Terms of Reference (TOR)

for

Baseline Assessment

Empowering Children through Education (ECE) Project

March 2024

**Education Sector**

**Save the Children, Bangladesh**

# Project Summary

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Type of assessment | Baseline by external consultant |
| Name of the project | Empowering Children through Education (ECE) Project |
| Project Start and End dates | Nov 2023 to Oct 2026 |
| Project duration | Three Years |
| Project locations | Rajarhat in Kurigram and Madarganj in Jamalpur |
| Thematic area | Education |
| Sub-theme | Basic Education |
| Donor | Hampen Foundation |
| Program Participants | Children in Grades I-V of govt primary school and their parents, community influentials, govt teacher and official. |
| Project Overall Objective | Enhanced foundational learning competencies among learners  in Grades I-V through remedial learning support with a particular emphasis on advancing teachers'  professional development. |

# **Introduction**

Despite Bangladesh’s strong commitment to achieving SDG4, Bangladesh is facing a learning crisis with alarming figures showcasing high levels of children out-of- school (OOSC). School closure due to Covid-19 caused a significant learning loss, specially to primary schools’ children in Bangladesh. The learning loss reduced the foundational literacy and numeracy skills among primary school children. Foundational learning is critical in enabling all children to reach their full potential and participate fully in society.

According to National Students Assessment (NSA)-2022, proportion of students who were proficient in literacy and numeracy was 51% and 39% respectively in grade 3 and 50% and 30% respectively in grade 5. There are also gaps in teachers’ professional skills to address children’s learning needs which is other causes of this learning gap. The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) taken the progressive initiative to develop a national remedial learning package as part of its formal education provision to meet the national learning gap. The package provides additional content to grade 1–5 teachers to support learners who are not achieving learning outcome targets in Bangla, English, and Math to catch up. Teachers are expected to integrate this content into their normal lessons, and while it is specifically targeted at lower-performing students, the activities and pedagogy incorporated will benefit teachers’ general teaching practice. Save the Children International (SCI) will work in partnership with multiple levels of the DPE to support the rollout of the remedial learning package and provide continuous teacher professional development (TPD).

The 'Empowering Children through Education (ECE)' Project builds upon the success of the previous 'Empowering Girls through Education (EGE)' Project, which demonstrated significant improvements in girls' foundational literacy and numeracy skills, as well as positive impacts on girls' continued education. Foundational learning is critical in enabling all children to reach their full potential and participate fully in society. The current overall situation of children’s well-being in Bangladesh is less than what is ideal as disparities in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, and locality are vividly present. Despite many initiatives, the government is still struggling to ensure quality education at pre-primary, primary, and secondary level (UNICEF, 2020). The proportion of children out-of-school varies by district and sub-districts (Upazila), as well as by rural and urban location, age, sex, and wealth quintiles.

# **Background and context**

## General Information

The ‘Empowering Children through Education (ECE)’ project provides emphasis on foundational learning of grade-I and V and support to address the needs of struggling learners to reduce their learning gap by developing and implementing a remedial learning support model. The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) initiated the implementation of a national remedial learning package to address the learning gap at 500 schools as pilot basis. Save the Children contributes to this initiative based on its expertise in quality teaching and learning at two sub-districts in Kurigram and Jamalpur. The main purpose of the model would be to improve the learning outcomes mitigating learning loss with enhanced 21st-century skills of children falling behind while also focusing on the capacity development of teachers and education officials and finally influencing government stakeholders to adapt and integrate the model into the government system.

The ECE project jointly developed with DPE and the project team. To achieve the overall objective the project works in close partnership with the government to from the design and development of the project to develop a National Remedial Package to support the learning loss of students across Bangladesh. To strengthen the effective roll out of the remedial package the project focuses on supporting teachers to enhance their competencies to ensure quality learning for children. SCI’s Enabling Teachers Approach would be reviewed for contextualising in partnership with the local government authorities, with needs based and subject based training focussed on EdTech, teachers’ professional development and wellbeing. Partnership with the government at the national and local level is a key strategy of this project right from the design stage and this is possible due to the strong presence of SCI in Bangladesh’s Education sector. Based in these and key learning around as well as learnings from the previous phase in terms of the successful use of an online learning management system (LMS) and EdTech for engaging students, as well as the multistakeholder approach, where community, parents and school leaders were engaged after-school session groups small group of learners, which resulted in less dropouts as well as improved learning outcomes, the approach of engaging school leaders, parents/community and local government as well as the use of EMIS for monitoring the performance and /attendance of the children will be carried forward and scaled up in this project.

## The ECE Project overview

Based on the evidence from the situational analysis, understanding of the context and needs of schools and alignment with our strategic goals, the ECE project operates with a long-term goal and a short-term goal. The long-term goal is: “A strengthened education system is in place, with effective Teacher Professional Development education, that can deliver remedial learning in order to reduce the learning crisis.” We believe that the project will have this impact focusing on the short-term goal: “Learners from Grade I-V have improved foundational learning competencies through remedial learning support delivered by motivated and skilled teachers”. To reach this goal we have structured the interventions around three outcomes. Below is an overview of the three outcomes and activities:

**Outcome 1: Increased capacity of teachers to deliver remedial learning to children from grade I-V, so they have improved foundational learning competencies and enhanced EdTech skills.**

As a response to the deepening learning loss crisis in Bangladesh, the government has prioritized the development and rollout of a remedial learning package. The package provides additional content to Grade 1 – 5 teachers to support learners who are not achieving learning outcome targets in Bangla, English and Maths to catch up.

**Outcome 2: Strengthening Government Systems for Teacher Professional Development Training and Remedial Learning for Grades I-V.**

To reach this outcome the ECE project will work closely with the government to support and strengthen existing structures to deliver qualified teachers’ professional development and remedial learning.

**Outcome 3: Increased Teachers' Motivation and Engagement with the School Community.**

Empowering teachers and fostering strong partnerships between schools and communities are fundamental to increasing teacher wellbeing and motivations, ultimately resulting in enhanced educational outcomes and a supportive learning environment.

## Key Stakeholders/Participants of Project/Program

The following participants will be considered for the baseline assessment.

**Key Participants:**

* Grade I to V children and their parents of all government primary school (GPS) at two sub-districts in Kurigram and Jamalpur.
* Assistant teachers and Head teachers of all GPS of 2 sub-district.
* Respective govt. education officials in sub-district, district, and national levels.
* Respective EdTech service providers.

# **Scope of baseline assessment**

## Purpose, Objectives and Scope

To assess the current condition of learning loss of Grade I to V student, capacity of schoolteacher on children assessment and improvement planning, engagement of parents with schoolteacher at the targeted schools. The ECE project will use baseline data to set target over the project period. Additionally, it will establish **strong evidence to design the new and appropriate project, and will use findings to have in-depth understanding on learning gaps, competencies, teachers’ capacity, EdTech opportunity etc**.

The primary objective of the baseline is figure out the students’ foundational and teachers’ competency skills at two upazila in Kurigram and Jamalpur. Participatory assessment exercises will be undertaken to identify children who have a learning gap and mapping out the teachers’ competencies for broader support to the children.

The specific objectives are to:

* assess the learning gap of grade I to V children in Bangla, English and Mathematics.
* review teachers’ capacity on remedial support, e.g. enabling environment, students’ assessment etc.
* identify the gaps in teachers’ competencies for developing and delivering a professional development course for teachers.
* examine the current gaps on teachers’ competency framework while teachers feel motivated, valued and empowered.
* identify the scope of engagement of key stakeholders, e.g. SMC, parents with school to continuation of their children.

**Scope:**

The baseline will explore the status of children regarding learning gap, competencies, schoolteacher capacity and Edtech services in the project location. So, it will create scope to revisit the designed interventions aligned with support requirement of target children as well as contribute to govt. priorities.

## Intended Audience and Use of the baseline

Primary intended audience of the study are:

| **Stakeholder** | **Further information** |
| --- | --- |
| Government stakeholders | MoPME, DPE, URC, UEO, MoPTIC, NCTF, A2i |
| Community groups | School, Union Parishad, Service providers |
| Beneficiaries | Children, parents and schoolteacher and govt. education official |

Baseline findings will share with SCI team, govt. stakeholders in sub-district and national level, member and donor through in person and virtual meeting/workshop.

## Key Questions

The consultant (individual/org) is expected to analyse the study questions based on the above-mentioned specific objectives. Here are few guiding questions:

* “What is the effect of remedial support program of Bangla, Mathematics, and English for class I-V children compared to those who do not receive the program?”
* How government (DPE) remedial support initiatives can make it more beneficial for grade I to V children to reduce learning gap? What are the Pros and Cons of it? How NCTB will be engaged with these initiatives regarding the new curriculum?
* Which groups, e.g. grade, gender, economic, marginalized, children with disability etc. are the most vulnerable regarding the learning gap (Bangla, English and Mathematics) including performance of grade I to V of govt. primary schools?
* What is the attendance and completion status of students of grade I to V in school?
* Are teachers ready to ensure remedial support including enabling teaching approach for children who have learning gap within class time and how it can be start up?
* How do parents engage with schoolteacher or school management to follow up their children’s learning?
* What professional development and technological capacity is found among the teacher and what further capacity building be required to make effective learning environment?
* What technological devices are available in school and what are their functioning level? What are the technological devices using status among parents?
* What is the overall socio-economic status of the parents in the community and how is it affecting children attendance, and child marriage/child labor?

# **baseline assessment Methodology**

## Design and Sampling

The consultant (individual/org) is expected to develop a quasi-experimental difference-in-differences estimation methodology to meet the objectives of the baseline assessment. is suggested to compare between the treatment (Rajarhat, Madarganj) and control groups (adjacent two sub-districts) at baseline in both background characteristics, learning outcomes and teachers’ professional development skills. The assessment criteria, checklist and methodologies should be proposed by the consultant (individual/org) aligned with national and or govt assessment tools. Prescribed students assessment tools will be provided to selected consultant.

*The consultant (individual/org) is suggested to draw sample of students more than 400 in each grade assessment (grade 1 to 5) both intervention and control areas. To obtain in-depth understanding, heterogeneous stakeholders, e.g. parents/caregivers, education officials, assistant teachers, headteachers, DPE/NAPE personnel, and SCI/NGO personnel will be selected for interview by consultant.* The methodology and relevant instruments should be adjusted and finalized in consultation with SCI before implementation. The study should be carried out through involving different stakeholders. It is desired that the consultant will collect primary data from the field physically. The consultant (individual/org) should also prepare and share a comprehensive work plan.

To meet the study objectives, the consultant (individual/org) will draw statistically significant sample size with the appropriate sampling method for quantitative sampling and purposive sampling method will be used for qualitative sample. The consultant will also propose appropriate number of focus group discussion (FGD), key informant interview (KII)/ in-depth interview (IDI) considering the different stakeholders.

## Data Sources and Data Collection Methods/Tools

All primary data collected during the baseline assessment must facilitate disaggregation by gender, age, disability, location or remoteness, vulnerability status. SCI will provide guidance on tools and classification schemes for this minimum dataset.

SCI will not provide enumerators to assist with primary data collection. Data triangulation is expected for this study. It will be a requirement of the study team to source additional external data sources to add value to the baseline assessment, such as government administrative data.

Any personal and professional influence or potential bias among those collecting or analysing data should be recorded and addressed or mitigated ethically. The analysis must explore/cover these aspects.

The study team is required to adhere to the  [SCI Child Safeguarding; Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying](mailto:https://www.savethechildren.net/about-us/our-commitment-safeguarding); and Data Protection and Privacy policies throughout all project activities (attached in Annex).

## Ethical considerations

It is expected that this baseline assessment will be:

* **Child participatory**. Where appropriate and safe, children should be supported to participate in the assessment in a holistic manner beyond simply being respondents. Any child participation, whether consultative, collaborative or child-led, must abide by the [9 Basic Requirements for meaningful and ethical child participation](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/applying-9-basic-requirements-meaningful-and-ethical-child-participation-during-covid-19).
* **Inclusive**. Ensure that children from different ethnic, social, and religious backgrounds have the chance to participate, as well as children with disabilities and children who may be excluded or discriminated against in their community.
* **Ethical**: The assessment must be guided by the following ethical considerations:
  + Child safeguarding – demonstrating the highest standards of behaviour towards children.
  + Sensitive – to child rights, gender, inclusion, and cultural contexts
  + Openness – of information given to the highest possible degree to all involved parties.
  + Confidentiality and data protection – measures will be put in place to protect the identity of all participants and any other information that may put them or others at risk. [[1]](#footnote-2)
  + Public access – to the results when there are not special considerations against this.
  + Broad participation – the relevant parties should be involved where possible.
  + Reliability and independence – the assessment should be conducted so that findings and conclusions are correct and trustworthy.

It is expected that:

* Data collection methods will be age and gender appropriate.
* Assessment activities will provide a safe, creative space where children feel that their thoughts and ideas are important.
* A risk assessment will be conducted that includes any risks related to children or young people’s participation.
* A referral mechanism will be in place in case any child safeguarding or protection issues arise.
* Informed consent will be used where possible.

# **Expected Deliverables**

Th consultant (individual/org) is expected to support SCI colleague to submit research protocol to Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval prior to data collection. The baseline assessment deliverables and due dates (subject to the commencement date of the study) are outlined below. The consultant (individual/org) and SCI Sr. Manager-MEAL will agree on final milestones and deadlines at the inception phase. The consultant (individual/org) will advise [SCI Sr Manager-MEAL immediately of any risks or issues that may impact on their ability to provide the deliverables by these due dates.

**Deliverables and Tentative Timeline**

| **Deliverables/Milestones** | **Timeline** |
| --- | --- |
| The Baseline Team is contracted and commences work | 20 May |
| The Baseline Team will discuss with the relevant stakeholders to develop the inception report. | 22 May |
| The Study Team will submit an **inception report\*** in line with the provided template, including:   * Baseline assessment objectives and key study questions * description of the methodology, including design, data collection methods, sampling strategy, data sources, and study matrix. * data analysis and reporting plan, limitations of situation, risks and mitigation plan, stakeholder and children communication and engagement plan * consultation protocols for consulting with children and other vulnerable groups (if applicable), key deliverables, responsibilities, and timelines * draft data collection tools (in line with the study matrix). | 28 May |
| **Final data collection tools (in the report language-Bangla and English)**:   * Survey instrument | 30 May |
| **Tools orientation and Data collection**   * Tools orientation for Enumerators * Quantitative and Qualitative data collection and follow up | 3 to 7 Jun |
| An **Interim** Power Point Presentation including a summary of formative findings from the baseline assessment. The focus will be on:   * Summary of interim findings * Any emerging program issues or risks (if applicable) * Key tasks for the next stage of the baseline and any proposed refinements or changes to methodology (if applicable) | 10 Jun |
| **A Baseline Report\*** (Draft Version) including the following elements: Max 30 pages   * Executive summary * Background description of the program/project and context relevant to the Study (1 page) * Research Objectives and Questions * Scope * Overview of the baseline survey methodology and data collection methods, including a study matrix * Findings of key study questions (15-18 pages) * Specific caveats or methodological limitations of the endline * Recommendations (2-3 pages) * Annexes (Project log-frame, study ToR, Inception Report, Study schedule, List of people involved)   A consolidated set of feedback from key stakeholders will be provided by Save The Children within one weeks of the submission of the draft report. | 15 Jun |
| **Data and analyses** including all raw data, databases, and analysis outputs | 15 Jun |
| **Final Baseline Report\*** incorporating feedback from consultation on the Draft baseline Report | 20 Jun |
| **Knowledge translation materials:**   * PowerPoint presentation of study findings (Slide deck (8 slides) highlighting the: methodology and purpose -1 slide, key findings 4 slides, challenge 1 slide, lesson learned if any 1 slide, and recommendation 1 slide.) * Evidence & Learning Brief\*\* | 25 Jun |

\*All reports are to use the Save the Children **Study Report template**. Please also refer to Save the Children technical writing guide.

\*\* The Evidence & Learning Brief is a 2-3 pages summary of the full report and will be created using the Save the Children **Evidence & Learning Brief template**.

All documents are to be produced in MS Word format and provided electronically by email to the SC Project Manager. Copies of all PowerPoint presentations used to facilitate briefings for the project should also be provided to Save the Children in editable digital format.

# Reporting and governance

The study team lead is to provide reporting against the plan. The following regular reporting and quality review processes will also be used:

The Project Donor will be accountable for approving the Final Baseline Report.

# Assessment Management

**Assessment Tentative Timeline, with key deliverables in bold. The final timeline and deliverables will be agreed upon at the inception phase.**

| What | Who is responsible | By when | Who else is involved |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Baseline tender submissions | Program support officer | 20 Mar | Sr Project Manager, ECE |
| Tender review and selection of assessment team | SC tender review panel | 20 Apr | Sr. Project Manager  Sr. Manager-MEAL |
| Consultation | Study team | 22 May | Sr. Project Manager  Sr. Manager-MEAL |
| Inception report | Study team | 28 May | EGE Project Manager  Sr. Manager-MEAL |
| Review of inception report | EGE Project Manager  Sr. Manager-MEAL | 1 Jun | PD-Education  SC Denmark |
| Development of Data collection tools | Study team | 2 Jun | EGE Project Manager  Sr. Manager-MEAL |
| Research Protocol Submission to IRB | Study team | 2 Jun | Sr. Manager-MEAL |
| Tool Orientation and Data collection | Study team | 3-6 Jun | EGE Project Manager  Sr. Manager-MEAL |
| Data management and analysis | Study team | 7 Jun | Sr. Project Manager  Sr. Manager-MEAL |
| First draft of the Final assessment report | Study team | 10 Jun | Sr. Project Manager  Sr. Manager-MEAL |
| Review of first draft report | Sr Project Manager, ECE | 13 Jun | Sr. Manager-MEAL, SCD |
| Meeting with assessment team to finalize the report | Study team | 15 Jun | Sr. Project Manager  Sr. Manager-MEAL |
| Validation of assessment findings, recommendations | Sr Project Manager, ECE  Sr. Manager-MEAL | 18 Jun | Project Director-Education |
| Final assessment report and submission of data set | Study team | 20 June | Sr. Project Manager  Sr. Manager-MEAL |

# DISSEMINATION PLAN

The Baseline findings will be shared with each of the different stakeholders, particularly outlining how reporting back to communities, beneficiaries and children will be conducted in an accessible and child friendly manner.

# baseline team and Selection Criteria

To be considered, the study team members together must have demonstrated skills, expertise and experience in:

* Designing and conducting baseline using quantitative and qualitative methods.
* Conducting research and/or assessment in the field of Education, particularly in relation to Basic education.
* Conducting ethical and inclusive research and/or assessment involving children and child participatory techniques.
* Conducting ethical and inclusive research and/or assessment involving marginalised, deprived and/or vulnerable groups in culturally appropriate and sensitive ways.
* Managing and coordinating a range of government, non-government, community groups and academic stakeholders
* Extensive experience of theories of change and how they can be used to carry out baseline.
* Report writing and presentation skills.

There is a high expectation that:

* Members (or a proportion) of the study team have a track record of working together.
* A team leader will be appointed who has the seniority and experience in leading complex baseline, and who has the ability and standing to lead a team toward a common goal.
* The team has a strong track record of working flexibly to accommodate changes as the project is implemented.

# TECHNICAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

### ELIGIBILITY/ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

Criteria which bidders **must** meet in order to progress to the next round of evaluation. If a bidder does not meet any of the Essential Criteria, they will be excluded from the tender process immediately. These criteria are scored as ‘Pass’ / ‘Fail’.

1. Legal Documents [Copy of Trade License/Registration Certificate, TIN, BIN/VAT, Certificate of Incorporation (for Limited Company only)].
2. More than 3 years’ experience of consultancy service
3. Compliance with our Mandatory Policy
4. Suppliers/Vendors are not any prohibited parties or on Government debar/ Blacklisting by any organization.

**Note:** \*\*Supporting documents need to be submitted with Proposal. (Eligibility criteria may be relaxed for the enlisted vendors/service providers with SCI)

**Capability Criteria:**

The organization will assign a committee composed of management and technical team to evaluate the proposals submitted by consultant (individual, org). **One representative must be from the Central PDQ MEAL team.** The selection committee will evaluate the bidders based on the criteria set below. The consultant (individual, org) is expected to provide detailed information based on the given framework to ensure fair and effective comparison. The committee reserves the right to drop a competitor that scores the least. The proposals submitted will be reviewed based on the set criteria.

| **Criteria** | **Score** |
| --- | --- |
| **Technical Proposal (Desk Review)** | **50** |
| Appropriateness of the study design and elaboration for choosing the specified study design | 15 |
| Sampling strategy, data collection methods (including the data collection tools), and data quality assurance plan | 15 |
| Required expertise (skills) and experience of the personnel of consulting firm/firm to conduct the study. Testimonials will be considered while evaluating the firm. | 10 |
| Roles and responsibilities assigned in undertaking and managing the study | 5 |
| Capability of the consultant (individual, org) (management, technical and financial capacity) | 5 |
| **Oral presentation** | **10** |
| **Sustainability criteria2**  Bangladesh-based consultant (individual, org), using local resources (e.g., research assistants, note-takers) (10)  Otherwise (0) | **10** |
| **Financial Proposal** | **30** |
| **Total** | **100** |

**Benchmark scoring point:**

**Step 1:** To be a potential candidate to conduct the assessment, the bidder must score at least 50% in technical proposal.

**Step 2:** During the evaluation of technical proposals, from those obtaining at least 50% score in technical score (out of 50), the top three proposals will be selected for further screening through oral presentation. The overall scoring should consider the technical proposal, the financial proposal, and oral presentation.

**Step 3:** Financial proposal will be reviewed and scored out of 30 for the top three proposals having scored at least 50% in technical proposal and the combined comparative statement will be conducted for only the top three candidates. Finally, Save the Children will award the Evaluation with the highest scorer consulting firm.

# schedule of payment

The following payments will be made to the consultant using an agreed mode of payment.

* Upon approval of inception report and tools: [40%]
* Upon submission of First Draft Report: [30%] duly accepted by project.
* Upon approval and duly accepted by program of Final Report: [30%]

# Annexes

**Annex 1 SC Child Safeguarding Policy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TOR prepared by: | Md. Nazmul Haque, Sr. Manager-MEAL, Shahin Islam, Project Director-Education |
| TOR reviewed by: | Rafeya Azad, Sr Manager-Research, Learning and Knowledge |
| TOR approved by: | Nasirul Islam, Technical Director-E&L |
| Date of sign off: | 25 March 2024 |

1. If any Consultancy Service Provider, Freelancer or Contingent worker will have direct contact with children and/or vulnerable adults and/or beneficiaries and/or have access to any sensitive data on safeguarding and/or children and/or beneficiaries, it is the responsibility of the person receiving the consulting service to contact the local HR team and child safeguarding focal point to ensure vetting checks and on-boarding are conducted in line with statutory requirements, local policies and best practices guidance. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)