

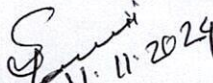
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Ministry of Commerce  
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1  
Office of the Project Director  
Level-12 (West side), Probashi Kollayan Bhaban,  
71-72 Eskaton Garden Road, Dhaka-1000

Memo No: 26.00.0000.066.07.053.24 -516

Date: November 11, 2024

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR SELECTION OF CONSULTING FIRM (National)**

1. The Ministry of Commerce is implementing the Technical Assistance Part of IDA financed Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1.
2. The Procuring Entity intends to apply a part of the IDA Credit for procuring consulting firms for the following services: Package No. SD-45: Conduct an impact assessment of the training programs and established business support centers at the Women Chambers under BRCP-1, MoC. The Required qualifications and experiences of the firm are as follows:
  - 2.1 The Consulting Firm/Institute shall have the legal capacity to enter into the contract and shall have minimum 10 years of general experience in providing consulting services out of which at least 03 years of experiences in conducting surveys/impact assessment;
  - 2.2 The Firm/Institute shall have successfully completed at least one service contract similar/related to conducting impact assessment of training programs in the last 05 years;
  - 2.3 The required average annual turnover of the Consulting Firm/Institute shall be at least BDT 50 (Fifty) lakh in last three years;
  - 2.4 Prior experience in conducting impact assessment of women entrepreneurship related training programs will be an advantage;
  - 2.5 Prior experience in designing/ implementing or conducting studies related to women entrepreneurship and empowerment will be an added advantage;
  - 2.6 Experience with women chambers will be an added advantage;
  - 2.7 Experience(s) in working with development partner's funded projects will be added an advantage.
3. The brief Scope of Services of the consulting firm for the package is as follows:
  - 3.1 Review of Completed Training Programs involves a comprehensive evaluation of the training initiatives that have already been conducted for women entrepreneurs.
  - 3.2 The "Impact Assessment" phase involves a thorough evaluation of the effects and outcomes of the completed training programs on the participating women entrepreneurs.
  - 3.3 Impact Assessment of the Business Support Center:
4. The interested consulting firm must submit the following documents with its Expression of Interest:
  - i. Updated Trade License valid up to June 30, 2025, ii. TIN Certificate & Update Income Tax Clearance Certificate/ Evidence, iii. VAT Registration Certificate, iv. Firm Registration certificate, if any, v. Bank Solvency Certificate, vi. Audited Accounts for last 03 Years, vii. A written undertaking that the Firm/Institute has not been blacklisted or debarred by any Government Organization & IDA and viii. All supporting documents to prove that they have required qualifications and experiences.
5. The Project Implementation Unit of BRCP-1, MoC on behalf of the Ministry of Commerce invites eligible consulting firm to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consulting firms must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services. Details of the qualification requirements and responsibilities are available in the Terms of Reference (TOR) which is available in the office of the undersigned and also at [www.mincom.gov.bd](http://www.mincom.gov.bd) and <http://brcp-1.gov.bd/>. The attention of interested Consulting firms is drawn to paragraphs 3.14 to 3.18 of The World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, Procurement in Investment Project Financing, Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services, July 2016 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank Group's policy on conflict of interest. A Consulting firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the Procurement Regulations. Further information can be obtained at the address given below during office hours between 09:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Expressions of Interest (EOI) must be delivered in written form - one original & one copy in sealed envelope to the address given below in person or by mail by 2:00 p.m. on December 02, 2024.
6. The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason, whatsoever.

  
(Shajila Yasmin)

Joint Secretary (Planning), Ministry of Commerce  
and Project Director (Additional Charge),  
Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1[Part-2]  
Phone: +8802- 55138022  
E-mail: pdbcrc1moc@gmail.com



Package No. SD-45

**Terms of Reference (TOR) for Selection of Firm / Institution**  
**Conduct an impact assessment of the training programs and established business support centers at the Women Chambers under BRCP-1, MoC**

**Introduction**

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received an SDR 150 million Credit from the International Development Association (IDA)– a member of the World Bank Group – for financing the cost of the Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project 1(BRCP-1), being jointly implemented by the Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA), National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Ministry of Commerce. The Ministry of Commerce as a separate technical assistance project is implementing the second component of this umbrella project. The overall objective of this technical assistance project is to strengthen trade related institutional capacity in order to ensure active and sustainable cooperation among trade related stakeholders and economic empowerment of women traders.

This technical assistance project consists of following three (3) components:

- Component A: Develop (pilot) programs to support female traders and entrepreneurs. This component will pilot activities to help address barriers to women becoming more integrated into regional and global supply chains and trading opportunities.
- Component B: Support to the National Trade Facilitation Committee. The inter-ministerial National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) has been set up to coordinate all trade and transport-related policies and activities in Bangladesh, and will also serve as the Advisory Committee for the Project.
- Component C: Improvement of Bangladesh Trade Portal and to set up a National Enquiry Point for Trade. The Bangladesh Trade Portal (BTP) was launched in March 2016. This component will support further up-gradation of the BTP to expand its functionality to include information of relevance for potential Bangladesh exporters and to ensure that content is kept up to date. This component will also set up the National Enquiry Point for Trade, which will help Bangladesh to meet a key requirement of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

This technical assistance project intends to apply a part of the IDA Credit for procuring consulting/training management services to **conduct an impact assessment of the training programs and established business support centers at the Women Chambers under BRCP-1, MoC.**

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**Background of the assignment:**

Economic empowerment and creating business opportunities for the women traders is one of the core components of the BRCP-1, MOC. The purpose of this component is to address policy and capacity gaps in promoting women traders' participation in trade, especially in regional and international trade. Notable research and capacity building activities have already been performed engaging potential women entrepreneurs.

The project has completed three diagnostic studies in the agro-processing, cut-flower and ICT sectors to assess women's participation across the value chain and business potential of the women entrepreneurs. Necessary regulatory and capacity level assessments were also conducted to suggest actionable recommendations to promote women entrepreneurship in Bangladesh.

Under BRCP-1, specialized sectoral training has been organized engaging potential women entrepreneurs in the agro-processing, cut-flower and ICT sectors and regulatory issues. The purpose of the capacity building training program is to enhance their production capacity, introduce them to new and efficient technologies, build awareness on the regulatory issues and connect them with the potential global value chain. Under the project, 1000 beneficiaries received training on Cut-flower, 1125 on agro-processing, 1000 on ICT and 1000 on regulatory regimes. Another 1000 women entrepreneurs in the diversified jute products, handicrafts and agro-processing sector are expected to get trained as a part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> revision of the TAPP.

The project also designed and is currently implementing the "Piloting Programme for Development of business Capacity of Women Entrepreneurs on Agro processing sector and cut-flower sector" to incubate the capacity of the selected women entrepreneurs/traders/other relevant stakeholders as full-fledged entrepreneurs in the Agro processing and cut-flower sub-sector for promoting business in the domestic and international export markets. Approximately 300 women entrepreneurs in the cut-flower sector and 600 women entrepreneurs in the agro-processing sector have received hands-on specialized training under the piloting activities. Most promising entrepreneurs will receive matching-grant support to expand their business operations.

Besides, the project has established business support centers in 19 women chambers of commerce and industries to assist women entrepreneurs to get access to information and technology related support. Women entrepreneurs regularly use the business support centers and get benefited in gathering information and maintaining business communications.

Considering the number and spread of the capacity building and business support related activities implemented thus far, it is pertinent that a thorough impact assessment is conducted to assess the efficacy, effectiveness and sustainability of these interventions and capture what worked and what did not.

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## Objective of Consulting Service

The primary objectives of this impact assessment are:

- **Evaluate Training Effectiveness:** To thoroughly evaluate the effectiveness of the completed training programs in equipping women entrepreneurs with the relevant skills and knowledge necessary for business success (e.g. through increased profits, lower employee attrition / higher retention, growth in revenue, etc.)
- **Assess Impact on Entrepreneurs:** To assess both the tangible and intangible impacts of these training programs on the participating women entrepreneurs, focusing on metrics such as business growth, revenue generation, and overall empowerment.
- **Gather Beneficiary Feedback:** To gather comprehensive feedback from the beneficiaries regarding the strengths and areas for improvement of the training programs, ensuring their voices and experiences inform future iterations.
- **Assessment of the Business support center:** To conduct a thorough and multidimensional assessment of the benefits, usability, and effectiveness of the established Women Business Support Center, considering various aspects of its operations and overall impact.
- **Evaluate Accessibility and Inclusivity:** To assess the center's accessibility, inclusivity, resource availability, and its long-term impact on the broader business ecosystem, ensuring it meets the diverse needs of all women entrepreneurs.
- **Assess Capabilities of the Business Support Centers:** To evaluate the center's effectiveness in enhancing the business capabilities of women entrepreneurs, including providing strategic and financial support and facilitating access to critical market information and resources.
- **Identify Sustainability Challenges:** To identify and analyze the sustainability challenges associated with the initiatives, including training programs, pilot projects, and the business support centers, focusing on their long-term viability and continued relevance.
- **Provide Improvement Recommendations:** To provide actionable recommendations on how to improve these interventions and ensure their sustainability, fostering an environment where women-led businesses can thrive and remain competitive in the long term.

## Scope of Service

1. **Review of Completed Training Programs** involves a comprehensive evaluation of the training initiatives that have already been conducted for women entrepreneurs. This will include but not limited to:
  - a. *Content and Curriculum Evaluation:* Analyze the content of the training programs, including topics covered, materials used, and practical exercises, and assess the relevance and applicability of the curriculum to the needs and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. Both sector and subject-matter specific technical (cut-flower, agro processing and ICT) and regulatory issues are to be considered for the assessment.

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- b. *Methodology and Delivery*: Examine the methods employed to deliver the training, such as workshops, seminars, online modules, mentoring sessions, etc. Evaluating the effectiveness of the chosen delivery methods in engaging participants and facilitating learning. The conduciveness of the training venues, food and other logistical issues are to be evaluated as well.
  - c. *Trainer Competency*: Assess the qualifications, expertise, and experience of the trainers or facilitators responsible for conducting the programs. Such assessment will follow an evaluation matrix duly approved by the PIU.
  - d. *Participation Rates and Demographics*: Examine the demographic profiles of the participants, such as age, educational background, and prior business experience.
2. **Impact Assessment of the training programs**: The "Impact Assessment" phase involves a thorough evaluation of the effects and outcomes of the completed training programs on the participating women entrepreneurs. This assessment aims to provide a clear understanding of the tangible and intangible benefits experienced by the beneficiaries. Some of the key activities of this impact assessment will be:
- a. *Alignment with Objectives*:
    - a. Evaluate the extent to which the training programs align with the broader goals and objectives of the BRCP-1;
    - b. Ensure that the training content and delivery methods support the overarching mission of empowering women entrepreneurs.
  - b. *Measuring Tangible Outcomes*:
    - a. Assess quantifiable results such as increased revenue, expanded customer base, improved product quality, and other specific metrics to be finalized during the inception phase.
    - b. Compare post-training performance indicators with pre-training benchmarks to measure improvement. The consultant will be provided with reports of previous trainings to conduct necessary comparative assessment.
  - c. *Qualitative Impact*: Assess intangible benefits, including enhanced confidence, improved problem-solving skills, increased networking opportunities, and other non-quantifiable gains.
  - d. *Business Continuation and Growth*: Evaluate the continuation rate of businesses, identifying factors that contribute to their ongoing success or challenges that lead to discontinuation.
  - e. *Comparative Analysis*: Compare the performance and outcomes of participants who underwent training with those who did not. This may involve creating control groups for a more rigorous analysis.
  - f. *Feedback and Testimonials*: Solicit feedback and testimonials from women entrepreneurs regarding the direct impact of the training on their businesses and personal development.
  - g. *Community and Ecosystem Impact*:
    - a. Evaluate the broader impact of the training programs on the local business community and ecosystem.

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- b. Assess how the growth of women-owned businesses contributes to community development and economic progress.
- h. *Addressing Challenges and Barriers:*  
Identify any challenges or barriers faced by participants in implementing the knowledge and skills acquired during the training.
3. **Impact Assessment of the Business Support Center:** Some key activities would include, but not limited to:
- a. *Assess the Infrastructure:*
- Evaluate Establishment Nature: Assess the physical and digital infrastructure, including hardware and software systems.
  - Organizational Structure: Review the staffing, organizational hierarchy, and resource allocation to determine operational efficiency and effectiveness.
- b. *Review the Services:*
- Service Enumeration: Catalog the specific services provided by the center, such as mentorship, training programs, access to resources, networking opportunities, and other support initiatives.
  - Service Quality Evaluation: Assess the quality and effectiveness of these services, identifying strengths and potential gaps that need addressing.
- c. *User Profiling:*
- Demographic Analysis: Define the demographic characteristics of the women entrepreneurs who have utilized the center's services, including age, educational background, business sector, and level of business experience.
  - Needs Assessment: Understand the unique needs and challenges faced by different demographic groups to tailor services accordingly. The demographic groups may include but not limited to: Young Entrepreneurs, Mid-Career Entrepreneurs, Matured Entrepreneurs, Urban Entrepreneurs, Rural Entrepreneurs, Cottage, Small, Medium Entrepreneurs etc.
- d. *Accessibility Audit:*
- Physical and Digital Accessibility: Conduct a thorough audit of the center's accessibility, including physical access to facilities and usability of online platforms.
  - Inclusivity Assessment: Evaluate the inclusivity of programs and services for diverse groups of women entrepreneurs, ensuring they are accessible to all.
- e. *Resource Availability:*
- Resource Evaluation: Assess the availability and adequacy of resources provided by the center, including financial, educational, and technological support.
  - Gap Analysis: Identify any gaps in resources and support services, and recommend ways to address these deficiencies.
- f. *Impact Assessment KPIs and Metrics:*
- Business Growth: Measure key indicators of business growth, such as revenue increase, market expansion, and overall business sustainability.
  - Skills Acquisition and Application: Evaluate the skills gained by the entrepreneurs and how effectively they are applying these skills in their

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businesses. A skill mapping matrix needs to be developed by the consultant as a part of the assessment.

- Customer Base Expansion: Assess the growth in the customer base of businesses supported by the center.
  - Productivity Improvements: Measure improvements in business productivity and operational efficiency.
  - Cost Reduction: Evaluate the extent to which businesses have been able to reduce costs through the support received.
  - Access to Information: Assess the ease of access to critical market information and business insights provided by the center.
- g. *Feedback and Testimonials:*
- Soliciting Feedback: Gather feedback and testimonials from women entrepreneurs to understand the direct impact of the center's services on their businesses and personal development.
  - Incorporate Feedback: Use this feedback to make informed decisions on improving service delivery and addressing any identified gaps.

#### 4. Sustainability of the Initiatives:

- a. *Financial Sustainability:* Assess funding sources, revenue streams, and cost management strategies.
- b. *Operational Sustainability:* Analyze scalability, operational efficiency, and process improvements.
- c. *Others:* Assess the sustainability of the positive changes observed and suggest strategies to maintain and enhance long-term impact.

### Methodology

The impact assessment will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The methods will include:

a. **Surveys:** Administer structured questionnaires to a representative sample of women entrepreneurs who have completed the training programs. The sample size has to be statistically significant to conduct the study. The consultant is required to propose the sample size with proper justification in the technical proposal.

b. **Interviews:** Conduct in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including government agencies, beneficiaries, trainers, program implementors, local stakeholders, business associations etc. At least 30 KIIs are to be conducted. The final list of KIIs needs to be approved by the PIU.

c. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Organize 06 FGDs (04 for training programs and 02 for business support centers) to gather collective insights and experiences from a select group of beneficiaries. The consultant is required to propose the number of participants per FGD with proper justification in the technical proposal.

d. **Public consultation:** Organize one national public consultation engaging relevant stakeholders (approx. 40 participants), share preliminary findings and solicit input.

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e. **Desk Research:** Review relevant documents, reports, and data related to the training programs and similar initiatives. Documents include but not limited to: baseline survey data, pre-training assessment reports, report completion documents, and others.

f. **Case Study:** Necessary case studies need to be developed to highlight the successes of the training programs including the piloting activities and business support center.

The above methodology is indicative and relevant instruments should be adjusted in consultation with PIU- BRCP-1, MOC and finalized before implementation.

**Approach:** The consulting firm needs to design an appropriate approach to undertake the activities necessary to measure the impact of the training programs and business support centers.

**Work Plan:** The work plan should propose the main activities of the assignment, its content and duration, phasing and interrelations, milestones and delivery dates among the component of the assignment. The proposed work plan should be consistent with the technical approach and methodology, showing understanding of the ToR.

**Organization and Staffing:** The firm should propose the structure and composition of its team members and other administrative and technical support staffs. It should list the key experts showing main disciplines for the assignment and their responsibilities for each component of the assignment.

**Period of Services:**

Five (05) months from signing the contract.

**Final Deliverables**

The deliverables are the following:

<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Indicative Timeline</b>
Inception report	Within week 02
Submit the Finalized the key indicators and Data Collection Instruments	Within week 04
Collect data (Survey, FGD, KII, and Public Consultation)	Week 04-12
Submit compiled raw data for verification purposes	Within week 12
Draft Impact Assessment Report	Within week 15
Organize validation workshop	Within Week 17
Submit final report	Within Week 20

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### The Consultant's Team and Inputs

The proposed services under this Terms of Reference shall be carried out by using a firm (Consultant) with adequate experience in conducting the impact assessment. The firm should propose the structure and composition of its team members. It should list the main disciplines of the assignment, the key experts, technical and support staff.

An indicative team structure may be as follows:

Position	Man days	Qualification and Experience
Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Expert Cum Team Leader (01)	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least a Master's level degree in business, economics, development studies, statistics, mathematics or any other relevant subject.</li> <li>• At least 15 year of professional working experience in the area of monitoring and evaluation.</li> <li>• At least 05 years of experience in the area of monitoring and evaluation in public sector development projects and experience</li> <li>• At least one experience in assessing impact of large scale (at least 500 trainees) training related programs.</li> <li>• Experience in business and trade related sector will be an added advantage.</li> <li>• Experience in team leadership will be an added advantage.</li> <li>• A good computer systems skills. Excellent command of written and spoken English</li> </ul>
Gender Expert (01)	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least a master's degree in fields such as business administration, entrepreneurship, economics, women's studies, or a related field</li> <li>• At least 10 year of professional working experience with women entrepreneurs, preferably in roles related to business advisory, mentorship, training, or program management.</li> <li>• Expertise in designing and delivering training programs, workshops, and mentoring sessions tailored to the needs of women entrepreneurs will be an added advantage</li> <li>• Experience in assessing impact of training programs/ or other relevant interventions for women entrepreneurs will be an added advantage.</li> </ul>

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Position	Man days	Qualification and Experience
Statistician	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have relevant Master's degree from a recognized university/institute in Statistics.</li> <li>• S/he must have a minimum of 10 years of general experience out of which at least 05 years' relevant experience in sampling design, questionnaire design etc. data cleaning and analysis in different development studies, evaluation, and survey.</li> <li>• S/he must have experience in data analysis software such as SPSS/STATA/R etc.</li> <li>• Having experience as for impact assessment of training programs related project will be added advantage.</li> </ul>
Data Analyst	80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Data Analyst must have Minimum Bachelor Degree in CSE/ICE/ICT/CS/ Economics/ Statistics/ Business Administration or relevant subject from any recognized university/institute.</li> <li>• S/he must have minimum 05 years of general experience of which at least 03 years of experience in data/system analysis that shall include data analysis tools such as SPSS/STATA, SAS/Python/Power BI etc.</li> <li>• Must have proven experience in quantitative data analysis.</li> <li>• Having experience as data analyst/researcher or similar position for impact assessment of training related project will be added advantage.</li> </ul>
Non- Key Experts	To be proposed by the consultant	<p>In addition to above team of Key Experts, the Consultant may propose/add Non-Key Experts/Staffs including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Research Associates,</li> <li>b. Enumerators,</li> <li>c. Field Supervisor/Coordinator, and</li> <li>d. Proof reader etc.</li> </ol> <p>in its proposal as would be required for the assignment with appropriately inputs distribution. However, proposed Non-Key Experts/Staffs will be reviewed but not evaluated.</p>

**Consulting Firms qualification and experiences:**

The interested Consulting Firm/Institute shall provide demonstrated evidences/documents as follows for reviewing expressions of interest (EOI) submitted for the assignment:

- The Consulting Firm/Institute shall have the legal capacity to enter into the contract and shall have minimum 10 years of general experience in providing consulting services out of which at least 03 years of experiences in conducting surveys/impact assessment;
- The Firm/Institute should have successfully completed at least one service contract similar/related to conducting impact assessment of training programs in the last 05 years;
- Prior experience in conducting impact assessment of women entrepreneurship related training programs will be an advantage.

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- Prior experience in designing/ implementing or conducting studies related to women entrepreneurship and empowerment will be an added advantage.
- Experience with women chambers will be an added advantage.
- The required average annual turnover of the Consulting Firm/Institute shall be at least BDT 50 (fifty) lakh in last three years;
- Experience(s) in working with development partner's funded projects will be added an advantage;
- List of key professional staffs showing qualification's and experiences and other resources including logistic support of the Firm/Institute;
- A list of core team of Key Experts to be proposed for the assignment, showing their qualification and experience including the projects/assignment on which they have worked, their role in the assignment/project and duration of their engagement. However detailed CV of Individual would not be required at the initial selection stage;
- Required Documents: The company must submit the following documents:
  - a) Company Registration (Trade License/ RJSC certificate or other relevant document), Income Tax Return and VAT Registration Certificate;
  - b) Audited Financial statement (last 03 Years);
  - c) Company's Brochure/Profile bearing organizational structure.
- A written undertaking that the Firm/Institute has not been blacklisted or debarred by any Government Organization and IDA as well;

**Selection Method:**

The selection method for this package will be Quality and Cost based Selection (QCBS) described in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations" for IPF Borrowers (July 2016, updated in November 2020). Under this system the best qualified firm having relevant experience will be invited to submit technical and financial proposals.

**Facilities Provision**

- (a) The Firm/Consultant will facilitate monitoring of studies by the Employer and World Bank's officials.
- (b) The project will provide to the Consultant all key program documents, available related data and reports such as:
  - Relevant extract of Technical Assistance Project proposal (TAPP), if required;
  - Sharing relevant up to date project information for a better understanding of the project;
  - Providing timely feedback to the consulting firm on inception report, questionnaire, sampling, training module, draft reports etc.;

Any logistic support such as transportation as well as office space will not be provided by the Client.

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