

27 March 2024

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Study Title: Landscape study on MHM products and comparative analysis on feasibility and acceptability of MHM products in Bangladesh

Proposal submission deadline: 24 April 2024

Interested national/ International team of consultants/consulting/research firms are requested to submit a technical and a financial proposal through email at WaterAid-Tender-TA@wateraid.org

The focal person for this assignment is Mr. Md Golam Rasul (GolamRasul@wateraid.org) to answer queries. There will be a pre-bid meeting scheduled on **17 April 2024**.



WaterAid Bangladesh
House 97/B, Road 25, Block A
Banani, Dhaka 1213
Tel: +88 02 58815757, Fax: +88 02
9882577

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SECTION 1: INFORMATION TO ORGANISATIONS/INDIVIDUALS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The eligible team of consultants/consulting/research firms with required qualifications and experience are invited to submit a proposal.
- 1.2 Costs for preparing the proposal and attending the pre-bid and/or negotiation meeting are non-reimbursable.
- 1.3 Team of consultants/consulting/research firm is expected to follow highest ethical standard in their participation in the bidding process and refrain from influencing the internal selection process of WaterAid Bangladesh.
- 1.4 Any attempt of undue influence on the evaluation and selection process will lead to cancellation of the proposal from the subsequent process.
- 1.5 Any misrepresentation of facts including the facts on professional /institutional capacity will also lead to cancellation of the proposal.
- 1.6 WaterAid Bangladesh reserves the right to amend and modify this RFP document. Also, to select team of consultants/ consulting/ research firm(s) for providing selected goods and services cited in section-2 (article-4) as deliverables of this RFP, either for the entire content of the proposal or a part thereof.

2. Clarification and amendment of RFP documents

- 2.1 At any time before the receipt of proposals, WaterAid Bangladesh may for any reason, whether at its own initiative or in response to a clarification requested by an invited consultant/ consulting/ research firm(s), amend the RFP. Any amendment shall be issued in writing and shall be posted and will be binding. WaterAid Bangladesh may at its discretion extend the deadline for the submission of proposals.

3. Preparation of proposal

- 3.1 Team of consultants/consulting/research firm(s) are requested to submit their proposal written in English (font-Arial, size-11). Proposals must remain valid for a minimum of 90 days after the submission date.

Technical proposal

- 3.2 The technical proposal from team of consultants/consulting/ research firm(s) must give particular attention to the following:
 - Detailed methodology and workplan to address the objectives of the assignment
 - CV of proposed key person(s); it is desirable that the key professional staff who would be involved in the assignment have practical experience and an extended knowledge on the subject matter having relevant qualification and experiences
 - Organisational/individual profile with an outline of recent experience on assignments similar to the nature of this RFP

Financial proposal

- 3.3 The financial proposal from team of consultants/ consulting/ research firm(s) are expected to take into account the requirements for

accomplishing the deliverables specified in the section-2 (article-5) and conditions outlined in the RFP documents. **Maximum budget for this assignment is 40,00,000 BDT.**

4. Submission of proposals

- 3.4 Provide a justified financial proposal consistent with the technical proposal which clearly mentions item wise summary of cost for the assignment with detail breakdown, the taxes, VAT, duties, fees, levies, and other charges to be included under the applicable law. Copy of VAT registration certificate including BIN, TIN certificate, and bank account details should be attached with the financial proposal.
- 3.5 WaterAid Bangladesh will deduct VAT and Income Tax at source according to the GoB rules and deposit the said amount to government treasury.
- 4.1 The technical and financial proposals should be submitted electronically to the following email address WaterAid-Tender-TA@wateraid.org with 'Landscape study on MHM products and comparative analysis of MHM products in Bangladesh' as the subject.
- 4.2 Proposals submitted to any other e-mail account except the above will be treated as disqualified.
- 4.3 Submissions after the **deadline 24 April 2024** will be treated as disqualified.
- 4.4 Two different files (PDF) should be generated for technical and financial proposals, and both the files should be submitted into one zip folder. Please name the zip folder in the name of your organisation/individual.
- 4.5 The proposal altogether (technical and financial part) should not exceed 25 pages, including CVs and organisational/individual profile.

5. Proposal evaluation

- 5.1 The evaluation committee will evaluate the proposals on the basis of their responsiveness to TOR and applying the evaluation criteria and point system specified herein. Each responsive proposal will be given score. Proposal(s) will be rejected at this stage if it does not respond to important aspects of the TOR.
- 5.2 The final selection will be done following Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS). This will be done by applying a weight of 0.80 (or 80 percent) and 0.20 (or 20 percent) respectively to the technical and financial score of each evaluated proposal and then computing the relevant combined total score for each consultant/consulting/research firm(s).
 - Technical proposal: 80
 - Understanding of the assignment and detailed methodology: 30
 - Composition of the team: 20
 - Relevant work experience: 15
 - Work plan and overall quality of the proposal: 15

- Financial proposal with a detailed breakdown: 20
- 5.3 The evaluation committee will determine whether the proposals are complete or not. The committee may invalidate any proposal if it is determined that significant budgetary mistakes or omissions undermine the integrity of the proposal.
- 6. Pre-bid meeting**
- 6.1 There will be an **online (Teams) pre-bid meeting on 17 April 2024 at 3pm to 4pm (Bangladesh time)** to brief the objectives of the assignment and answer related queries.
- interested consultants/firms can join directly through the link**
 Link: [Join the meeting now](#)
 Meeting ID: 346 350 717 343
 Passcode: WUZtsv
- 7. Presentation and negotiation**
- 7.1 Once the proposals are evaluated, WaterAid will request team of consultants/ consulting/ research firm(s) with valid and complete proposals for a presentation within two weeks of the submission deadline.
- 7.2 WaterAid may enter into negotiation with one or more bidders before final selection. If negotiations fail, WaterAid Bangladesh will then invite those organisation/individuals whose proposals received the next highest score. If none of the invited proposals led to an agreement, a new RFP will be called upon.
- 7.3 The presentation and negotiations may include a discussion on the proposed methodology, workplan, staffing, costing, or any suggestions made by the bid participating organisation(s) to improve the terms of reference.
- 7.4 WaterAid Bangladesh and the contracted organisation/individual may revise the TOR which should be incorporated final contract document.
- 8. Awarding of contract**
- 8.1 The team of consultants/consulting/research firm(s) is expected to sign the final contract document within a week of communication of selection and commence the assignment within 2 weeks.
- 9. Penalty clause**
- 9.1 The team of consultants/ consulting/ research firm(s) is expected to deliver required outputs within the stipulated timeframe maintaining the quality. If for any reason, the consultant/consulting/research firm(s) fails to deliver required deliverables within stipulated time, the consultant/ consulting/ research firm(s) needs to inform WaterAid intime with valid and acceptable explanation in written. Failing to this may evoke penalty clause at the rate of 0.5% for each day of delay.
- 10. Confidentiality**
- 10.1 Information relating to evaluation of proposals and recommendations concerning awards will not be disclosed to the organisations who submitted the proposals or to other persons not officially concerned with

the process, until the winner has been notified with award of the contract.

11. Focal person

11.1 Mr. Md. Golam Rasul
Senior Officer- Research and Knowledge Management (RKM)
WaterAid Bangladesh

Can be reached directly at: GolamRasul@wateraid.org

SECTION 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

Bangladesh has a 165 million population, with more than 50% (83 million) female.

Among the female population, around 55% are between 10-49 years of age who have started their menstruation period or are about to start. These numbers indicate a large population of women and girls experiencing regular menstruation who are subjected to the challenges associated with its management in Bangladesh's social, economic, and cultural context. A study conducted in Bangladesh reported that the Average age at menarche was 12, and 98% of girls started their menstruation before age 14¹.

Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) refers to dealing with menstruation by collecting or absorbing menstrual blood using different materials safely and with dignity.

Menstruation is an important issue for every woman in their reproductive age. Still, most women and girls often face difficulties regarding MHM due to a lack of access to appropriate MHM products and their lack of knowledge and information regarding menstrual hygiene.

Bangladesh National Hygiene survey indicates that most women heard about menstruation and menstrual hygiene management after their first episode. However, the use of sanitary pads is increasing; still, only 20% of the total menstrual-age women use sanitary pads in Bangladesh. On the contrary, a substantial number of women and girls use cloths during their menstruation days; among them, only 20% of girls/ women have proper knowledge about proper cleaning of the cloths². Different studies have identified various challenges that hinder the increase of using pads among women in Bangladesh. With the increase in knowledge and awareness among girls and women, the use of MHM products is increasing in Bangladesh. The size of the sanitary napkin market was BDT 25 crore in 2009, which increased to BDT 500 crore in 2022³. However, information about the market size of other MHM product are not available in Bangladesh. Hence, to generate evidence about the MHM product market and

¹ Alam M-U, Luby SP, Halder AK, *et al.* Menstrual hygiene management among Bangladeshi adolescent schoolgirls and risk factors affecting school absence: results from a cross sectional survey. *BMJ Open* 2017;7:e015508. doi:10.1136/ bmjopen-2016-015508

² Afiaz A, Biswas RK. Awareness on menstrual hygiene management in Bangladesh and the possibilities of media interventions: using a nationwide cross-sectional survey. *BMJ Open* 2021;11:e042134. doi:10.1136/ bmjopen-2020-042134

³ <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/health/menstrual-hygiene-affordability-biggest-barrier-using-sanitary-napkins-428406>

accessibility of different MHM products in Bangladesh, WaterAid Bangladesh is planning to conduct a study. This study aims to increase access to culturally appropriate, accessible, and user-centered menstrual health options and hygiene education by contributing to the menstrual product evidence base in Bangladesh. Overall assessment comprises four major outputs, which are

1. Landscape analysis of menstrual hygiene products in Bangladesh
2. Comparative analysis of feasibility and accessibility of MHM products in Bangladesh
3. Piloting “vulva” tools, a 3D educational product
4. Generate evidence to improve MHM education in Bangladesh and disseminate the study findings.

Output 1: Landscape analysis of menstrual hygiene products in Bangladesh

To better understand the various influencing aspects of menstrual hygiene management, this assessment plans to conduct this landscape analysis to understand the MHM products in Bangladesh. This analysis aims to look at the menstrual product policy, quality standards, availability, product range choices, prices, and use (including disposal, washing, and affordability).

The objectives of Output 1 are

- Present an overview of the menstrual hygiene product landscape in Bangladesh
- Identify different MHM-related products, markets, user groups, benefits, availability, affordability, and drawbacks of using these products.
- Identify menstrual product policy, quality standards of MHM products in Bangladeshi market.
- Identify different stakeholders related to MHM product production in Bangladesh to understand the major MHM product using pattern in Bangladesh.
- Understanding the market share, keeping in mind demand and supply options to further improve safety and health in the sphere of MHM from the producer/supplier perspective.
- Understand the barriers and challenges for availability of good quality and affordable menstrual hygiene products.

- Prepare a policy recommendation for promoting good practices related to MHM product use in Bangladesh taking into account the safety and environmental sustainability of different product choices.

Methodology

This landscape analysis will undergo an extensive literature review, including policies, standards, guidelines, relevant research studies, and grey literature on policy, quality standards, availability, use, and preferences of menstrual products in Bangladesh. Besides the literature review, key-informant interviews (KII) will be conducted with the relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, private sector stakeholders, and subject matter specialists of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) / Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sectors in Bangladesh.

Scopes of Work

- Prepare a detailed study proposal to obtain approval from the relevant institutional review board (IRB) for conducting a study on both Output 1 and Output 2
- Detail literature review of MHM products-related studies and documents with proper referencing
- Review of relevant policies, standards, and guidelines
- Prepare an overview of the menstrual hygiene product market in Bangladesh
- Interview with relevant stakeholders/producers/suppliers to Capture their perspectives on the menstrual hygiene product market in Bangladesh.
- Prepare comprehensive and well-structured reports that outline the assessment findings, recommendations
- Prepare action plans for Outcome 2 with details methodology and data collection tools.

Output 2: Comparative analysis of feasibility and accessibility of MHM products in Bangladesh

After obtaining findings from the landscape analysis of menstrual hygiene management products in Bangladesh, A mixed method study will be designed to understand the feasibility and accessibility of different MHM products among Bangladeshi women and

adolescent girls. This mixed method study aims to compare the available MHM products options for Bangladeshi women and girls in terms of convenience, price, availability, comfort, considerations for disposal, washing and drying, etc. The study will also explore the acceptability of menstrual cups and other solutions while seeking to improve the adaptability of households, factories and schools in Bangladesh. This study will include two groups of respondents: 1. Women and adolescent girls living in low-income settings; 2. Working women at the garments factory (Dhaka)).

Thus, the objectives of output 2 are

- Identify accessibility, feasibility, usability, price, availability, comfort, disposal/ washing facility and social norms related to different MHM products use in Bangladesh, stratified by respondent types.
- Understand the using pattern, availability of alternative menstrual hygiene products, including reusable pads made of different textiles and menstrual cups from the user perspective.
- Identify the key factors (Knowledge, attitude, economic feasibility and practices) associated with the use of different MHM products use in Bangladesh.
- Identify product innovations/interventions that can create a more enabling environment for women and girls.
- Prepare recommendations for industry and policymakers to promote the production of high-quality MHM products in Bangladesh and make them affordable and easily accessible for all.
- Prepare a policy recommendation in line with the Bangladesh National MHM strategy, which will help to promote good menstrual hygiene management practices at both household and institutional levels.

Methodology

This comparative analysis will deploy a mixed methods study approach. Quantitative data will be collected from households and institutions (garments factories). Besides the quantitative data collection, in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussion (FGDs) will be conducted with the relevant participants (users, sellers/distributors,

institution/factory authority) to understand the perspective of different stakeholders related to MHM products in Bangladesh.

Scopes of Work

- Depending on the analysis from Phase 1, key activities will be to carry out desk review, market research, client interview, KII of, and FGD with the key stakeholders, etc.
- Develop a proper analysis plan identifying key thematic area of the assessment
- Develop qualitative and quantitative data collection tools incorporating the findings from the output 1.
- Estimate sample size for the quantitative interview and determine the number of qualitative interviews, including targeted respondents.
- Collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data from different respondent groups.
- Prepare comprehensive and well-structured reports that outline the assessment findings, recommendations, and action plans for Outcome 4.
- Prepare knowledge products (scientific manuscript, IEC/BCC materials) out of the study findings in collaboration with WaterAid Bangladesh.

Output 3: Piloting of Vulva tools

This study will be piloting **'Vulva'**, a 3D educational product to be piloted in the targeted respondents group. This tool consists of an animation that explains the female physiology, and as an extension, the proper use of MHM products along with the related health and safety issues.

The objectives of output 3 are

- Piloting **'Vulva'** tools in the targeted respondents group.
- Gather user feedbacks on the tools and capture learning from the piloting.

Methodology

The interested consultant/ consultancy firm is requested to propose suitable methodology for assessing the result of the 'Vulva' tools piloting. However, the team is expected to use robust statistical analysis through questionnaire survey about the user feedbacks and learning captured from the piloting component.

Scope of work

- Contextualization of the 'Vulva' tools for demonstrating at the garment worker settings
- Piloting 'Vulva' a 3D educational tools among the targeted respondents (Factory workers)
- Prepare a details methodology for capture the learning of 'Vulva' piloting
- Capture the learning and user feedback from the targeted respondents group
- Prepare a report highlighting the learning and feedbacks of 'Vulva' piloting.

Output 4: Evidence generated and disseminated

The study aims to integrate the findings from output 1, 2 and 3 into the communication packages for IEC (Information, Education and Communication) and BCC (Behavioral Change Communication) materials, which will address taboos, personal hygiene, safety, and health in the context of safe Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) practices. These materials will be tailored for different user groups. The study team will work closely with the Bangladesh MHM platform, which is a collaboration of 47 organizations that focus on menstrual hygiene management. WaterAid Bangladesh chairs the platform and is currently developing a localized and context specific MHM application (App), along with a centralized knowledge management repository. This solutions package will include a website, Facebook page, mobile application, and a call center for users to connect and receive advisory support from health professionals. Additionally,

Thus, the objectives of output 4 are

- Review the existing IEC and BCC materials on MHM practices for targeted population
- Integrate the study findings into these materials and finalize the IEC and BCC materials for the targeted audience
- Additionally, based on the study findings, the study team will propose program implementation suggestions for improving MHM practices of the garment's workers

Methodology

Evidence generated from this study will be finalized through close consultation with the MHM subject expert, sector specialists, and relevant stakeholders. The consultant/ consultancy firm is expected to submit a proper methodology and activity plan for validation of the knowledge products. Also, the study team will share findings for the three outputs (1,2 and 4) with a broader range of audience.

Scope of work

- Review existing IEC and BCC materials on MHM products and menstrual hygiene practices for the targeted communities
- Develop and finalize the IEC and BCC materials for the targeted population.
- Consult with relevant stakeholders, subject expert, sector specialists to finalize the communication materials.
- Disseminate study findings with the wider stakeholders (including representative from the government, development sectors, and academia)

Timeframe and deliverables

The timeframe of the assignment is 7 months after signing the agreement. The contracted organization/team will submit an inception report that includes details methodology including proposed data collection tools, analysis plan and work plan with key milestones within two weeks of signing the contract. The inception report will be reviewed and approved by WaterAid. Key milestone and timeline are given in the below table

	Key Activities	Timeline
1	Inception report	2 weeks of contract signing
2	Output 1: Landscape Analysis Report submission	10 weeks of contract signing
3	Output 2: Comparative analysis of feasibility and accessibility of MHM products in Bangladesh report	20 weeks of contract signing
4	Output 3: Piloting of Vulva tolls report submission	20 weeks of contract signing

5	Output 4: Prepare and submit IEC and BCC materials and disseminate the study findings	24 weeks of contract signing
6	Finalize all report, IEC, and BCC materials	28 weeks of contract signing

The contracted organization/team is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- Inception report containing final methodology, analysis plan, report outline (For outcome 1,2&3), including detailed work plan and timeline.
- A well-written draft report for output 1,2 and 3 according to study objectives and containing detailed findings.
- Prepare IEC/BCC materials for output 4 and consult with the sector specialists, academicians to finalize the materials.
- A detailed final report for each output containing a high-quality executive summary (concise and well-articulated), interesting findings, recommendations, and synthesis of key issues.
- Work collaboratively with WaterAid Bangladesh to prepare and submit scientific manuscript to the peer reviewed journal
- Hardcopy (01) and Softcopy of the final report of each output, including all datasets, syntax and analysis, BCC and IEC materials
- Disseminate study findings with the senior management of WaterAid and other relevant stakeholders.

Mode of payment

The payment will be made in following four instalments:

Instalments	Percentage	Schedule for payment
First	10%	After acceptance of inception report
Second	20%	After acceptance of the report for output 1 and final data collection tools for output 2
Third	40%	After acceptance of the report for output 2 and output 3
Fourth	30%	After receiving the final deliverables: All approved final report, approval of the BCC and IEC materials, handover of all data set and syntax, hard and soft copy

		of final report and any other deliverable as mentioned under scope of work and deliverables section
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Expected competency

Interested team of consultants/consulting/research firm(s) is expected to have the following competencies and experience:

- Proven track record of conducting public health/ reproductive health / Menstrual hygiene management related research
- The lead researcher should have at least 8-10 years of experience in conducting reproductive and menstrual health related studies with good scientific publication record.
- The lead researcher should have academic track record in medical science with specialization in public health and/or reproductive health related studies
- Track record of conducting qualitative research and data analysis
- Proven track record of conducting quantitative analysis and report writing
- Expertise in developing BCC and IEC materials

Technical proposal submission form

A.	Forwarding letter format	1 Page
B.	Statement of Suitability	1 Page
C.	Technical Proposal	13 Pages
D.	Short CV of key members including list of publications Details CV/ List of publications can be added as separate attachment	6 Pages
E.	Proof of work -At least five relevant studies/Work with the link of the output/report (Project/ Study summary including Introduction, objective, methodology and approaches, and result/output). Output/ report can be shared as link.	4 Pages

**The format for A is given below. The format for B, C, D and E is expected to be prepared by the organization/.

A. Forwarding Letter Format

(Please use letterhead pad)

[*Location, Date*]

To
WaterAid
House 97/B, Road 25, Block A
Banani, Dhaka 1213

Dear Madam/Sir:

We, the undersigned are offering to provide the following assignments in accordance with your Request for Proposal (RFP) dated [*Date*] on "**Landscape study on MHM products and comparative analysis on feasibility and acceptability of MHM products in Bangladesh** "

We are hereby submitting our proposal, which includes this Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal.

If negotiations are held during the period of validity of the proposal, i.e., before [*Date*] we undertake to negotiate on the basis of the proposed staff. Our proposal is binding upon us and subject to the modifications resulting from contract negotiations.

We understand you are not bound to accept any proposal you receive.

Yours sincerely,

Authorized Signature:

Name:

Title:

Name of Firm/Org:

Address:

Financial proposal submission form

- F. Forwarding Letter format
- G. Summary of budget/costs.
- H. Breakdown of price per deliverables with unit cost
- I. Budget Narratives

**The format for F is given below. The format for G, H and I are expected to be prepared by the organization.

F. Forwarding Letter format

(Please use letterhead pad)

[Location, Date]

To
WaterAid
House 97/B, Road 25, Block A
Banani, Dhaka 1213

Dear Sir:

We the undersigned are offering to provide the following assignments in accordance with your Request for Proposal (RFP) dated *[Date]*. Our attached Financial Proposal is for the sum of Taka *[Amount in words and figures]*.

This amount is inclusive of the local VAT and taxes, which we have estimated at *[Amount(s) in words and figures]*. We understand that the local VAT and taxes payable will be determined as per applicable law and will be deducted at source while making payments.

Our Financial Proposal shall be binding upon us subject to the modifications resulting from contract negotiations, up to expiration of the validity period of the Proposal, i.e., *[Date]*.

We understand you are not bound to accept any proposal you receive.

Yours sincerely,

Authorized Signature:

Name:

Title:

Name of Firm/Org:

Address: