Terms of Reference: recruitment of a consultant for the development of an AI-powered image content recognition tool.

July 2025

BACKGROUND TO ICI

Established in 2002, the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) is a non-profit foundation set up to help tackle child labour and forced labour in cocoa-growing communities. ICI works with the cocoa industry, civil society and national governments in cocoa-producing countries to promote child rights and workers' rights.

CONSULTANCY OUTLINE

ICI is seeking a consultant to develop an AI-powered image content recognition solution to process the data of standardized paper forms.

Country	Remote consultancy. The consultant will be required to interact with ICI team members based in Geneva, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, which requires availability during working hours in the GMT and CET time zones.
General background	ICI's vision is of thriving cocoa-growing communities within a dignified, sustainable and responsibly managed cocoa supply chain, where child rights and human rights are protected and respected, and where child labour and forced labour have been eliminated.
	As part of its efforts to tackle child labour and forced labour in the cocoa supply chain, ICI regularly involves and relies on community structures and members to conduct interventions. For practical reasons, the **standardized tools used in this context by community members are on paper**, which helps tackle common limitations (e.g., limited access to smartphones or tablets, weak internet connection), but makes it more **difficult to monitor and learn from the activities, in the absence of an agile digital data workflow**.
	With the development of AI-based technologies, less resource intensive solutions are emerging which allow to process standardized, paper-based forms into structured databases.
	To support its efforts and community-based initiatives, ICI is seeking to develop such a workflow, which could adapt to several contexts of digitalization and forms (see examples below).

Examples of community-led activities	*Initiative 1* As an illustration of the above, ICI has been testing the use of **community-based grievance mechanisms** in Ghana since 2022. Community-based grievance mechanisms are put in place through effective community-level structures such as Community Labour Protection Committees. These are groups of trained adult volunteers who raise awareness about labour rights, listen to grievances reported by workers and employers and work to resolve these grievances (for more information, please consult this document). To continue improving committees' actions, ICI has recently developed a standard workbook with specific data collection and grievance recording forms based on paper. The challenge is to collect data from these forms both reliably and in a timely manner, to monitor activities and grievances received, generate learning and allow for this type of intervention to be scaled up. *Initiative 2* In a context where child labour is present in 55% of the households of the cocoa communities in Ghana, ICI initiated a project to **strengthen adults' protective and nurturing skills** and to build local alliances of supportive actors to protect children from child labour and improve child development outcomes, such as learning and wellbeing. In this context, primary school teachers were trained to conduct simple activities with pupils in the classroom, including to assess time children spend on different activities, including work, on a quarterly basis, by using a paper-based tool called the "calendar". Data from these calendars is used to inform the community on progress made in the fight against child labour and on priority actions to be taken. The challenge is, again, to collect data from these forms both reliably and in a timely manner, to monitor activities, learn and allow for this type of intervention to be scaled up.
Objective	The objective of this consultancy is to develop a user-friendly and efficient secured workflow based on existing and well-established AI solutions, to allow for the digitalization of the key information of structured and standardized paper forms, in a developing country context. While the developed solution will be tested first on the two abovementioned initiatives, ultimately, the aim will be to adapt and roll it out in other similar interventions.
Time Frame	September/October – December 2025 (tentative)
Specific Objectives	1. Work closely with ICI's IT, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Programme teams to clearly identify all technical, operational, and contextual needs from end-users (community members and ICI staff). 2. Identify the relevant technology amongst the existing well-established solutions and undertake a quick risk assessment to identify and document potential technological, operational, or context-specific risks. 3. Develop and test a process allowing users to create secured workflows allowing to:

Specific Objectives	*a.* Recognize the target information contained in each paper form (structure of the document, QR codes, geometrical figures, boxes, text)
	  b. Capture and interpret this information (e.g. a checked box means the response to this question is "yes", a circle means that the child was at school, this column refers to activities that happened on Monday…)
	  c. Determine specific constraints (internet connectivity, literacy levels, hardware limitations) affecting the solution's deployment
	  d. Process this information into a structured database.
	4. Design workflows to ensure confidentiality and secure handling of personal data and sensitive data related to child labour and grievances.
	5. Define data export standards and interoperability with common data analytics software used by ICI.
	6. Ensure user interface design is intuitive and suitable for users with limited digital literacy.
	7. Provide comprehensive documentation including sources codes, user guides, workflow charts, troubleshooting instructions, and technical documentation for system administrators.
	8. Plan for the long-term maintenance, support, and sustainability of the solution, detailing roles and responsibilities of ICI staff post-deployment
	9. Develop capacity-building strategies to ensure knowledge transfer and technical independence for local stakeholders and staff.
	10. Document the process and technical requirements for scaling or replicating the solution across different contexts.

Expected deliverables	• Synthetic needs assessment report (including risks and workplan) • Technical proposal (incl. workflow and tool design documents, AI recognition and processing model) • Data security and privacy protocol • Interoperability and data export documentation • Functional tool (initial version) • Pilot and synthetic testing report • Functional tool (final version and go live support) • Technical and operational documentation • User training and related documentation • Final consultancy report and presentation

REQUIREMENTS

ICI is seeking a consultant with the following experience and profile:

- Master's/PhD level education in web development, mathematics and computer science, IT and/or AI technologies.
- Excellent command of writing code in one or more programming or scripting languages, such as HTLM, CSS, JavaScript or PHP.
- Excellent knowledge and command of AI tools/automation technologies/image-text recognition technologies.
- Knowledge of R, Stata or python
- Experience in leading projects to popularize complex concepts or educational projects would be a plus.
- Experience in planning and developing reliable, high-performance prototype applications or online platforms/modules.
- Knowledge in data privacy and cybersecurity
- Database management skills
- UX/UI design skills
- Experience in data-driven decision making
- Knowledge in risk management
- Excellent command of French and English.
- Experience in international development or NGO sector would be a plus.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested contractors should send a technical and financial proposal, describing the contractor's relevant experience and capacity to undertake the mission.

Applications must be submitted by email with the subject line: "*NAME*_AI-powered image content recognition tool" to **hr@cocoainitiative.org** by **7 September 2025.**

Applications must include:
- Information on the consultant's prior experience on similar projects, including references or links to examples of relevant work **(1 page, max.)**
- Technical and financial offer, including the total amount offered in Swiss Francs or Euro. Note that the budget should detail all staff and material costs **(1 page, max.)**
- Draft workplan to provide the deliverables listed above **(1 page, max.)**
- CVs of the lead consultant and any key team members **(2 pages max, per person)**
- Contact details of two referees.

By submitting your application, you consent to us processing your data for the purpose of evaluating the suitability of your profile for this mission. The data related to your application will remain confidential and will only be used for recruitment purposes. Once the position is closed, your application will be deleted.

For any questions, please contact c.marclay@cocoainitiative.org and f.auger@cocoainitiative.org.

Please note that only candidates who meet the above requirements and are selected for an interview will be contacted.

CORE VALUES OF ICI

All ICI staff members and partners are required to adhere to, uphold, and promote ICI's core values at all times: HUMANITY, INTEGRITY, NEUTRALITY, PARTNERSHIP, INNOVATION. For more details, please visit ICI's website: Our Values | ICI Cocoa Initiative

Child Protection

ICI enforces a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of neglect, violence (sexual, physical, emotional, and psychological), and exploitation (sexual and commercial) against children. ICI is committed to placing the best interests of the child at the center of its work, regardless of the child's abilities, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality, or culture. By applying to ICI, you automatically agree to the above terms and commit to upholding these principles of child protection.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination

ICI is committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination for all employees and job applicants, and to providing a fair and discrimination-free working environment for its staff and consultants.

Disclaimer

ICI and its preferred recruitment partners will NEVER ask candidates for any fees, for any reason, during the recruitment process. No recruitment fees, hiring fees, security deposits, software or equipment charges are required from candidates applying to ICI.