



The Asia Foundation

Promoting Decent Work and Acceptable Working Conditions in the Tannery Sector in Bangladesh

Terms of Reference for Researcher(s)/Research firm

Date: April 10, 2022

From: The Asia Foundation

Country: Bangladesh

Location: Dhaka

Tentative initiation date: May 10, 2022

Time dedicated to the desk review and to the writing of the report: to be defined with the consultant

Introduction

The Asia Foundation is seeking an external researcher(s)/research firm to identify best practices and develop a cost benefit analysis for the sector to become eligible for LWG audit protocol and certification under the project “Promoting Decent Work and Acceptable Working Conditions in the Tannery Sector in Bangladesh” An exposure visit to the Tannery industries in Chennai, India will be held in May 2022. This analysis will be conducted based on this exposure visit.

About the organization

The Asia Foundation (the Foundation) is an international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Informed by six decades of experience and deep local expertise, the Foundation’s programs address critical issues—governance and law, economic development, women’s empowerment, environment, and regional cooperation—to encourage Asia’s continued development as a peaceful, just, and thriving region.

Background

Bangladesh currently has no Leather Working Group (LWG) certified¹ tanneries, although there are only three in the footwear subsector of the leather industry. The tanning industry lags behind other industries in terms of having the Environmental, Social and Quality (ESQ)

¹ LWG is the world’s leading certification for the leather manufacturing industry. It offers a suite of auditing tools to assess the environmental and social performance of leather manufacturing facilities. This is the prerequisite for manufacturing units to export leather to the U.S. and E.U. markets.



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compliance required for achieving global standards and certification. While industry owners understand that compliance is a prerequisite for accreditation, export, and trade, longstanding and emerging bottlenecks, including loss of business impacting financial status and credit rating of tanneries, tanners' lack of access to financing, and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) permitting big individual tanneries to set up individual effluent treatment plants have prevented tanneries from making progress in obtaining certification. Updated audit protocols of LWG certification in 2021 include a significant focus on Occupational Safety and health (OSH), chemical management, and social compliance. Demonstrating responsible practices by tanners and workers in these areas is imperative for achieving ESQ compliance.

To support tanneries and the Tannery Workers Union (TWU) to adopt the best practices needed for certification, the project will organize an exposure visit to compliant tanneries in India. Tanneries in India use similar procedures as Bangladesh in collecting raw materials from different parts of the country and have a similar tanning culture. India has more than 100 LWG certified tanneries.

An independent third-party researcher will carry out a cost-benefit analysis of investment on compliance during this visit. Participants will observe good practices of LWG certified tanneries that can be replicated in Bangladeshi tanneries.

After the exposure visit, with support from the international auditor, the Asia Foundation and Bangladesh Tanners Association (BTA) will target 10-15 tanners and provide them with a two-day training to build their knowledge on the basics of LWG certification and audit protocols. These tanners will eventually work as change makers or ambassadors in the industry and motivate others to join this effort and prepare for LWG audits and accreditation. Through this entire process, the increased commitment and investment of tanners in achieving social compliance will ultimately impact working conditions and labor in the tannery sector. As a result, workers will have extensive scope for implementing OSH and labor law across the industry. The TWU representative will also share best practices of social compliance with workers upon returning to Bangladesh while the BTA member tanners will share best practices of ESQ compliance with their fellow tannery owners in periodic BTA meetings, including their annual general meeting and other platforms.

Objectives of the research

- Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of investments on ESQ compliances for LWG certification and provide a projection of relevant data
- Illustrate good practices of LWG certified Indian tanneries
- Record and report the local (Indian) industry insights and expert opinions from the exposure visit to India.
- Produce a comprehensive report.



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Research methods and process

Overall research approach and data collection methods proposed but not limited to:

1. **Preparation phase:** Secondary data review, briefing with TAF personnel at Bangladesh country office, writing an inception report for study stating the sources of information, tools for collection. The methodological proposition of study must allow a mutual understanding between TAF team and the consultant, regarding the objectives, scope, time and expected results of the assignment.
2. **Field phase (Chennai, India):** Meeting with key industry stakeholders, especially trade body, local authorities, beneficiaries, workers' union, sector experts and civil society organizations.
3. **Cost benefit Analysis:** Consultation with Bangladeshi tanners after exposure visit to Indian tanneries will be required. The cost benefit analysis should be based on the findings gathered from both the consultation with Bangladeshi tanners and the exposure visit.
4. **Analysis and debriefing phase:** The results and preliminary conclusions will be presented to TAF teams and partners at field level. A debriefing in the capital will be organized by the consultant(s)/consulting firm to discuss the results and recommendations.

Deliverables

All deliverables are to be submitted to Director, The Asia Foundation in Bangladesh in English.

Deliverables include:

- An **inception report**, to be submitted one week after the beginning of the study, explaining the methodology, work program and timetable for the study.
- A **final report** to be submitted at the end of the study with a maximum extension of 30 pages excluding annexes. The report should also be sent through email in word and pdf format.
- Study **pictures and soft copies** of relevant data and its analysis
- **PowerPoint presentation** of the main findings and recommendations

Duration and dates

The assessment is to take place over a period of 50 days starting from May 10, 2022. The study report and all concerned activities leading to the production of the final report must be completed by June 30, 2022.

Profile of the Consultant

An external consultant/researcher will be involved for the task.



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Required skills and competencies

Following are the required skills and competencies expected from the selected applicant for conducting this end evaluation. In the case of an evaluation team, it is expected that the team leader should fulfil all required skills and competencies.

Education:

- Advanced degree in relevant discipline (e.g., Economics, Development Studies, and other social studies etc.).
- Advanced degree in research methodology is an asset.

Professional experience:

- At least 5 years' experience cost benefit analysis in a development context and proven accomplishment in undertaking research, qualitative and quantitative both.
- Experience in evaluating labor rights and/or economic development related programs/projects.
- Experience in managing and coordinating research and delivering agreed outputs on time.

Knowledge and skills:

- Knowledge of cost benefit analysis
- Extensive knowledge of qualitative and quantitative study methods.
- Ability to respond to comments and questions in a timely, appropriate manner
- Ability to write and present high quality, clear, concise reports in English

Important: The researcher must explicitly declare his/her independence from any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing, or advising any aspect of the program of The Asia Foundation that is the subject of the study. Selection process will ensure that the researcher does not have any relationship with The Asia Foundation program in present and the evaluator/s is/are willing to travel to and work in the program implementation areas.

He/she will conduct his or her duties in respect of the policies of The Asia Foundation.

Child Safeguarding Policy

The Asia Foundation expects that its contractors' professional conduct reflects proper behavior in accordance with local culture and traditions. The incumbent assures the moral protection of the name of The Asia Foundation and defends in all circumstances the interests of the movement.

The Asia Foundation intervenes without any affiliation for politics, religion, or financial profit. He/she will direct his or her activities and engagements without preoccupation of political, racial, or religious affiliation.



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Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy

The Asia Foundation expects its contactor/s recognizes the need to maintain the highest ethical and professional standards when working with communities to ensure that power inequalities are not abused or exploited, and the evaluator/s will ensure that their commitment to non-discriminatory and respectful behavior is embedded in all their practices and is communicated to all everyone.

Application Process

Interested candidates should submit -

1. A technical offer including: An understanding of the issues at stake of the study and the Terms of Reference (ToR): development of problems and formulation of questions which the offer will aim to answer; Methodology and proposed tools; The timetable showing the details for the completion of each of the evaluation phases. The proposed schedule should include time for briefing and debriefing
2. A detailed financial offer including one person budget of exposure visit to India
3. An up-to-date CV
4. Technical sample of a research/study report done by the candidate
5. References

Only complete applications will be considered -

The applicants must send off requested documents electronically to **country.bangladesh.jobs@asiafoundation.org**, clearly indicating on the subject line **“application for cost benefit analysis – your firm/organization name.”**

The deadline to apply is April 20, 2022.