

Terms of Reference to Develop an End-to-End Curriculum Avocado Production, Aggregation and Export to China

Duty Station: Kenya

Type of Contract: Consultancy: Firm or Individual consultant

Reports to: SAF-Africa's China–Africa Ag Value Chain Opportunities Project
Coordinator

Closing Date for Proposal Submissions: 16 October 2026

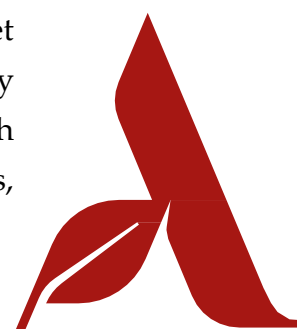
Estimated Duration: 2 months

1. Background and Overview

The China–Africa Agricultural Value Chain Opportunities Project is an investment by the Gates Foundation designed to analyze and unlock sustainable Africa-China agricultural partnerships, with a focus on crop value chains that benefit smallholder farmers in Kenya and Tanzania. The investment supports inclusive agricultural transformation (IAT) objectives while leveraging the rapid growth of China's agricultural import market and is implemented by the Sustainable Agriculture Foundation – Africa (SAF-Africa).

China's agricultural imports reached USD 236.06 billion in 2022, a year-on-year increase of 35.1 percent, and were projected to reach approximately USD 260 billion in 2023. Imports from Africa totalled approximately USD 5.2 billion in 2022, with growth of roughly 25 percent expected in 2023. This project was designed to help ensure that Kenyan and Tanzanian smallholder farmers can capture a meaningful and sustainable share of this growth, with a specific 'deep-dive' focus on **cassava**, avocado, and dried red chili peppers.

The project was structured in four interlinked phases, moving deliberately from evidence generation to stakeholder dialogue to direct market engagement: (1) mapping of export-oriented crops and China's regulatory requirements in both Kenya and Tanzania; (2) in-depth market research covering production dynamics, farmer segmentation, export readiness,



and return on investment (ROI) for smallholders; (3) national stakeholder discussion forums in Nairobi, Kenya and Dodoma, Tanzania to validate findings and build alignment around practical next steps; and (4) a China study tour and post-tour exporters' engagement connecting Kenyan and Tanzanian delegates to Chinese Market.

2. Objectives of the Assignment

Overall objective: To design, develop, validate and package a practical, competency-based, end-to-end training curriculum that equips **avocado** smallholder farmers, aggregators, packhouse operators and exporters with the knowledge and skills needed to produce, aggregate and export avocado to China in full compliance with regulatory and buyer requirements.

Specific objectives:

1. Consolidate findings and requirements from SAF-Africa's mapping study, market research, stakeholder forums and China study tour, together with current GACC, TPHPA/KEPHIS (or equivalent national authority) and Chinese buyer requirements, into one coherent curriculum framework.
2. Develop three integrated curriculum modules covering (i) production/agronomy, (ii) aggregation and post-harvest handling, and (iii) export readiness and market access to China, plus cross-cutting themes (traceability, business literacy, climate resilience, gender and youth inclusion). Ensure incorporation of case studies and modular practical assignments and building traceability throughout the curriculum in the different modules. The modules should be highly practical rather than lecture heavy content.
3. Tier curriculum content and delivery formats to different audiences: smallholder farmers, farmer groups/cooperatives, aggregators/packhouse operators, and exporter/export-company staff.
4. Produce a complete training package: facilitator/trainer guide, participant handbook, visual job aids, and pre/post assessment tools, in both print-ready and digital formats and in relevant local languages.
5. Design and deliver a Training-of-Trainers (ToT) component so the curriculum can be rolled out at scale by SAF-Africa, county/regional extension staff, and partner associations.
6. Pilot-test the curriculum with a representative sample of farmers, aggregators and exporters, and refine it based on feedback.



7. Package the final curriculum for scale-up, including a rollout and adaptation plan for other SAF-Africa focus countries (e.g. Tanzania) and, where relevant, other export crops.

3. Scope of Work

The consultant/consulting firm will:

1. Desk review of all relevant SAF-Africa reports and studies, plus current China GACC import regulations, national phytosanitary authority requirements, and available Chinese buyer specifications (e.g. JWM quality requirements).
2. Training needs assessment, including consultations with smallholder farmers, farmer groups, aggregators, packhouse operators, exporters, government regulators (phytosanitary/customs authorities), and industry associations (e.g. TAHA, ASTA, or Kenyan equivalents), to validate content gaps and confirm audience-specific needs.
3. Curriculum design, structuring content into the three core modules (Section 4) using adult-learning and competency-based instructional design principles.
4. Development of training materials: facilitator/trainer guide, participant manual/handbook, visual aids (posters, illustrated job cards, checklists), video/digital content where appropriate, and assessment/evaluation tools (pre-test, post-test, practical skills checklist).
5. Development of a Training-of-Trainers (ToT) module to prepare extension officers, association staff and lead farmers to cascade the curriculum.
6. Stakeholder validation workshop to review the draft curriculum with SAF-Africa, regulators and representative value-chain actors.
7. Pilot delivery of the curriculum to a sample group of farmers/aggregators/exporters, with structured feedback collection.
8. Finalization and handover of the complete curriculum package (print-ready, digital, and ToT-ready versions) together with a rollout/scale-up plan.
9. (Optional/if requested) Development of a simple monitoring and evaluation framework to track training reach, knowledge/skills gains, and downstream export-readiness outcomes.

4. Curriculum Content Outline

The curriculum must cover, at minimum, the following three modules and cross-cutting themes. The consultant may propose refinements based



on the training needs assessment but must retain full coverage of China-specific compliance content.

Module 1: Avocado Production for Export

- Orchard establishment: site selection, certified/disease-free seedlings, approved varieties (Hass, Fuerte, Pinkerton)
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), including Global G.A.P. requirements
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM), with focus on quarantine pests of concern to China (e.g. fruit flies, false codling moth)
- Fertilizer and pesticide management, spray records, and Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) compliance
- Irrigation, soil health and climate-resilient orchard management
- Harvest maturity determination and dry-matter testing standards
- On-farm record-keeping and traceability basics

Module 2: Aggregation, Post-Harvest Handling and Processing

- Aggregation models: collection centers, farmer group/cooperative organization, out-grower schemes
- Grading, sorting and sizing to export standards
- Packhouse operations, hygiene, and registration with the national phytosanitary authority and GACC
- Cold chain management: pre-cooling, cold storage, temperature-controlled transport
- Packaging and labelling requirements (country/farm/packhouse of origin, batch and traceability codes)
- Quality assurance, defect management and rejection-cause analysis
- Introduction to value addition (avocado oil, ready-to-eat/ripened fruit, purée)

Module 3: Export Readiness and Market Access to China

- Regulatory framework: the bilateral phytosanitary protocol, GACC exporter/farm/packhouse registration, traceability codes, fumigation and cold-treatment requirements
- Required export documentation: phytosanitary certificate, certificate of origin, export permit, quality/radioactivity analysis certificates



- Logistics and shipping: cold chain in transit, freight options, lead times, and planning around the Chinese New Year demand window (February–March)
- Understanding Chinese buyers and distribution systems: wholesale markets, supermarket chains, e-commerce and social-commerce channels
- Commercial practice: contracts, price negotiation, risk and cost allocation, and the specific complexities of consolidated/multi-exporter shipments
- Introduction to Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) principles and trade-facilitation benefits
- Using market intelligence and buyer feedback to continuously improve quality and supply reliability

Cross-Cutting Themes (integrated across all modules)

- Basic business and financial literacy for smallholders and aggregators
- Gender and youth inclusion in export value chains
- Climate-smart agricultural practices
- Digital tools for traceability, record-keeping and market information

5. Target Beneficiaries

Audience	Primary curriculum focus
Smallholder avocado farmers (individual and group-based)	Module 1 (Production), with basic aggregation and compliance awareness
Farmer groups, cooperatives and out-grower schemes	Modules 1 and 2
Aggregators and packhouse owners/operators	Module 2, with export-documentation awareness
Exporters and export-company staff	Module 3, with production/aggregation quality-standard awareness
Extension officers, association staff and lead farmers (Training of Trainers)	All modules, at trainer depth
Relevant government regulatory staff (as resource persons/co-facilitators)	Module 3 (compliance content validation)

The curriculum should primarily target Kenya's avocado-producing counties (e.g. Murang'a, Kiambu, Nyeri and other Mt Kenya/Rift Valley producing areas) and be designed for straightforward adaptation to Tanzania's avocado-producing regions (Njombe, Mbeya, Kilimanjaro, Iringa, Songwe).

Indicative Budget: USD 6,000



6. Methodology and Approach

The assignment will follow a six-phase approach:

1. Inception – review of ToR, confirmation of methodology and work plan with SAF-Africa.
2. Desk review and training needs assessment – review of SAF-Africa reports and China/GACC regulatory documents, plus field/virtual consultations with farmers, aggregators, exporters and regulators.
3. Curriculum drafting – development of the modular framework and full content, applying adult-learning (andragogy) principles: participatory, practice-oriented, tiered to literacy levels, and gender-responsive.
4. Stakeholder validation – review workshop with SAF-Africa and representative stakeholders including farmers, cooperatives, aggregators, packhouses, exporters, government regulators and technical experts; incorporation of feedback.
5. Finalization and handover – production of print-ready and digital versions, translation into relevant local languages, and delivery of a Training-of-Trainer's session.

Materials should be designed for blended delivery (in-person plus digital/print), suitable for low-connectivity rural settings, and structured so that SAF-Africa's own staff and partner trainers can deliver them without ongoing consultant support.

7. Deliverables and Timeline

#	Deliverable	Indicative timing
1	Inception report and detailed work plan	Week 1 (by 22 Oct 2026)
2	Training needs assessment report (desk review + consultations)	Week 2
3	Draft curriculum framework and module outlines	Week 3
4	Full draft curriculum: all 3 modules, facilitator guide, participant handbook, assessment tools	Week 5
5	Stakeholder validation workshop and workshop report	Week 6
6	Pilot training delivery and pilot feedback report	Week 7
7	Revised, final curriculum package (print-ready-digital versions)	Week 8
8	Training-of-Trainers (ToT) session and rollout/scale-up plan	Week 8

8. Consultant Qualifications and Team Composition

The assignment may be undertaken by a firm or a consultant-led team.

The proposed team should collectively demonstrate:



- Proven experience designing agricultural training curricula and materials, ideally for horticultural/export value chains, using adult-learning/instructional-design methods;
- Direct experience with avocado (or comparable horticultural export crop) production, post-harvest handling and export compliance;
- Working knowledge of China's import requirements (GACC registration, phytosanitary protocols, MRLs, traceability) or demonstrated ability to research and translate these into training content;
- Familiarity with Kenyan and/or Tanzanian smallholder farming systems and value chain actors.

Suggested team composition:

Lead Consultant / Curriculum Design Specialist – advanced degree in agriculture, agribusiness, agricultural economics or education; minimum 10 years' relevant experience; overall responsibility for curriculum design and quality.

Horticulture/Agronomy Specialist – technical expertise in avocado production, GAP and IPM.

Post-Harvest and Cold Chain Specialist – expertise in aggregation, grading, packhouse operations and cold chain management.

Export/Trade Compliance Specialist – expertise in GACC/phytosanitary regulations, export documentation, and ideally direct China-market experience.

Training/Adult Education Specialist – responsible for instructional design, facilitator guide development and ToT design.

Proficiency in English is required; capacity to develop or adapt materials in Kiswahili (and other relevant local languages) is an advantage.

9. Management, Coordination and Reporting

The consultant will report to the SAF-Africa Project Coordinator for the China–Africa Agricultural Value Chain Opportunities, who will coordinate SAF-Africa's technical review and sign-off at each deliverable stage.

The consultant is expected to coordinate closely with:

- The relevant national phytosanitary/plant health authority (e.g. KEPHIS), to validate all compliance content;



- Industry associations who have direct access to farmer and exporter networks;
- SAF-Africa's team, to ensure alignment with findings from the mapping study, market research, stakeholder forums and China study tour.

Progress will be tracked through milestone-based deliverable reviews (Section 7) and regular check-in meetings (proposed: bi-weekly). All curriculum materials, data collected, and intellectual property produced under this assignment will vest in SAF-Africa.

10. Duration and Indicative Budget

Duration: 2 months, from 22nd October 2026, inclusive of pilot testing and ToT delivery.

Budget: Bidders should propose a detailed, itemized budget covering personnel (by role and level of effort), field consultation/travel costs, workshop and pilot-training costs, materials production (design, printing, translation), and any other direct costs.

Proposed payment schedule (milestone-based, to be confirmed at contracting):

Milestone	% of contract value
1. Signing / inception report approval	20%
2. Approval of full draft curriculum (Deliverable 4)	30%
3. Approval of validated and pilot-tested curriculum (Deliverables 5–6)	30%
4. Final handover and ToT delivery (Deliverables 7–8)	20%

11. Evaluation Criteria for Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated using a combined technical and financial scoring method:

Criterion	Weight
1. Technical proposal	70%
2. Understanding of the ToR and quality of proposed methodology	20%
3. Team composition, qualifications and relevant experience	25%
4. Demonstrated prior experience in curriculum/training material development and/or China-market export compliance	15%
5. Realism and clarity of work plan and timeline	10%
6. Financial proposal	30%

Bidders must meet minimum qualification thresholds (Section 8), provide at least two references or samples of comparable prior work, and submit a technical and financial proposal.



Submissions:

Interested bidders should submit a technical and financial proposal electronically to **info@saf-africa.org** with the subject "**ToR: Avocado Export-to-China Curriculum Consultancy**" in the subject line, by **16 October 2026**.

