



The Asia Foundation

Terms of Reference- Mapping of ongoing and upcoming Future Work Interventions intended for RMG industry in Bangladesh

The Asia Foundation (TAF) seeks the services of a Dhaka-based skilled research consultant or consultancy firm to undertake a thorough mapping out of existing or to be started Future Work Interventions intended for RMG industry in Bangladesh for H&M Foundation's Future of Work pilot and Collective Impact phase.

About the organizations

The H&M Foundation (H&MF) is a non-profit global foundation, privately funded by the Stefan Persson family, founders, and main owners of H & M Hennes & Mauritz AB (H&M Group). Its mission is to drive long-lasting positive change and improve living conditions by investing in people, communities, and innovative ideas. Through partnerships with experienced organizations around the globe, the H&M Foundation aims to accelerate the progress needed to reach the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The Asia Foundation (TAF) is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia for more than 65 years. TAF opened its first office in Dhaka in 1954 and has maintained a continuous presence since, working with the government of Bangladesh, civil society, community leaders, and the private sector to promote responsive and accountable governance, broad-based and inclusive economic growth, and basic rights and security.

About the program

H&MF is planning to launch a 3-6-year project in Bangladesh to equip female textile workers for an automated and digitized future work environment. The project aims to address the challenges and opportunities brought about by the 4th Industrial Revolution, where increased mechanization and use of digital technology will create an adverse situation in the RMG sector as millions of unskilled Bangladeshis risk to be laid off due to a lack of technological skills. Figures show that, 60 percent of the jobs in the RMG sector will become automated by 2041. There is already a decrease in RMG jobs (4.4 million in 2013 to 3.5 million in 2018) and women will be bearing the brunt of this development since they are disproportionately represented in the most vulnerable, lowest-paid forms of work. Thus, the project aims at increase female employability, to prevent livelihood risks for RMG women.

H&MF's vision is to create an **Innovation Hub for Future Work** interventions through a multi-stakeholder approach, addressing female job security through a holistic lens by looking at all factors influencing the employability and empowerment, from the household/community level to the industry sphere.

The first phase of this initiative is a short-term **Disaster Relief** effort providing female garment workers with emergency interventions such as: access to health, WASH, child support, and gender services, to cope with COVID 19. In the second phase of the program known as Future Work Pilots (*where we are now*), H&MF and TAF intend to test innovative ideas to address the readiness of, and prepare the Bangladesh garments industry for, changing trends and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.



The Asia Foundation is serving as a **Project Coordinating Organization (PCO)**, helping to facilitate the project activities of collaborating organizations. Two pilot programs will be implemented in Phase 2:

1. **Skilling and Perception Change project**

Purpose: Implement a demand-led upskilling training to equip female garment workers with critical skills required for managerial and sophisticated machine-operator roles. The program has three components: Soft Skill Training, Hard Skill Training, and a Perception Change intervention. The ambition is to synchronize and integrate these three types of interventions to offer a holistic skilling program. It is thus the dynamic mix of all three components of the program which makes it unique. At present, we have not yet aligned on the exact number of factories or participants.

Partners:

Shimmy Technologies is going to serve as the Hard Skills Training partner. Shimmy develops video game-based skill training that helps female production workers enhance their skills to become multi-machine operators and digital design workers.

CARE Bangladesh will be the Soft Skills Training partner. CARE has been intensively working in the RMG sector for almost two decades, partnering up with different donors and stakeholders in the RMG ecosystem.

BBC Media Action will be the partner for the Perception Change intervention. BBC MA aims to contribute towards improved perceptions and reduced levels of bias among factory owners and executives; increased self-confidence among female garments workers; and more supportive attitudes within families and communities, together contributing to an increase in the proportion of women in supervisory and machine operator roles within the Bangladesh RMG sector.

2. **Industry Dialogue Series and Innovation Challenge Fund**

Purpose: To create a platform for RMG industry stakeholders to discuss disruptive Future Work themes and pave a roadmap to ensure inclusive industry adoption, growth and sustainability in the transformation needed to address the 4th Industrial Revolution.

This will be parallely accompanied by an Innovation Challenge Fund which will identify promising business innovations with high potential for impact on the lives of female garment workers and increasing Bangladeshi RMG sector's competitiveness.

BRAC Social Innovation Lab will be the implementing partner for the Dialogue Series and Innovation Challenge Fund intervention.

The successes and lessons learnt from the first and second phase will be articulated and synthesized to ensure the success of the longer-term project of 3-6 years, which will be known as the Collective Impact



Initiative. In this larger phase, some or all of the partners from the first and second phase, and possibly even new partners, will work together to create a cooperative and coordinative approach to ensure that the targeted beneficiaries, the female garment workers, become overall more equipped to be in supervisory or technical roles along with families, communities as well as garments managers and owners who will play a greater supportive role. By doing so, the Bangladeshi garments industry will better prepare itself for the Fourth Industrial Revolution without defeminizing itself.

Purpose and scope of the study

Given the above program background, TAF wants to carry out a mapping of ongoing Future Work-related initiatives concerning the forthcoming Dialogue Series and Innovation Challenge to understand the context in which the program is operating. The result of this assignment will inform the development, re-design if requires and continuation of the forthcoming industry dialogues and challenge fund in the Collective Impact phase.

TAF is aware that the Future of Work has become an interest area for diverse actors in Bangladesh. The interest and need have been further amplified during the ongoing pandemic. There are currently a few interventions going on in Bangladesh on Future Work and it’s imperative that our forthcoming program stands out from the crowd. As of now there are a few interventions surrounding the industry dialogue and innovation challenge. As a result, there are quite a few scopes to work on but that also creates a risk of duplication of efforts by multiple organizations. So, it is imperative to map the past, current or to be started Future Work Interventions especially related to Industry level dialogue and Innovation related interventions in order to make sure that the current program stands out and prepares the industry for the 4IR without duplicating efforts.

H&MF and TAF want to address these kinds of uncertainties in the very beginning of the larger or Collective Impact phase and therefore, have decided to conduct such a study to make sure that the Future Work Interventions do not duplicate already existing dialogues and innovation efforts and constrain unnecessarily resources. The consultant is required to deep dives into these initiatives, learn about their focus as well as objective broadly to make sure H&MF’s intended program is not an exact replica. The focus of the mapping should be on Future Work-related initiatives i.e. Industry Dialogues and Innovation Challenge Fund efforts that are large in scale/noteworthy, has been going on or in the pipeline.

Timeframe	April-May 2021
Location	Dhaka, Bangladesh
Consulting Days	15 days
Foundation contact	Fixed Price (Daily Rate Contract)
Stakeholders	The results of this study are intended for internal use by the program to inform H&MF and TAF about possible duplication in the project and program design. Findings will be shared with the funder, strategic partners, and implementation partners as it deems necessary.
Primary Areas of Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A thorough review of H&MF’s FW pilot phase’s projects especially BRAC’s Industry Dialogue and Innovation Fund Challenge and its documents and about the Collective Impact approach



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a quick analysis of existing Future Work initiatives around fast fashion, circular fashion, automation in the apparel sector, advanced manufacturing technology, etc. in Bangladesh to identify the potential overlaps, synergies and how the H&M Foundation Future of Work pilot project can add value. • Identify and catalogue the range of industrial dialogues, research works and challenge fund in regards to Future of Work for RMG sector that has been done, ongoing or to be started, the exact focus of the interventions, duration, delivery mechanism, funded and implemented by, similarities and dissimilarities with H&MF’s forthcoming project.
Data sources	<p>The consultant shall employ multiple tools to conduct the mapping. S/he shall include at least a systematic literature review and face-to-face/virtual interviews with various stakeholders in the private, public, non-profit, and governmental realms.</p>
Deliverables and structure of the report	<p>M1. Kick-off meeting with TAF and share a list of stakeholders to be reached out for this assignment M2. Submit a DRAFT study report in English M3. Presentation of findings and recommendation in MS PowerPoint format M4. Review and finalization of the final report in light of the discussion with TAF and H&MF during the presentation</p> <p>The final report should be jargon-free, clear, and simply written. The main body report should not exceed 25 pages and should include the following sections-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive summary ▪ Acronyms ▪ Background ▪ Research methodology ▪ Limitations ▪ Findings; identifying different ongoing Future Work interventions for RMG workers as well as for the industry along with in what spheres do they overlap/are duplicated with our planned project. ▪ Recommendations: for future project design to avoid duplication as well as any suggested improvements/innovation to existing project design ▪ Appendices <p>Note- Recommendations and findings should be backed up with relevant data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In addition, the final report should contain at least the following Appendices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of documents reviewed



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of organizations/individuals/stakeholders contacted for verification • Any other relevant material, including data collection tools • Further technical data and sources • Photographs (if any)
Payment Schedule	Full payment will be processed upon achieving all milestones.
Reports to	Program Director, The Asia Foundation

Qualifications and work experience

The Consultant will be selected based on the following qualifications:

- Advanced university degree in international relations, international development, public administration, or a related field
- Proven experience in research work
- Existing publications (research article, news article)
- Great knowledge about innovation, similar events & the RMG sector in Bangladesh
- Contextual understanding of the Bangladesh RMG industry’s landscape and relevant stakeholders and their dynamics or power mapping
- Linkages with Bangladesh RMG industry stakeholders to be able to set up meetings and verify data
- Proven ability to work productively, independently, and remotely; responsiveness to requests; and delivery of quality outputs with tight deadlines.
- Effective interpersonal and influencing skills with the ability to communicate and explain report findings to a non-technical audience
- Fluency in speaking, listening and writing in English and Bangla

Application procedures

Interested candidates must submit the following by 8th April 2021:

- Submit a **CV of the maximum of 4 pages** or a **Company and Team profile of 10 pages** along **with a cover letter** of not more than 1 page detailing your experience, suitability and daily rate for the role to country.bangladesh.jobs@asiafoundation.org. Applications that do not meet these page limits and fail to clearly address the suitability of the candidate for this specific position will not be reviewed. We thank all applicants for their interest, however only those making the shortlist will be contacted.
- A **brief plan (not exceeding 4 pages)** including planned timeline and work plan with methodologies/approach, literature review of all relevant secondary sources, milestone and deliverables, respondents/organizations to be consulted, and protocols for data collection and validation, and budget

The Asia Foundation Responsibility

The Asia Foundation Bangladesh office will supervise this study and provide guidance and support as and when needed. The consultant will also work closely with H&M Foundation for this undertaking as required.



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General Terms and Conditions

Any document, information or data entrusted to or produced by the consultant in connection with this project shall be strictly confidential and cannot be used by the consultant for any other purpose without the written consent of the H&M Foundation authority. This provision shall remain valid even after the completion of this project.