



International
Labour
Organization

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Request for Proposals (RFP): Scoping study on Child Labour in Agriculture in South Africa

The ILO DWT/CO in Pretoria requests any interested National or International Consultant (External Collaborator) to submit a **technical and financial proposal** (including CVs) to undertake the above assignment.

Deadline: 31 January 2024 23:59 South African Standard Time and proposals should be sent to the following email: lpc_pry@ilo.org

Terms of Reference

1. Background and rationale

In many countries child labour is mainly an agricultural issue. Worldwide seventy per cent of all children in child labour, 112 million children in total, are in agriculture. And for over three quarters of all children aged 5-11, agriculture is underscored as an entry point to child labour.¹

Child labour in agriculture can be particularly damaging for children due to the physical demands and hazards of farm work. Because of the prevailing division of labour, boys and girls are involved in different tasks and therefore are exposed to different risks and hazards. For example, in farming, boys are often responsible for operating machinery, using sharp tools, spraying chemicals, and they are more often exposed to amputations, cuts and burns, pesticide poisonings, and other adverse health impacts. Girls are often responsible for carrying water, collecting, and carrying wood, risking musculoskeletal injuries, fatigue, and sexual abuse. Moreover, girls are more likely to face the double burden of working in agriculture and performing household chores. In addition, community attitudes, such as not valuing girls' education (partially due to different returns to education for boys and girls) and not considering household chores as work, pose additional challenges to improving the situation of girls in rural areas.²

Child labour in agriculture takes many forms, each requiring specific strategies. On family smallholder farms, which host the largest share, families need to be able to reduce their dependency on child labour to sustain their livelihoods. On larger commercial agricultural entities, children can often be found working alongside their parents. Piecework payment schemes, where income depends on kilos of crops picked or number of rows weeded, for example, can incentivize the use of children – especially if that means families will earn a living wage.³

In South Africa, the Survey of Activities of Young People reveals that 571,000 children were involved in child labour in 2019, with female children slightly more likely to be involved in child labour than their male counterparts (5,1% vs 4,9%). The prevalence of child labour increases noticeably with age, from 2,6% among the youngest children (7–9 years) to 7,1% in the oldest age group. Black African children (5,7%) were more

1 International Labour Office and United Nations Children's Fund, Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2021. License: CC BY 4.0.

2 ILO : Gender and child labour in agriculture.

3 International Labour Office and United Nations Children's Fund, Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2021. License: CC BY 4.0.

likely to be working than children from other population groups. While the survey does not present the involvement of child labour by sector, it indicates that agriculture accounted for the largest share of children who worked more than 14 hours per week (61.4%).

The COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa, had a devastating and broad ranging impacts on children and young people. More than 101,000⁴ people died and a report by UNICEF⁵ released in 2022 revealed that the number of COVID-19 orphans had come close to 150,000. The increase in the number orphans in KwaZulu Natal and parts of the Eastern Cape during the pandemic were further exacerbated by the devastating floods of April 2022 that resulted in the tragic loss of many lives raising concerns amongst the national authorities in the likely reversal in years of progress in protecting and promoting the rights of children and in tackling and eliminating child labour. Significant to mention also is that the disruption in the delivery of basic social services in such sectors as education, health (see above), nutrition, and child protection during the COVID-19 lockdown period held serious implications for the rights of children to healthcare, education, protection, and to protection against child labour. While there is indication that the COVID-19 pandemic posed threats to gains made in combating child labour, there is a paucity of empirical data to provide a clearer picture of the actual impact at the provincial level and local level, and to ascertain the forms and trends of child labour that could have emerged since the pandemic particularly in the agricultural sector. The absence of a rich knowledge base on the impact of the pandemic on child labour, particularly at the local level, makes it difficult to inform policy interventions to mitigate against child labour post the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Objective of the Consultancy Assignment

The proposed research will aim at strengthening the knowledge base on child labour in agriculture in South Africa to inform policy and intervention design.

In particular, the research will:

- Provide updated information on children's involvement in agriculture, its existence and possible magnitude, its gender dimension, and on the characteristics and conditions of work, recruitment patterns, main hazards and exposure to violence and socio-economic environment where child labour occurs;
- Identify knowledge gaps;
- Identify what are the main factors at family and community that push children into child labour in agriculture, and what are those that prevent it;
- Review national and provincial efforts to address child labour in agriculture, and identify best practices and remaining gaps;
- Identify national and provincial mechanisms that intervene (or could intervene) in fighting Child Labour;
- Produce, present, and disseminate a report on child labour in agriculture to provide guidance for policy design and implementation as well as action by stakeholders in the sector.

Preliminary research questions are listed in Annex 1, however, they will be finalized in conjunction with national stakeholders through a national consultation workshop, with the date to be determined.

⁴ Department of Health COVID-19 statistics <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>.

⁵ UNICEF, September 2022 <https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/press-releases>.

3. Methodology

The research will involve a review of available research on children involved in agriculture, including review and analysis of existing survey data, review of interventions related to child labour in agriculture and primary quantitative and qualitative data collection in the targeted provinces of KwaZulu Natal and the Western Cape.

The research will be based on the Rapid Assessment methodology developed jointly by ILO-IPEC and UNICEF⁶.

The research will adhere, as much as possible, to the definition of child labour based on national and international standards (see Panel 1. Below).

Panel 1. Child labour definition based on international labour standards

In accordance concerning child labour and international standards, as set by the 20th International Conference on Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in the Resolution to amend the 18th ICLS Resolution concerning statistics of child labour:⁷

- **Working children** are defined as children aged 5 to 17 years engaged in any activity to produce goods and to provide services for use by others or for own use.
- **Child labour** is work within the SNA production boundary performed by children below the minimum age and work, which, by its nature and circumstances in which is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (**hazardous work**). The minimum age shall be designated on the basis of national laws or regulations.
- **Hazardous work** by children is statistically defined in terms of the engagement of children in activities of a hazardous nature (designated hazardous industries and occupations), or as work under hazardous conditions, for example, long hours of work in tasks and duties which by themselves may or may not be of a hazardous nature for children (hazardous work conditions) or work at night. Designated hazardous industries and occupations shall be designated on the basis of national laws or regulations, where they exist. Similarly, long hours and night work may be determined on the basis of the national law.
- **Light work** is work that is not likely to be harmful to child's health or development and does not prejudice child's school attendance, participation in vocational orientation or training programmes, or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received. Light work shall be designated on the basis of national laws or regulations, where they exist.

The definitions above shall, however, be adapted to the national legislation as countries enjoy some flexibility concerning i) the minimum age of admission to employment; ii) the exception of some categories of work or employment and provisions for light work; iii) the list of hazardous occupation and activities.

4. Expected Outputs

The following are the expected outputs of the consultancy assignment;

I. Output 1: Background review and review of survey data

As a first step, a background review will take stock of available research, including survey data, on children involved in agriculture and will review interventions related to child labour in agriculture. The review will also involve an analysis of the sector (labour force composition, sector practices, working conditions and regulatory and oversight mechanisms), to understand its structure and functioning, the social context and the locations where child labour occurs, and of the stakeholders involved.

⁶ <http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=1819>.

⁷ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_647347.pdf.

The **review of the existing research** will involve considering research papers, studies and reports using quantitative, qualitative or mixed methodologies on child labour in agriculture, including those produced by research organizations, government authorities, social partners, civil society organizations and private sector institutions.

The review shall cover information regarding the presence and extent, characteristics and causes of child labour in agriculture. Within this framework, efforts shall be directed towards identifying characteristics and factors specific to children's engagement in agriculture, including poverty and lack of economic stability and of employment and livelihood opportunities, lack of education, cultural and social construct. Areas of focus will be gender dynamics.

All studies to be considered, whether qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods, must satisfy at least one of following criteria:

- Ensure the study design, methods, and procedures are sufficiently transparent and ensure an independent, balanced, and objective approach to the research;
- Provide the necessary information to reproduce or replicate the study;
- Provide sufficient description of the sample, the intervention, and any comparison groups;
- Use appropriate and reliable conceptualization and measurement of variables;
- Research submitted to a peer-review process;
- Adhere to quality standards for reporting (i.e., clear, cogent, complete, credible).

In line with the research questions in Annex A, the literature review will explore:

- Prevalence/presence of child labour in agriculture
- Background characteristics, aiming at identifying characteristics specific to children's involvement in agriculture
- Attitudes towards child labour in agriculture (of children, parents, employers and communities, government, civil society actors)
- Recruitment patterns/ practices, including the role of private/recruitment agencies and online recruitment platforms
- Work modality and working arrangements
- Time-intensity
- Remuneration and payment patterns (modality and flow of payment)
- Exposure to hazard, violence and abuse
- Health impact
- Impacts on school attendance, education, learning skills and future prospects

The **review of interventions** will build on recent existing national reviews of laws, policy and programs, a review of the policy and legal framework to eliminate child labour in agriculture will be conducted.

The review will analyse the national and provincial legislation relating to child labour aiming at identifying the operational definition of child labour in South Africa and specific provisions relative to the agricultural sector. The review will also consider both policies and programs directly tackling child labour in agriculture, as well as those with a bearing on it, such as education, social protection, active labour market policies and awareness raising.

The institutional framework will also be looked at in order to identify the role of key institutional actors and their capacities at all tiers of governance (national, provincial and district level), and their coordination.

As far as the **review of survey data** is concerned, the review will identify surveys containing information on child labour in agriculture. In particular, for each selected survey, the availability of information will be assessed with respect to:

- Extent of children working in agriculture (by age, sex, area of residence, ethnicity, migrant status, disability etc.). The identification of children working in agriculture should be done in accordance with relevant classifications such as: i) International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC rev. 3) (i.e., 2-, 3- or 4-digit) or national classification; ii) International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) or national classification and/or iii) any other relevant question in the questionnaire that allows an unambiguous identification of children working in this specific sector. The specific protocol for identifying children in each survey shall be clearly outlined.
- Characteristics of working children:
 - a) *Background characteristics* (age, sex, residence, ethnicity, migrant status, etc.);
 - b) *production and/or work modality* (family subsistence agriculture, small and medium-size family farms, large-scale commercial agricultural enterprises, etc.);
 - c) *seasonality* (periods during year during which work is concentrated);
 - d) *time intensity* (average weekly working hours);
 - e) *exposure to hazards* (pesticides, heavy loads, long hours, dangerous machinery, etc.);
 - f) *health impact* (reported work-related ill-health and injury, etc.);
 - g) *school attendance* (working only, working and studying); and
 - h) *educational impact* (late entry, attendance, school survival, grade for age, etc.).

An inventory will be created in the form of a matrix to present the information contained in the surveys identified. The matrix will be organised by variable and survey type.

II. Output 2. Analysis of survey data

Pending the availability of information, one survey will then be selected in consultation with ILO to develop a set of statistics as follows:

- The overall prevalence of children's work and child labour in agriculture (number and percentage of total children's population);
- Children's work and child labour in agriculture disaggregated by age, gender, ethnicity, area and region of residence (number and percentage of total children's population);
- Children's work and child labour in agriculture disaggregated by occupation/tasks;
- Children's work and child labour in agriculture disaggregated production and/or work modality (family subsistence agriculture, small and medium-size family farms, large-scale commercial agricultural enterprises, etc.);
- Exposure to hazards of children working in the agriculture (pesticides, heavy loads, long hours, dangerous machinery, etc.); comparing the nature of hazards experienced by girls and boys in this context;
- Time intensity (average weekly working hours);
- Children's work and child labour in agriculture by school attendance status (working only, working and studying) and educational impact (late entry, attendance, school survival, grade for age, etc.).

III. Output 3. Primary qualitative data collection

Key-informants' interviews and interviews with children and parents will provide in-depth information on the characteristics of the work performed by children involved in agriculture, the socio-economic and cultural factors behind child labour, the characteristics of the agricultural sector and their influence on child labour, and the characteristics and effectiveness of the institutional response in preventing and eliminating child labour.

Qualitative tools will include, but not limit to, in-depth interviews or focus group discussions with key informants, children and their parents.

In particular, qualitative methods will aim at:

- Gathering additional information on the availability of data and research on child labour in in agriculture
- Gathering a better understanding of the factors affecting child labour in agriculture both from the demand (employers/contractors) and the supply (parents and children) side:
 - Interviews with children working in agriculture will aim at understanding the activities performed by children and the working conditions, the nature of the children's relationship with their employers, the extent and nature of direct surveillance of children by employers/contractors, exposure to dangers and hazards, the interplay of child labour in in agriculture with school attendance, and the reasons for involvement in agricultural work.
 - Interviews with employers/contractors will aim at building a better understanding of the factors influencing the demand of child work: interviews will therefore target both employers/contractors resorting to children's work/child labour and employers who do not resort to children's work/child labour.
 - Interviews with parents will aim at understanding households' dynamics regarding children's involvement in agriculture.
- Gathering additional information on interventions addressed to eliminate child labour in agriculture (both national and provincial; as well as bilateral project, etc....)
- Collecting information on relevant academic, research centres with interest and on-going research on child labour (in particular at provincial levels)
- Obtain inputs from the stakeholders on perceived critical knowledge gaps to tackle child labour in in agriculture.

Qualitative methods will target key informants, which will be identified through the background research. Guiding questions for their identifications are:

- Who are the main actors involved in in agriculture (parents, recruitment agencies, etc.)?
- Which institutions (government institutions, employer's and workers' organizations, recruiting agencies, NGO, international organizations, etc.) are involved in the elimination of child labour in in agriculture?
- Which institutions (government institutions, NGOs, international organizations, etc.) are involved in agriculture?

A sub-set of stakeholders will be selected, in close consultation with the ILO Country Office and the Research and Evaluation Unit (Fundamentals, ILO HQ), as key informants.

IV. Output 4. Report: Child Labour in Agriculture in South Africa

Building on the background review and on the interviews with key informants, a report will be developed on children's involvement in agriculture, addressing the research questions included in Annex A. The final report will not exceed 40 pages, excluding annexes.

It is suggested to structure the report around the following themes:

- Executive summary
- Introduction
- The agricultural sector in South Africa
- Child labour in agriculture in South Africa: emphasis shall be on factors specific to children's involvement in agriculture, including both demand and supply side, and on the gender dimension of child labour in agriculture.
- Government's law and interventions with implications for child labour in agriculture
- Conclusions, including key data gaps hampering interventions and recommendations for eliminating child labour in agriculture.

5. Ethical Considerations

Conducting research on child labour calls for serious ethical considerations to protect interviewees and interviewers, as outlined in the ILO Ethical considerations when conducting research on children in the worst forms of child labour.⁸ Given the current circumstances, measures relating to the COVID pandemic are particularly relevant.

Participants should not be harmed in any way as a result of their participation. To this end, ethical principles will be respected during the conduct of the study. Also, the participant's consent will be obtained before the questionnaire is administered. Under no circumstances will the individual economic or financial data collected be used for tax, economic or social control purposes, nor for research purposes by administrative, political, police, military or judicial authorities. All members of the collection team will undertake measures to keep the information collected confidential.

The final data will also be anonymised to prevent individual information from being identifiable.

6. Workplan

Consultation with national stakeholders both at national and provincial levels (KZN and W.C) and identification of priority research questions	
Development of Terms of reference for consultant	
Background research (consultant/research organization)	
Research design (consultant/research organization in consultation with ILO)	

⁸ ILO (2003). Ethical considerations when conducting research on children in the worst forms of child labour.

Stakeholder consultation: presentation of initial results from the background research and proposed research design	
Data collection (qualitative and quantitative)	
Draft report	
Validation workshop	
Finalization of the report and dissemination	

ANNEX I. CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE: PRELIMINARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Prevalence

What is the prevalence of child labour and hazardous work in agriculture in South Africa (national or sub-national level)?

Characteristics of the agricultural sector

1. What are the characteristics of the agricultural sector in South Africa? What is the size of the workforce involved in the sector and what are its characteristics?
2. What are the recruitment practices in the sector? How are children recruited?
3. What are the characteristics and attitudes of the employers resorting to child labour?

Background characteristics of households with children involved in agriculture

4. What are the background characteristics of the households whose children are involved in agriculture in South Africa?
 - 4.1. Socio-demographic profile: who is affected by child labour? What are their socio-demographic characteristics (age, sex, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-demographic variables)?
 - 4.2. Areas and communities: In what regions/areas of the country are children engaged in child work, child labour and/or hazardous work in agriculture? What are the characteristics of these regions/areas (poverty, inequality access to basic service, access to social services, etc.)? Which communities are most affected by child labour? What are their characteristics?
 - 4.3. Migration dynamics: Are there migration dynamics related to children's involvement in agriculture? Do children engaged in agriculture work in regions where they normally live? Have children travelled/migrated from other regions or other countries? Do children travel with their families? Are they unaccompanied?
5. What are the factors (social, economic, and cultural, industry) that push/prevent children to work in agriculture?
6. Gender dimension of child labour: Are male and female children equally involved in child labour and agriculture?

Characteristics of the work performed by children in agriculture

7. What type of work do children do children involved in agriculture?
 - 7.1. **Task:** What type of tasks do children perform? What is the degree, if any, of gender specialisation? How do children's tasks differ from those of adult workers?
 - 7.2. **Payment:** what is the payment scheme? Are children paid for their work? How (cash, in kind, as part of the parent salary)? How much do children earn? Is it below the minimum wage?
 - 7.3. **Duration and time:** How many hours do children engage work in agriculture? At what times of day and week do they work? (Morning/ afternoon/night; school day/weekend)?
 - 7.4. **Exposure to hazards and abuse:** What is the children's exposure to physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse in the workplace?
 - 7.5. **Threat or menace of penalty:** Are children working under the threat or menace of penalty?
 - 7.6. What **occupational safety and health issues** (injuries and illnesses) have resulted from children's involvement in these tasks?
 - 7.7. **Working arrangements:** What is the degree of formality of the work children perform?
 - 7.8. **Gender dimension of child labour:** How girls' tasks differ from those of male children? Are male and female children equally involved in household chores?

Interplay with education

8. What is the interplay between child labour in agriculture and education?
 - 8.1. What is the school attendance and school performance (attendance, highest level of education attained, drop out, repetition) of children involved in agriculture?
 - 8.2. What are the barriers and challenges (from the demand and supply sides) that children face in accessing education?
 - 8.3. Are male and female children equally attending and benefiting from school?

Interplay with social development

9. What is the interplay between child labour in agriculture and social development?
 - 9.1. Do children engaged in child labour in agriculture participate in socially valuable activities? Are they stigmatized or socially excluded? Do they establish positive peer relations?
 - 9.2. Are children engaged in child work/child labour in agriculture isolated or separated from their family?

Attitudes, social acceptance and awareness

10. What is the attitude towards child labour in agriculture?
 - 10.1. What is the level of awareness about child labour in agriculture? What is the attitude towards child labour in agriculture of parents, employers/exploiter, recruiters, communities, local and national governments, civil society organizations? Does awareness of child labour in agriculture influence the supply (parents) and the demand (employers/contractors) of children in agriculture? Is the attitude towards child labour/involvement in work and education different for girls and boys?
 - 10.2. Does media influence attitudes towards child labour in agriculture?
 - 10.3. What is the level of awareness of policies with a bearing on children involved in agriculture and of operational grievance mechanisms among parents and children?

ASSESSING THE NATIONAL RESPONSE TO CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE

Government efforts

11. What government efforts may affect child labour in agriculture?
 - 11.1. Legal framework: what is the legal framework relative to child labour? Does national legislation contain provisions relevant to child labour in agriculture?
 - 11.2. Enforcement: What enforcement and monitoring mechanisms exist to ensure children do not work in agriculture? How effective is the labour inspection in enforcing the law on child labour? Do labour inspectors come to these areas? Target? Routine? Unannounced? What are the protocols of action in case they find children?
 - 11.3. Grievance mechanisms: do grievance mechanisms exist? How effective are they with respect to children involved in agriculture?
 - 11.4. Which policies affect child labour in agriculture?
 - 11.4.1. Education: are schools available in the regions/areas where children involved in agriculture can be found? Are there education interventions (early education, interventions to increase school access and quality, remedial education and vocational training) in those regions/areas? Are there education interventions specifically targeting migrant children? Do education interventions contain specific provisions for migrant children?
 - 11.4.2. Social protection: are there social protection programs/interventions in the target areas? Do households whose children are involved in agriculture have access to those social

protection programs? Do migrant households/children access social protection interventions?

- 11.4.3. Referral mechanisms: Are there social services children can be referred to? How effective are these services in addressing the root causes of child labour, withdrawing children from child labour (including moving to safe work children above the minimum age), reintegrating them into education and remediating the effects of child labour?
- 11.4.4. Migration policies: are there policies aiming at promoting the integration of migrants (for example, language skills training, transfers of professional credentials, protection against discrimination)?
- 11.4.5. Did national efforts to tackle child labour peak/earn momentum following South Africa's access to the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences?
- 11.4.6. As a result of the direct and indirect actions, have children shifted to other types of work or other sectors?
- 11.4.7. What are the community /societal level mechanisms available (if any) to bring the issue to light?
- 11.4.8. Are there mechanisms in place to ensure that accurate data on child labour (or lack thereof) are available?