

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Hiring a research consultant/consulting firm to develop cost benefits analysis on “investment and best practices of RMG sector on women economic empowerment and lead the GAA business case development process”

1. Background and introduction

Founded over 80 years ago, Plan International is one of the oldest and largest development organizations working to promote children's rights and equality for girls. Plan International plays an important role in ensuring vulnerable and marginalized children and young people, especially girls and young women, realize their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignities.

The Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) program aims to contribute to building a society where young women are free from gender-based violence and economic exclusion. In Asia, GAA is implemented by Plan International Bangladesh, India, Philippines, Nepal, and Asia Regional Office. GAA, Plan International Asia and Plan International Bangladesh aim to advocate with the private sector for policy and practice changes along the garment supply chain that invest on the economic empowerment of young women workers.

For this reason, Plan International Bangladesh and Asia Region is conducting a research jointly with Change Associates on the contributions of employers to women workforce empowerment (equitable workplace and career progression) and the costs and benefits of an empowered women workforce to the RMG industry. This research will contribute to the development of a 'Business Case' that will be used as an advocacy tool with RMG actors, especially members of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), that equitable working environments translate into increased bottom lines.

Plan International will employ a consultant/consulting firm to lead the research and conduct cost benefit analysis of the investments by employers included in the research as per this Terms of Reference (ToR).

2. About the research

Plan International's Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) program aims to contribute to building a society where young women are free from gender-based violence and economic exclusion. In the Asia regional program, GAA encompasses activities in Plan International Bangladesh, India, Philippines, Nepal, and Asia Regional Office. Through GAA, Plan International Asia and Plan International Bangladesh aim to advocate with the private sector for policy and practice changes along the garment supply chain that invest on the economic empowerment of young women workers.

While taking the rights-based approach has significant value and contribution to Plan's engagement with the private sector, effectively influencing businesses necessitates an honest discussion of how upholding the rights of women in the workplace translate to

practical benefits for employers as well. For this reason, Plan International is conducting a research jointly with Change Associates on the contributions of employers to women workforce empowerment and the costs and benefits of an empowered women workforce to the RMG industry. This research will contribute to the development of a 'Business Case' that will be used as an advocacy tool with RMG actors, especially members of the the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), that equitable working environments translate into increased bottom lines.

Literature on the perspective of businesses and the actual considerations that they make in deciding to invest (or not) on and uphold the rights of women are scant. The closest research that reflect this point of view is the BSR's analysis of case studies in the apparel supply chain across the globe of commonalities on what works, and smaller studies that identified reduced absenteeism and staff turnover as benefits. But the case studies were not localized to fit the Bangladeshi private sector context, or supported by methodologies that involved employers throughout the study, and therefore have few contributions to a local private sector engagement approach.

This is a clear knowledge gap that Plan International's research could provide in addition to confirming the findings that other research studies have made in relation to the challenges and opportunities, including the costs and benefits, of investing on a women's workforce in Bangladesh's RMG sector.

The research will look at existing "best practices" of selected factories/ local employers/suppliers in the Bangladesh RMG sector that have invested in women workers in various forms and benefited from these investments. For the purposes of this study, these factories/employers/suppliers will be defined as "champions". Furthermore, the study will attempt to delineate those factors that contribute to an employer's decision to commit (or not) to policy and practice changes in favor of women. It will also validate assumptions and evidence from available literature that identified challenges women specifically faced while working in the sector, and map out effective private sector engagement approaches undertaken by different actors who are working with suppliers to address issues hounding the industry.

3. Objectives of the study

The broader objective of the research is to collect evidence of best practices resulting in equitable environments in the workplace and the benefits of investing in the career development of women workers (18 and above). The evidence will be analyzed to understand what factors influenced employers to invest in the empowerment of their women workforce. The research also aims to identify the specific challenges and areas of intervention for women's economic empowerment in the RMG sector, and the costs and benefits associated with this, in addition to exploring how other actors engage the private sector to influence policy and practice changes.

The specific objectives of this research are:

- To conduct a situational analysis of adult women workers (18 and above) in the RMG sector;
- To identify private sector champions in the RMG sector and good practices of equitable working environment and investing in women workforce empowerment;
- To understand the benefits- including a cost benefit analysis, of the investments by champions;
- To develop the business case on the investments and benefits of equitable environment at workplace and investing in women workforce employment in the RMG sector; and
- To identify effective advocacy and influencing approaches to convince RMG owners to adopt the best practices.

4. Intended users

The research will be primarily used to support the GAA Bangladesh, regional and Netherlands advocacy platform that aims to promote formulation and adoption of more inclusive policies at workplace and enhance economic empowerment of women. Thus, primary users will be the regional and country staff directly involved in the GAA programme in Asia and Bangladesh, and GAA alliance members. The secondary audiences will be other Plan staff who engage private sector actors to address sexual harassment, promote equitable workplace and women's economic empowerment; academia, NGOs, business sector associations and institutions interested in promoting gender equality in supply chain.

5. Methodological Guideline

Change Associates (Partner NGO) has proposed a methodology for the research to develop 'Business Case' that is given in annex 1. The consultant/consulting firm is expected to revisit that methodology and suggest what can be done to get a better outcome. The consultant/firm should propose an appropriate methodology to conduct cost benefit analysis in the study. The methodology and relevant instruments should be adjusted in consultation of Plan International Bangladesh and finalised before implementation. The study should be carried out through involving the stakeholders of the project.

6. Scope of Work

The assignment will preferably include, but not limited to :

- Work closely with Change Associates under the guidance of Plan International Bangladesh and provide them all types of support to conduct the research.
- Study GAA project documents and other relevant documents to get an overview of the project to provide appropriate support.
- Review the methodology and tools for research and provide assistance to Change Associates for finalisation.
- Support Change Associates to administer data collection, ensure quality data are collected and provide guidance for data analysis.

- Design and conduct cost-benefit analysis of the employers included in the research.
- With the support of Change Associates, produce a research report that includes all information as mentioned in specific objectives. Share the draft report with Plan International and its partner organisations and finalise the report based on feedback.
- Support GAA project to identify effective advocacy and influencing approaches to convince RMG owners to adopt the best practices.
- Providing regular updates to Head – MER & KM of Plan International Bangladesh about the progress of research.

7. Expected Competency of the consultant

The consultant/firm should have following competencies.

- Expertise in conducting quantitative and qualitative research independently in women's empowerment, and/or RMG sector in Bangladesh and similar sectors;
- Knowledgeable on Bangladesh labor law, ILO convention and Gender policies and high court verdict.
- Good understanding about women economic empowerment and the barrier of women's career progression at RMG sector.
- Skilled and experienced in cost benefit analysis¹, especially in social sector.
- No history of violation of child rights;
- Experienced to lead a research team and provide technical support to get an excellent outcome in research activities.

8. Timeframe and deliverables

Total duration of the assignment is 75 calendar days after signing of the agreement. The methodology and work plan will be reviewed and approved by Plan International Bangladesh. It is anticipated that the first draft report will be produced within eight weeks of signing of the agreement. The final report should be submitted after ten days of receiving feedback. Follow up meetings will be held time-to-time between the contracted consultant/consulting firm and Plan International Bangladesh. The research report will not exceed 30 pages and should have following structure.

- Title page
- Acknowledgements
- Executive summary
- List of acronyms

¹ Cost benefit analysis does not mean monetary value analysis rather it will prove that the investments to women workforce will turn into benefits. For example, if woman employers get training and skill that will enhance their productivity in work. Similarly the investment to introduce equitable or women friendly environment can reduce absenteeism, reduce drop-out of the employee, improved factory image to the brands community and ultimately management gets benefits.

- Introduction and background
- Review of Literature
- Methodology
- Findings/observation
- Evidences of good practices and analysis
- Cost-benefit analysis with graphical presentation
- Discussion, conclusion and recommendations
- Annexes (will not part of 30 pages)

The consultant/consulting firm shall produce the following deliverable:

- An inception report containing final methodology and work plan within five days of signing of the agreement.
- Study instruments reviewed, pretested, and finalised both in Bangla and English.
- Study Instruments for cost benefit analysis developed, pretested and finalised.
- Draft report containing detailed analytical findings as per specific objectives including cost benefit analysis.
- Presentation of the key findings to Plan International Bangladesh and its different stakeholders and finalise the report based on feedback.
- Final report should be submitted in two copies with spiral binding along with soft copy in MS Word. The report should be delivered in acceptable English. The consultant will arrange for proof reading, if required to maintain the quality.
- All field notes and the data set should be submitted.
- Regular updates to Head – MER & KM of Plan International Bangladesh about the progress of research.

9. Mode of Payment

The payment will be made in three instalments:

Instalments	Percentage	Timeline
First instalment	30	After receiving the inception report and methodologies
Second instalment	30	After receiving the first draft report
Final instalment	40	Upon submission of the final report

10. Evaluation criteria and scoring

Criteria	Score
Appropriate methodologies to address the study objectives	40
Relevant competency (research at RMG sector on women issues)	40
Amount of budget and justification	20

11. Preparation of proposal

The proposal will be divided into two parts and should be submitted in two separate folders i.e. technical and financial. The technical part of the proposal should not exceed 10 pages and will contain the following:

- Detailed methodology of the research especially for cost benefit analysis.
- Detailed timeframe (including dates for submission of first draft, dissemination of findings and final report).
- Account of experience in conducting similar type of research.
- CVs of the team leader and (if proposed) key members of the study team, which reflect relevant experiences.
- Copy of VAT registration certificate (for consulting firm).
- Copy of valid TIN certificate and bank account detail.

The financial proposal should clearly identify, item wise summary of cost for the assignment with detail breakdown. The budget should not contain income tax as a separate head; it can be blended with the other costs as it will be deducted from the source. However VAT can be mentioned in the budget as per government regulation. The organisation will deduct VAT and Tax at source according to the GoB rules and deposit the said amount to government treasury. The consultant/consulting firm is expected to provide justified budget which is consistent with technical proposal.

12. Submission of proposal

The technical and financial proposals should be submitted electronically to the email address: planbd.consultant.hiring@plan-international.org with the subject line “**cost benefit analysis on investment and best practices of RMG sector on women economic empowerment and lead the GAA business case development process**”. Proposal submitted to any other email account except this and in hard copy will be treated as disqualified. Submissions after the deadline **27 August 2018** will be treated as disqualified. The application should be submitted in pdf format.

13. Penalty clause

The consultant is expected to provide services within the period as mentioned in contract. The final deliverable (report) should maintain the quality as mentioned in section 8. If for any reason, the consultant/consulting firm fails to deliver services within stipulated time, the consultant/consulting firm needs to inform Plan International Bangladesh well ahead of time with valid and acceptable explanation. Failing to this may evoke penalty clause at the rate of 1% for each day of delay. If the quality is not maintained as mentioned in section 8 Plan International Bangladesh will deduct 5% of the total agreement amount.

14. Contact person

For any further quires, please communicate to Towhidul Islam (towhidul.islam@plan-international.org).

15. Ethical Considerations

There will be nothing in the study which may be harmful for respondents regarding legal or medical ground. No one would be forced, to provide information for the study. The objectives will be clearly explained to all the respondents of the study before gathering data from them. The evaluators will be abstained from collecting data from those who will deny or show any kind of disinterest in providing information. Thus, verbal/written consent of the respondents should be taken before collecting data. Confidentiality of data should be maintained and in the report name of the respondents should not be revealed.

16. Bindings

All documents, papers and data produced during the assessment are to be treated as Plan International Bangladesh's property and restricted for public use. The contracted consultant/consultant firm will submit all original documents, materials and data to country office of Plan International Bangladesh.

17. Negotiations

Once the proposal are evaluated, Plan International Bangladesh may enter into negotiation with one or more than one consultant/consulting firm for final selection. If negotiations fail, Plan International Bangladesh will invite consultant/consulting firm whose proposal received and was the next highest score to negotiate a contract. If none of the invited proposals led to an agreement fresh Requests for Proposals (bidding document) will be called.

18. Award of contract

The consultant/consulting firm expected to commence the assignment within one week of signing the contract.

19. Child Protection Policy

The individuals shall comply with the Child Protection Policy of Plan International Bangladesh. Any violation/deviation in complying with the policy will not only result-in termination of the agreement but also Plan International Bangladesh will initiate appropriate action in order to make good the damages/losses caused due to non-compliance of the policy.

Annex 1. Proposed methodology for research to develop “Business Case”

SI no.	Methods	Actor	Number	Unit	Total for all factories	Remarks
1	Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Workers (18+)	Male group # 2, Female group # 2	4	16 (Male # 8 Female # 8)	Participants will be selected randomly who have minimum one year working experience.
2	Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Community members	2 (Male # 1, Female # 1)	4	8 (Male # 4 Female # 4)	family, relatives, other community members
3	Observation	Factory	1	4	4	Infrastructural issues and overall situation, social issues etc.
4	Survey	Worker	100	4	400	Assuming 2000 worker. 5% of total workers will be surveyed.
5	Key Informant Interview (KII)	Owner/Top Mgt	1	4	4	Mostly involved in factory and worker management.
6	Key Informant Interview (KII)	Management (Line chief, floor in charge, APM, PM)	4	4	16	4 person will be selected who have experienced the progression of the factory for minimum 2/3 years.
7	Key Informant Interview (KII)	Supervisor	4	4	16	4 supervisors will be selected who have experienced relevant issues for minimum 2/3 years.
8	Key Informant Interview (KII)	HR & Compliance	2	4	8	They will have excellent concept on factory policies, administrative strategy and other compliance issues.

9	Key Informant Interview (KII)	Civil Society Actors	4	1	4	Researchers, development workers from different national and international organizations, media personnel who have raised their voices on women's empowerment.
10	Key Informant Interview (KII)	Govt. Official	2	1	2	Officials from relevant ministry and government authority.
11	Key Informant Interview (KII)	Brands/Global Retailers	4	1	4	Brands who have undertaken women empowerment initiatives in the factories.