on critical minerals governance and the experiences of mining-affected communities in Southern Africa, providing the evidence base for the Trust Fund's Civic Intelligence dialogue series and regional advocacy.

Specific Objectives:

- Conduct an intersectional analysis of the critical minerals landscape in the five focus countries, with emphasis on the positions of women, youth and artisanal and small-scale miners (ASM).
- Document civic intelligence emerging from the Zambia and Zimbabwe dialogues, including community experiences of extractive injustice, exclusion from value chains and governance gaps.
- Identify policy and legislative gaps at national and regional levels, referencing relevant frameworks including the Africa Mining Vision, AU Agenda 2063 and SADC instruments.
- Analyse the implications of emerging critical minerals governance trends for community agency, ecological justice, economic inclusion and gender equality in Southern Africa.
- Produce actionable recommendations for participatory governance, ASM reform, gender and youth inclusion, and community benefit in critical minerals value chains.
- Deliver a launch-ready research product to be presented at the Trust Fund's regional convening in the third quarter of 2026.

3. Scope of Work

The consultant(s) will be required to:

- Develop and refine the action research methodology and analytical framework, applying feminist, youth-focused, and intersectional lenses.



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- Conduct a desk review of literature, policy, and legislation on critical minerals in the five focus countries and at the regional level. The assignment is not expected to undertake primary field research in all five countries. Instead, it should synthesise evidence from Civic Intelligence dialogues and targeted stakeholder consultations to provide a regional analysis.
- Draw on the outputs of the Civic Intelligence dialogues in Zambia and Zimbabwe as primary evidence, complemented by key informant interviews with community representatives, civic actors, ASM associations, and policy stakeholders.
- Analyse data using intersectional methods that surface how gender, age, location, and livelihood/economic status shape experiences of the extractives economy.
- Develop 3–5 illustrative community case studies that demonstrate key opportunities, challenges, and governance dynamics within mining-affected communities.
- Prepare a draft research report of not more than 40 pages, with a standalone summary of findings and recommendations.
- Facilitate a validation session with the Trust Fund and key partners, and incorporate feedback.
- Finalise the research product to publication standard and support its presentation at the regional launch convening.

4. Methodology

The consultant(s) must employ a mixed-methods, participatory approach, including desk review, analysis of dialogue outputs, key informant interviews, and validation with stakeholders. All methods must be consistent with the Trust Fund's feminist, decolonial, and care-based principles, ensuring that the knowledge of mining-affected communities, particularly women, youth and ASM actors, is centred and appropriately attributed.

The consultant shall ensure informed consent, confidentiality, data protection, safeguarding and do-no-harm principles throughout the assignment. Particular attention should be paid to ethical engagement with women, youth, artisanal miners and other potentially vulnerable groups.

5. Deliverables

- Inception report (within 5 days of commencement): refined methodology, analytical framework, workplan, and annotated outline of the research report.
- Draft research report (by 15 September 2026): complete draft addressing the full scope of work, including findings, intersectional analysis, and recommendations.
- Validation session (by 22 September 2026): presentation of draft findings to the Trust Fund and key partners.
- Final research report (by 30 September 2026): publication-ready product incorporating all feedback, with a 3 to 5 page summary for policy audiences.
- A policy Brief with recommendations to pursue for advocacy with policy makers at national, regional and global levels.
- Launch presentation materials (Q3): PowerPoint presentation and participation in the regional launch convening.

6. Timeframe

The assignment will commence on 1 August 2026, with the final research product due by 30 September 2026 and launch support extending into the last quarter of 2026. Key milestones:

Timeframe	Milestone	Deliverable
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1 - 7 August	Inception phase	Inception report
8 - 25 August	Desk review; analysis of Zambia and Zimbabwe dialogue outputs; key informant interviews	Progress update
26 August - 15 September	Data analysis and drafting	Draft research report
16 - 22 September	Validation and feedback	Validation session
23 - 30 September	Finalisation	Final research report and summary
October - December (date to be confirmed)	Regional launch convening	Presentation materials and launch participation

7. Team Composition and Qualifications

The consultant(s) should possess the following skills, knowledge and competencies:

- Feminist researchers with demonstrable skills and competencies to think, work, and engage with intersectional lenses, tools, and frameworks.
- Advanced degree in development studies, economics, political economy, extractives governance, or a related field.
- Minimum 8 years' experience in applied research on extractives, natural resource governance or economic justice in Southern Africa.
- Experience with community-based ethical research, feminist/decolonial methodologies, and work in Portuguese-speaking or multilingual contexts.
- Deep understanding of the political economy of critical minerals and of artisanal and small-scale mining in the region.
- Demonstrated experience with participatory and community-grounded research methods.
- Excellent feminist analytical and writing skills, with a track record of publication-quality outputs.

8. Reporting and Management

The consultant(s) will report to the SATF 's Economic Justice and Social Protection and Climate Justice and Natural Resource Governance Leads and will work closely with the Research and Learning Officer and the Programs Unit team. Reporting requirements include weekly progress updates via email, bi-weekly check-in calls, and presentation of key milestones (inception report, draft report, validation). Quality assurance will be provided by the Trust Fund's internal review panel.

9. Budget and Resources

Consultant(s) must provide a detailed financial proposal for the consultancy services. The SATF will provide relevant organisational documents and contacts, outputs of the Civic Intelligence dialogues, and logistical support for the validation session and launch convening.

10. Application Process

Prospective consultants are invited to submit a technical and financial proposal covering the whole scope of work. Applications open on 8 July 2026. Submissions can be made to jmudzviti@southernafriatrust.org and copy amumba@southernafriatrust.org no later than 22 July



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2026 by close of business. Selection will be concluded by 31 July 2026 and the assignment commences on 1 August 2026.



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