

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR RESEARCH CONSULTANT

Position Title: Research Consultancy - NGO Transitions to Sustainable, Investment-Ready Social Ventures in East, West & Southern Africa

Organisation Type: Firm

Firm: Contract

Location: Remote with presence or networks in Lagos, Nigeria | Johannesburg, South Africa | Nairobi, Kenya

Reports To: Programme Manager, AVPA

Deadline: 20 February 2026

1. About AVPA

The African Venture Philanthropy Alliance (www.avpa.africa) is a unique Pan-African network of social investors working together to increase the flow of capital into African social investments and ensure its effective use for maximum social impact. Broadly, AVPA aims to address the SDG financing gap on the continent by not only mobilising more philanthropic capital but also attracting private capital into social investments. We collaborate with various social investors deploying grants, debt, and equity (the full spectrum of capital) into social investments. These include foundations, corporations, family offices, individual philanthropists, angel investors, impact fund managers, PE & VC funds, bilateral and multilateral donors, governments, DFI, and non-financial service providers. Our network strives to enhance and apply innovative finance approaches and models.

AVPA has its headquarters in Nairobi, with regional offices in Johannesburg and Lagos. AVPA is aligned with thriving sister networks in Europe (Impact Europe), Latin America (Latimpacto), and Asia (AVPN), as well as the newly launched Arab Impact Network, thereby forming a dynamic global force for social impact.

2. Background

AVPA is commissioning a research assignment to generate high-quality, ecosystem-level evidence on how African NGOs transition from grant-dependent models to sustainable, investment-ready social ventures capable of attracting blended finance and social impact investment.

The research will focus on Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa and will directly inform AVPA's ecosystem-building strategy, learning agenda, and broader sector practice. The assignment aligns with AVPA's emphasis on systems change, learning, and evidence-informed philanthropy, and AVPA's mandate to strengthen the African social investment ecosystem through credible research, convening, and knowledge dissemination.

3. Objectives

The goal of this assignment is to support African NGOs to transition from grant-reliant models to sustainable, investment-ready social ventures that can attract catalytic capital and drive scalable impact. The consultant is expected to design and deliver a rigorous, multi-country, mixed-methods research programme that:

- Map the current state of impact investing adoption across Africa's nonprofit sector
- Identify successful transition pathways and their enabling factors
- Analyse challenges limiting NGOs from becoming investment-ready, as well as facilitating factors.

4. Scope of Work

The consultant will be responsible for the full research lifecycle, including design, data collection, analysis, validation, synthesis, and dissemination. Work must comply with AVPA standards on ecosystem relevance, practitioner utility, and high-quality knowledge products. Through comprehensive landscape analysis, the consultant will:

- Builds credible evidence on NGO transition pathways to blended finance and SII
- Identifies barriers, enablers, and readiness factors at organisational and ecosystem levels
- Produces actionable insights for NGOs, funders, intermediaries, and policymakers
- Strengthens peer learning and cross-regional knowledge exchange within the African social investment ecosystem

A. Desk Review and Literature Mapping

- Survey existing research, avoiding duplication while identifying knowledge gaps.
- Focus on sectors such as health, education, climate change and economic development, and assess how the funding landscape has evolved across different countries.

B. Baseline Mapping

- Develop a digital survey to map the readiness and current positioning of NGOs in their SII journey.
- Segment findings by country and sector to identify patterns, opportunities, and constraints.

C. Case Studies: Select **9–12 organisations** across the two regions (**3–4 per region**) to document:

- The catalysts and barriers for transition.
- Innovations in financing (e.g., impact bonds, blended finance).
- Institutional and leadership dynamics.
- Lessons learned from both successes and failures.

D. Stakeholder Interviews

- These will entail in-person and telephonic interviews with impact investors, ecosystem actors, entrepreneurs, and business managers operating in Africa. In-person interviews will be conducted in the primary focus regions of East Africa and Southern Africa.

E. Workshops & Validation Sessions

- Organise peer-to-peer learning and validation sessions to test and refine the research findings with local actors. These sessions will be conducted through a webinar and during regional gatherings in East Africa and Southern Africa. The purpose is to ensure that the analysis reflects on-the-ground realities, incorporates diverse perspectives, and builds ownership of the recommendations among stakeholders.

5. Activities and Deliverables

BASELINE RESEARCH & SURVEY

- **Activity 1.1.1:** Design, pilot, and deploy a digital survey targeting NGOs in Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa.
Deliverable: Finalised survey tool, pilot report, and deployment plan with monitoring protocol.
- **Activity 1.1.2:** Analyse survey data (quantitative & qualitative) and produce a synthesis brief.
Deliverable: Data analysis report and synthesis brief highlighting readiness factors, barriers, and enablers.

CASE STUDY DEVELOPMENT

- **Activity 1.2.1:** Select and engage 9-12 case study NGOs across regions and transition stages.
Deliverable: Case study selection framework and participation agreements.

- **Activity 1.2.2:** Conduct in-depth interviews and document case studies (successes & failures). *Deliverable:* Draft case study reports (full narratives and bilingual English/French summaries).

STAKEHOLDER VALIDATION & CONVENING

- **Activity 1.3.1:** Design and facilitate virtual convening to validate insights with stakeholders. *Deliverable:* Convening report with feedback and refined recommendations.
- **Activity 1.3.2:** Curate and deliver AVPA conference panel on NGO transition strategies. *Deliverable:* Panel session narrative, speaker briefs, and summary takeaways.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- **Activity 2.1.1:** Develop dissemination materials (executive summaries, slide decks, infographics, visual briefs) in English and French. *Deliverable:* Suite of tailored knowledge assets for NGOs, funders, policymakers, and intermediaries.
- **Activity 2.3.1:** Draft strategic and policy briefs with actionable recommendations. *Deliverable:* 3–4 tailored briefs for different audiences.

PEER LEARNING & DISSEMINATION

- **Activity 2.2.1:** Coordinate 3 regional peer learning sessions (East, West, Southern Africa). *Deliverable:* Session designs, facilitation guides, and participation lists.
- **Activity 2.2.2:** Capture and disseminate peer learning insights via digital content. *Deliverable:* Blog posts, podcast episodes, or short videos summarising learnings.
- **Activity 2.1.2:** Distribute findings via AVPA and partner channels, track engagement. *Deliverable:* Distribution report with engagement metrics.

FINAL REPORTING & HANDOVER

- **Activity 2.3.2:** Finalise and launch bilingual comprehensive research report. *Deliverable:* Published research report (English/French) and launch campaign plan.
- **Activity:** Feed insights into AVPA's programming strategy. *Deliverable:* Strategic memo with recommendations for AVPA's future programming.

6. Team competencies and qualifications

- Proven expertise in mixed-methods research: survey design, case study development, qualitative interviewing, and data synthesis.
- Advanced degree (Master's or PhD) in Development Studies, Economics, Public Policy, Finance, or related field.
- Minimum 10 years' experience in applied research on development finance, impact investing, or NGO sustainability.
- Demonstrated experience delivering multi-country African research assignments
- Strong understanding of blended finance, SII, and NGO operating models.
- Proven track record producing policy- and practitioner-facing knowledge products
- Excellent analytical writing skills in English; French proficiency strongly preferred
- Proficiency in data analysis tools (e.g., SPSS, NVivo, Dedoose).
- Experience with digital survey platforms and data visualisation tools.
- Ability to produce bilingual (English/French) outputs.
- Deep knowledge of social investment ecosystems in East, West, and Southern Africa.
- Existing networks with African NGOs, funders, intermediaries, and policymakers.

7. Consultancy Duration

Between Feb 22, 2026, to May 22, 2026.

8. Application Requirements

Interested consultants/firms should submit:

- Technical proposal (not exceeding 10 pages):
 - Summary/profile of the consulting firm or individual consultant, including experience with similar research.
 - CV of key team members.
 - Proposed methodology and work plan aligned with milestones.
- Financial proposal/ Quotation
 - Budget proposal including daily rate, cost breakdown, and estimated total in USD. *(Any cost submitted in local currency shall be converted into USD using the prevailing rates for ease of comparison.)*

9. How to Apply

- Interested and qualifying candidates are to complete the online application form here: [AVPA Research Consultant](#)
- Please submit a soft copy (by email) of your Expression of Interest to learning@avpa.africa with the subject line: **Research Consultant-NGO Transitions to Sustainable Investing** on or before **20th February 2026**.
- We appreciate the time and effort invested in each submission. Please note that only shortlisted firms will be contacted.

10. Misrepresentation

The process of AVPA making its decision is largely reliant upon the information supplied by the bidder. Should it be found that aspects of such information are incomplete, untrue, or misleading, AVPA reserves the right to terminate or disqualify the bidder.

ANNEX 1: Evaluation and Scoring Matrix

Proposals will be evaluated using a Quality-and-Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) method, consistent with AVPA procurement standards.

A. Technical Proposal – 80 Points

Criteria	Description	Score
Understanding of Assignment	Demonstrated understanding of objectives, scope, and ecosystem context	15
Methodology and Approach	Rigour, appropriateness of mixed methods, sampling, and analysis plan	25
Relevant Experience	Proven experience in similar multi-country, finance/ecosystem research	20
Team Composition	Qualifications and roles of key personnel	10
Knowledge Translation	Ability to produce policy- and practitioner-oriented outputs	10
Total Technical Score		80

Minimum technical threshold for financial evaluation: 60/80.

B. Financial Proposal – 20 Points

Criteria	Description	Score
Cost Competitiveness	Value for money and cost realism	15
Budget Clarity	Transparency and alignment with deliverables	5
Total Financial Score		20

Final Score = Technical Score (80%) + Financial Score (20%)