

# Terms of Reference

**Developing an innovative, scalable and sustainable “Patient Centered Nursing Care Model” in two selected public hospitals in Bangladesh**



## 1. Background

Cowater International Inc. (Cowater) is Canada's global leader in management consulting services specializing in international development. The organization has managed the implementation of over 2500 projects in more than 95 countries worldwide for various clients including FCDO, DFAT Australia, the World Bank and Global Affairs Canada (GAC). Cowater works with governments, partner organizations, communities and civil society to design and implement sustainable solutions that generate positive and lasting social, economic and environmental impact.

Cowater is implementing a GAC-funded project titled "Empowering Women Through Professionalization of the Nursing Sector in Bangladesh" (ProNurse). This eight-year project aims to enhance professional status, voice and influence of nurses as well as improving the quality of nursing care in Bangladesh. To ensure sustainability, the ProNurse project emphasizes creating an enabling environment where nurses can reach their full potential and deliver the optimum level of care leading to better patient management and improved health outcomes.

The project is implemented jointly with the government of Bangladesh. Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery (DGNM) is the key Government of Bangladesh (GOB) counterpart. As lead, Cowater is implementing the project with two Canadian organizations –International Health Unit of the University of Montreal (UdeM) and the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN). UdeM provides technical assistance in improving the capacity of nurse teachers and CASN assists in strengthening the regulatory function of the Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC) for high quality education.

The Ultimate Outcome of the ProNurse Project is ***"Enhanced voice, influence and empowerment of women in the health sector in Bangladesh"***, which is supported by three mutually reinforcing Intermediate Outcomes:

1. Improved quality of gender-responsive education for female nurses in both public and private sectors in Bangladesh
2. Improved performance and professional status of female nurses in Bangladesh
3. Improved enabling environment for female nurses' increased participation in the health sector in Bangladesh

Key project stakeholders include the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), DGNM, Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC), College of Nursing (CoN) Mohakhali, targeted public / private Nursing Institutes and Bangladesh Nurses Association (BNA).

## **2. Rationale of this consultancy**

Quality nursing care directly contributes to faster recovery and lower mortality rates. Skilled nursing care ensures timely interventions, minimizing medical errors, precise monitoring, and effective treatment administration<sup>1</sup>. Efficient nursing care leads to better utilization of healthcare resources, including beds, equipment, and medications. Moreover, they can provide cost-effective care, reducing the need for more expensive medical interventions and specialist consultations. Numerous studies emphasize the significance of innovative nursing care techniques in LMICs and the revolutionary effects of such programs on population health. However, nursing sector in Bangladesh faces lots of challenges including heavy workload and disproportionate patient nurse ratio.

## **3. Purpose of the consultancy/study**

Cowater international is looking for a consultancy firm/research organization to develop and pilot an innovative, sustainable and scalable nursing care model that can significantly contribute to improved health outcomes in Bangladesh. The proposed study should also explore how and to what extent, enhancing the capacity of nurses, optimizing their assignments and creating an enabling environment at the workplace can contribute to improving quality of nursing services leading to better health outcome. The findings of the proposed research should help government and other key stakeholders to develop/adopt policies and strategies for the establishment and implementation of a quality nursing care system across all levels of health system in Bangladesh.

## **4. Specific Objectives:**

To develop a sustainable and scalable model of quality nursing services, the study will focus on exploring, formulating, designing and testing solutions that remove or mitigate the challenges faced by nurses to efficiently deliver their services and ensure high quality patient care. The specific objectives of the study include-

- i. Identifying and analyzing gaps and key challenges (workload, skill gaps, resource limitations, and workplace conditions) that hinder nurses from delivering efficient and high-quality patient care.
- ii. Assessing current nursing management, monitoring and supervision system, as well as efficiency of assignment and task distribution, and developing strategies to optimize resource utilization and reduce burnout.
- iii. Designing and implementing targeted capacity-building initiatives to improve nurses' clinical competencies, decision-making skills, and ability to deliver patient-centered care.

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<sup>1</sup> Rahman, M. M., & Islam, M. A. (2019). Impact of nurse staffing on patient outcomes in a tertiary hospital in Bangladesh. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, 38(1), 1-9.

- iv. Pilot, and evaluate a sustainable and scalable patient centered nursing care model that integrates best practices, technology, and innovative management strategies to enhance efficiency, and quality of care leading to better health outcomes.

## 5. Expected outcomes:

The project intends to achieve the following outcomes:

### **Ultimate outcome:**

Improved health outcomes of the patients who are admitted into the selected hospitals during the project where the patient centered care model is being piloted

### **Intermediate outcomes:**

- (a) An innovative, sustainable and scalable patient centered care model has been piloted and demonstrated at 2 tertiary level public hospitals, 2 secondary level public hospitals (UHs)
- (b) Improved patient management and nursing care services in the selected hospitals

### **Immediate outcomes:**

- (a) Improved coordination between doctors, nurses and support staff members in those selected hospitals/health facilities
- (b) Improved efficiency and quality of nurses' performance
- (c) Increased job satisfaction among nurses in the selected hospitals/health facilities

## 6. Scope of Work

The scope of work of this research ensures that nursing care practices in primary and secondary hospitals in Bangladesh are analyzed, improved, and institutionalized through evidence-based interventions. By engaging key stakeholders, leveraging innovative solutions, and fostering systemic change, this initiative aims to enhance the quality of patient-centered nursing care while ensuring sustainability and scalability. The scopes of work of this study are as follows:

- i. Understanding Nursing Care Practices:*** A range of social research methods will be employed to assess and analyze actual nursing care practices in primary and secondary level hospitals.
- ii. Identify major challenges and gaps:*** Applying mixed method approaches, the study will focus on identifying major challenges and gaps at different levels of health system (individual, institutional, policy and system levels) that prevent nurses from delivering optimum level of care
- iii. Identification and Prioritization of Solutions:*** Based on the data and insights from the context analysis, an appropriate approach needs to be employed to identify and prioritize potential solutions. Ultimately a sustainable and scalable model of nursing services to improve patient care needs to be developed.

- iv. Implement and test the innovative, scalable and sustainable Nursing care model in both public and private sectors setting**
- v. Evaluation and Impact Assessment:** An final evaluation and impact assessment need to be conducted to assess the efficiency, effectiveness including the cost-effectiveness, sustainability, scalability and impact the proposed nursing care model on improved patient care and better health outcomes in Bangladesh.
- vi. Producing recommendations:** At the end of the research project, the researchers must produce a list of actionable recommendations for sustainability and scaling up the model across the public and private health sector in Bangladesh

## **7. Methodology:**

This study will adopt a mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies to develop and validate a model for optimizing and professionalizing nursing care in primary and secondary healthcare settings in Bangladesh. Innovative methodology will be preferred for this study.

## **8. Deliverables**

- Deliverable 1: Inception report and implementation plan with detailed methodology
- Deliverable 2: context analysis report
- Deliverable 3: Reports on the identification and prioritization of possible solutions to improve nursing care efficiency in the current context.
- Deliverable 4: A proposal for piloting a scalable and sustainable patient centered nursing care model
- Deliverable 5: Impact evaluation/ final report including list of recommendations for sustainability and scalability of the model

## **9. Team composition, Qualifications & Experience required:**

- The assignment will be carried out by an agency specializing in research studies, with extensive experience in conducting health system research and qualitative studies. The agency should have a strong background in nursing and midwifery-related initiatives and research within the country.
- The agency should have successfully completed research on midwifery / nursing care
- The agency should have experience in translating research findings into policy actions
- A well-established research infrastructure is required to support field-based data collection, capacity development in clinical services, and electronic data archiving. The agency must also ensure the highest level of confidentiality for research subjects and uphold the validity and reliability of the collected data.

**10. Senior team members of the study/research team should include:**

- The Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator must hold a PhD degree and have significant publications on health system research in international peer-reviewed journals.
- The research team should have postgraduate qualifications in nursing and midwifery services, a master's in public health, or a PhD in Health or Social Sciences, with specialized knowledge and experience in nursing care and gender equality.
- The team must have a comprehensive understanding of nursing and midwifery care across different levels of health facilities, as well as the government health structure, processes, and systems.
- A minimum of 15 years of professional experience is required

**11. Duration and timeline of the Study:** 24 months from signing the contract.

**12. Proposal content**

a) The technical proposal should contain:

- Brief presentation of the firm's/individual's experience, highlighting similar assignments undertaken
- List of team members: current and complete CVs of proposed key experts, emphasizing relevant past experiences
- Approach and methodology for carrying out the assignment
  - Propose a Logic Model with a performance measurement framework with appropriate indicators
  - Provide an outline and clear steps on how the study will be carried out
  - Proposed sampling approach and scale
  - Scalability and sustainability plan
- Level of effort and division of labour for each team member
- Indicative work plan, with reference to requested Duration and Timeline above, presented in Gantt chart format
- Two research reports/papers in English as samples of similar work.

b) The financial proposal should include:

- Total fees for carrying out the assignment in **Canadian dollars (CAD)**
- A breakdown of the fees showing the daily fee rate in CAD, as well as the number of person-days for each key expert
- An itemized list of expected operational and travel expenses in CAD

### **13. Application process**

Consultants/firms that meet the requirements may submit a proposal, which should include:

- a) A brief cover letter including the consultant's/firm's suitability for the assignment and current contact information
- b) A technical proposal as per the guideline (see above)
- c) A financial proposal as per the guideline (see above)

### **14. Submission of proposals**

All applications are to be submitted through [info@cowater-pronurse.com](mailto:info@cowater-pronurse.com) no later than **08 May 2025**. Incomplete and/or late applications will not be evaluated. We thank all applicants, however only the successful bidder will be contacted.

Cowater International reserves the right to cancel this procurement process without justification at any time and will not be held liable for any costs associated with responding to this call for applications.