**Terms of Reference (ToR)**

***Midline Study of “SUSHIL: Supporting the Unity and Sustainability of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to Uphold Human Rights, National Integrity, and Rule of Law in Bangladesh” Project***

**About ActionAid:** ActionAid is a non-profit organization that was established in the early 1970s and has been working in Bangladesh since the 1980s to achieve social justice and eradicate all forms of inequality. In Bangladesh, ActionAid focuses on four strategic priorities: women’s rights and gender equity; resilience and climate justice; young people; and humanitarian response.

**About SUSHIL Project:** ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) has started to implement an European Union funded project entitled ‘’ Supporting the Unity and Sustainability of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to uphold Human Rights, National Integrity and Rule of Law in Bangladesh (SUSHIL)’’ for a four-year period from January 2023 to December 2026. SUSHIL aims to strengthen the capacities of a wide range of CSOs to allow them to voice their concerns and aspirations while engaging, promoting, and advocating for their civil and political rights and contributing to a strong, functioning democracy.

**General objective of the SUSHIL project** is to strengthen civil society organizations as independent actors of good governance and development in their own right.

**The specific objective of the project** is to strengthen the ability of local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), alliances, networks and multi-actor platforms to engage in meaningful policy dialogue and influence authorities as actors of good governance and development.

**Participants:**

Beneficiary: 161,120 individuals

Target Group 1: 32 Women’s Rights CSOs

Target Group 2: 39 Social Cohesion, Peace and Youth Empowerment CSOs:

Target Group 3: 5 minority rights CSOs

Target Group 4: 47 human rights CSOs:

CSOs: 123

FSTPs: 15

**Location:** The project targets 123 grassroots CSOs across nine (09) districts in Bangladesh: Bagerhat, Bandarban, Chattogram, Dhaka, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Kushtia, Naogaon, and Satkhira. The project aims to empower CSOs, ensuring their active participation in governance and advocacy for civil and political rights.

**Major Interventions of SUSHIL:**

* Conduct research on the legal and regulatory framework affecting the enabling environment and challenging grassroots CSOs
* Establishment of a legal counselling cell to support targeted grassroots CSOs
* Create a Citizens Journalist Forum for youth op-ed writers
* Produce video podcasts by youth mobilizers on issues related to civic space participation and their role in contributing to the SDGs
* Awareness raising campaigns with government and public authorities on digital security and digital media
* Undertake theme-specific national level policy dialogues
* Undertake policy dialogue with the Social Justice Parliamentary Caucus and Parliamentary Caucus on Indigenous People and Minority Affairs
* Press statement and petition to include CSOs in the process of drafting or revising domestic policies
* Support targeted grassroots CSOs to conduct public hearing and citizen manifestos
* Undertake inclusive and accessible dialogue and advocacy based on rights recognition
* Support the representation of grassroots CSOs in regional and international dialogue
* Promote and mainstream voluntary local review of the progress in achieving the SDG in alignment with the voluntary national review to operationalize and monitor the SDGs at the local level
* Research and evidence-based advocacy of minority groups, women, PWD and youth centred public services
* Establish a multi-actor’ local CSO alliance hub to strengthen CS alliances and ensure collaboration and build mutual respect, trust and accountability
* Capacity development and technical support and accompaniment to small and peripheral CSOs on financial compliance, institutional donor groups regulations and compliance and EU regulations
* Establish a CSO alliance with the private sector, to provide a platform for collaboration and engagement

## **Baseline study Findings:** The baseline survey assessed the existing capacities, challenges, and opportunities for grassroots CSOs in nine districts of Bangladesh. Findings indicate that while CSOs play a crucial role in advocacy, service delivery, and community mobilization, they face significant barriers, including limited financial resources, inadequate technical expertise, and insufficient access to policy dialogues. The survey highlights the need for capacity-building initiatives, particularly in financial management, advocacy strategies, and legal literacy. Furthermore, CSOs expressed concerns regarding sustainability, emphasizing the necessity of diversified funding sources and stronger networks with national and international stakeholders. The findings underscore the importance of structured mentorship, collaboration with policymakers, and leveraging digital tools for enhanced outreach. Moving forward, tailored training programs, policy engagement, and resource mobilization efforts will be essential in strengthening the resilience and impact of CSOs in advancing human rights, social justice, and governance at the grassroots level.

**Objectives of the Mid-line Study:** ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) seeks a consultant or consulting firm to conduct the Mid-line study to:

* Assess the current status of project participants after two years of intervention.
* Evaluate the progress of project indicators.
* Identify challenges, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for CSOs, marginalized women, youth, and minority groups.
* Provide contextual and policy analysis insights to inform future programming.
* Design the Mid-line study methodology, conduct data collection, provide necessary training, and produce a comprehensive report with actionable recommendations.



## **Methodology:** The study team will facilitate Midline evaluation using Quantitative and Qualitative data considering the community based participatory reflections with following research questionnaire and OECD/DAC criteria.

1. **Quantitative Data**

**CSO community Survey:** This method allows a surveyor to gain information from a large number of CSOs in a structure’s way according to specific questions, often in ways they allow for statistical analysis. These can range from being very simple to complex, which makes them useful in both development/empowerment contexts. They can include a structured set of closed questions (yes/no or multiple-choice questions) or they can include open-ended questions such as semi-structured interviews.

Considering intervened the sample size 400 or more measurements/surveys are needed to have a confidence level of 95% that the real value is within ±5% of the measured/surveyed value ([Sample Size Calculator](https://www.calculator.net/sample-size-calculator.html?type=1&cl=95&ci=5&pp=50&ps=1650&x=Calculate)). To minimize the sample error and make more representative results with reference to two geographic areas, it will be considered 350 as round figure (proportionately distributed among working areas areas will collect data as Enumerators using mobile-based data collection systems design with KOBO toolbox.

1. **Qualitative Data**

**Literature /Document Review:** All relevant programme documents i.e., Projects Interim Report, projects research/study/publication review, Baseline report, Quarterly reports, ALPS, HRBA, and annual monitoring as well as all kinds of project reports, plans and budget, financial documents, and other related documents to review.

**Participatory Evaluation Exercise by CSOs and Stakeholders:** The study team will facilitate the process for participatory evaluation exercise with community and stakeholders using Tree and Seed tools. Within this exercise the CSOs will evaluate themselves including identify impact results, collective weightage of the impact and mapping the factors for impact, identify challenges to sustain the impact and finally share their reflections for prolongation of the impact.

**KII Survey:** The study team will facilitate the process by engaging other stakeholders of projects like government official, service providers, representative etc.

**Capacity Assessment CSOs:** These evaluations will also assess the capacity of 147 CSOs:

* Legitimacy and Governance,
* Organizational Management,
* Staff Management,
* Administration and Logistics,
* Financial Management,
* Program/Project Management,
* Community Engagement and Acceptance,
* External Relations/Networking,
* Sustainable Initiatives,
* Participation in Decision Making Role,
* Advocacy initiatives

A self-explanatory assessment tool will be developed and oriented respectively by consultant

**Success Story:** Issue based success stories (Women rights, Human rights, Minority Rights, Youth Rights etc) data will be collected to make impact stories. Five to six stories will be finally developed.

## Sample Research Questionnaire:

**Impact Indicator-1:** % of targeted CSOs effectively conducting advocacy on sensitive issues such as democracy, governance, and human rights

### Key Questions:

1. In the past 2 years, has your CSO engaged in advocacy efforts related to democracy, governance, or human rights? If yes mention the number of advocacy efforts.
2. Which kind of advocacy activities has your CSO conducted on sensitive issues?
3. How confident is your CSO in addressing challenges or resistance while advocating for democracy, governance, or human rights?
4. What are the primary barriers your CSO faces in advocating for democracy, governance, or human rights?
5. Has your CSO observed any tangible impact from its advocacy efforts in the past year? If yes, please describe (e.g., policy changes, increased public awareness, government engagement).

**Impact Indicator – 2:** # of instances public office holders taking action to promote diversity and tolerance as a result of collaborative civil society advocacy.

### Key Questions:

1. In the past year, has your CSO engaged with public office holders (e.g., government officials, policymakers) to advocate for diversity and tolerance?
2. As a result of your CSO’s advocacy efforts, have any public office holders taken concrete actions to promote diversity and tolerance? Mention the action.
3. Can you provide specific examples of actions taken by public office holders in response to your CSO’s advocacy efforts?

**Outcome Indicator-1:** Number of local multi-stakeholder policy dialogue recommendations and findings jointly shared by local CSO alliances and networks with local administration, relevant ministries, national CSO platforms and national institutes (Information Commission; Law Commission; NHRC etc.)

### Key Questions:

1. In the past 2 years, how many policy dialogue recommendations or findings has your CSO alliance or network jointly developed and shared with local administration, relevant ministries, national CSO platforms, or national institutes (e.g., Information Commission, Law Commission, NHRC)?
2. Which of the following stakeholders have received policy recommendations or findings from your CSO alliance or network? (Select all that apply)
3. Have any of the shared policy dialogue recommendations resulted in further action or engagement from the receiving stakeholders? If yes, please describe the response (e.g., formal acknowledgment, incorporation into policies, follow-up meetings).

**Outcome Indicator-2:** % of local CSOs, alliance and networks reported facing fewer challenges and barriers in advancing their operational mandate and participation in the development process.

### Key Questions

1. In the past year, has your CSO, alliance, or network experienced a reduction in challenges or barriers while carrying out advocacy, service delivery, or participation in the development process?
2. Which of the following challenges or barriers has your CSO, alliance, or network faced less frequently compared to previous years? (Select all that apply)
3. What factors have contributed to reducing the challenges your CSO, alliance, or network faces in advancing its operational mandate and development participation? (Select all that apply)

**Midline Location:** Projects working area

**Midline Research Utilization:** Midline findings will be used by:

* AAB & Partners: To track & refine project implementation and monitoring.
* CSOs & Alliances: To strengthen their organizational capacities and advocacy efforts.
* Government & Donors: To inform project progress, policy engagement and funding decisions.

**Scope & Deliverables**

***4.1 Expected Outputs***

* Develop and finalize Midline study tools and methodologies.
* Organize training sessions on data collection methodologies.
* Conduct data collection, validation, and analysis.
* Measure projects Indicator
* Provide recommendations for Projects indicators.
* Engage in dialogue with AAB staff and stakeholders.
* Develop and present the final Midline report.
* Final presentation of the report on management responses.

**4.2 Specific Tasks:**

***Inception Phase:***

* Conduct meetings with AAB MEAL and project staff.
* Review project documentation.
* Develop an inception report and work plan.
* Design data collection instruments (quantitative and qualitative).
* Develop digital data collection plans (e.g., mobile/online forms).
* Ensure research ethics compliance.

***Data Collection Phase:***

* Pilot and refine tools with select CSOs.
* Train and support data collectors.
* Oversee data collection and ensure quality control.
* Provide feedback on initial data findings.
* Analysis & Reporting Phase
* SConsolidate and analyze data from all project locations.
* Provide key baseline indicators aligned with the project log frame.
* Develop a draft report for review and feedback.
* Finalize and present the Midline study report.

**Timeline & Expected Outputs:** The study will take place from 15 April to 31 May 2025.

**Budget:** BDT 300,000 approximately

**Qualifications:** The consultant must have:

* Expertise in CSO governance, accountability, and institutionalization in Bangladesh.
* 15+ years of experience in conducting baseline/midline/endline studies.
* Strong knowledge of rights-based approaches and advocacy.
* Proven experience in developing and applying research methodologies.
* Fluency in English and Bengali (written and verbal).
* Ability to conduct participatory research and engage diverse stakeholders.

**Management & Reporting:** The consultant will report to the Manager – MEAL/Manager, SUSHIL Project, and coordinate closely with AAB project staff. Regular updates and milestone reviews will be expected.

**Application Process:** Interested consultants/firms should submit:

* A technical proposal detailing the methodology, work plan, and previous experience.
* A financial proposal including a breakdown of costs.
* CVs of key personnel.

Two references from previous assignments.

Applications should be submitted by [submission deadline] to [contact email].

**Submission of the Proposal**

Interested Consultant(S)/Consultancy Agencies are requested to submit a proposal including the following:

1. Company/consultant profile and past experience.
2. Detailed cost breakdown with detailed specifications
3. Detailed Planning and delivery timeline
4. Contact details of the focal person.

**Deadline for Proposal Submission**: **12 April 2025**

• Please click below the link to submit your proposals

**Link:** [**https://jobs.actionaidbd.org/consultancy**](https://jobs.actionaidbd.org/consultancy)

*(Please note that, if you have any problem while applying, communicate at the Mobile No. 01618988183)*

**Disclaimer:** ActionAid Bangladesh reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications without assigning any reason thereof.