

## Request for Proposal (RFP) for Baseline survey of Nari Shakti, Samaz Shakti (NSSS) Project

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### 1. Background

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#### About Helvetas:

[HELVETAS Swiss intercooperation](#) is a development organization anchored in Switzerland. Our vision is a just world in which all people determine the course of their lives in dignity and security, using environmental resources in a sustainable manner. The promotion of good governance and gender equality and social equity is an integral part of the overall organizational policy of Helvetas Bangladesh, through which we seek to ensure that our organizational culture and practice reflects our commitment to social change.

HELVETAS Swiss intercooperation is a most experienced and largest development organization in Switzerland. It is active in 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. In Bangladesh, it started work in 1997 and in 2000 registered with NGOAB. The organization implemented a variety of projects with a focus on livelihoods/value chains, enterprise development, migration, skills development, local governance, disaster reduction and climate change. Helvetas vision in three words: “life in dignity”. help to support disadvantaged people and communities in developing countries to determine the course of their own lives and provide help for them to help themselves. Helvetas works in three broad working areas (domains) with goals: Ensuring Basic Rights: Water, Food and Climate (WFC); Strengthening Good Governance: Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion (VIC); Creating New Perspectives: Skills, Jobs and Income (SJI).

#### Brief information about NSSS Project:

Cox’s Bazar is one of the most vulnerable districts in Bangladesh, hosting both disaster-prone host communities and displaced Rohingya refugees. The “Nari Shakti, Samaz Shakti” (NSSS) project aims to create a gender-transformative environment that empowers women and marginalized groups, enabling safer, inclusive, and resilient communities.

Designed with gender transformative approach, the project focuses on empowering women socially and economically so they can protect their families from disasters, prevent asset loss, and support their children— especially girls—in building a more prosperous future. Helvetas will implement the project through two partners: one working with host communities in Teknaf and Ukhiya Upazilas, and another with Rohingya communities in selected camps within the same upazilas. The project targets vulnerable women and girls aged 10–35 years.

Given the intersection of gender inequality and climate vulnerability in this region, the NSSS project emphasizes inclusive and sustainable strategies that account for restrictive social norms, limited access to resources, and environmental risks. The baseline study will establish benchmarks for project indicators, assess community needs, attitudes, capacities, and systems, and inform adaptive and inclusive planning across all outcomes and outputs.

**Project Objective:** The project objective is to build a gender-transformative enabling environment, empowering women and marginalized groups to foster safer, more inclusive, and resilient communities in the vulnerable contexts of Cox's Bazar.

**The project planned outcomes and outputs are as follows:**

**Outcome 1:** Economic empowerment of vulnerable and or marginalized women to become a lead change champion (Economic Empowerment).

The related outputs under this outcome are: 1.1. Market assessment and selection of potential economic and livelihood opportunities possible for vulnerable marginalized women for the age group 18-35; 1.2. Identification, selection and capacity strengthening of women entrepreneurs; 1.3. Create safe spaces for income generation, and market linkages and promote women-led enterprises; 1.4. Private sectors are capacitated and promoted business opportunities for vulnerable marginalized women.

**Outcome 2:** Transforming social norms and attitudes thereby reducing social conflict and improved cohesion (Social Protection).

The related outputs under this outcome are: 2.1. Conduct leadership and management capacity assessment and thus, strengthen leadership skills and competence of these selected women entrepreneurs to become lead change champions; 2.2. Selected women (change champions/active citizens) conducted assessment, identified issues, barriers, and opportunities and based on this, developed collective actions and acted upon them for their home and neighborhood; 2.3. Referral service mechanism system for protection through addressing harmful norms for dignified life, rights and wellbeing of young girls particularly on GBV and ECM strengthened and functioning and 2.4 Promoted cohesion and protection measures at community level.

**Outcome 3:** Building safer and more inclusive communities by strengthening resilience and response capacity (Climate Change adaptation, and DRR).

The related outputs under this outcome are: 3.1. Community-based DRR mechanism and emergency response system established or in place and 3.2. Disaster risk management humanitarian response capacity of organization and partners enhanced

**Project Duration:** The duration of the project is 01 April 2025 to March 2028.

**Project Location:** The project was implemented in the following Rohingya Refugee Camps: camps 3, 4, 11, 12, and 25. In addition, the project also implemented in the following Host Community: 3 unions (Jaliya Palong, Halodiapalong, and Palongkhali) under Ukhiya Upazila; 2 Unions (Hnila & Whykong) under Teknaf Upazila in Cox's Bazar district.

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## 2. Purposes of the Baseline Survey

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The baseline study aims to establish benchmark values for key outcome and output indicators under the NSSS project. It will serve as a foundation for setting realistic targets and monitoring progress throughout the project period. The study will assess the current socio-economic conditions, protection needs, and resilience capacities of women and girls aged 18 to 35 from host and camp communities. It will also examine prevailing community attitudes, systems, and institutional readiness that influence women's empowerment, social cohesion, and disaster response. Additionally, the baseline will explore gender norms, power dynamics, and barriers that limit women's participation in economic, social, and decision-making spaces, especially those related to entrepreneurship, leadership, access to protection services, and community-based disaster risk reduction. The findings will inform evidence-based planning, help tailor interventions to local contexts, and support inclusive monitoring, learning, and adaptation across all three project outcomes

## Specific objectives of baseline study

1. To identify the baseline values of all project indicators across outcomes and outputs, ensuring data is disaggregated by gender, age, and community type (host vs. Rohingya).
2. To understand the relevance, possible effectiveness and efficiency, future impact, and sustainability of proposed project activities, considering the needs and problems of community people, to achieve the overall objective of project.
3. To understand the possible challenges, risks, and opportunities of implementing proposed project activities in southwest and northwest context in Bangladesh
4. To map key stakeholders at local, national, and regional levels, assess their roles and interests, and identify entry points for strategic engagement and advocacy.
5. To provide actionable, practical and contextual recommendations on project design and implementation of proposed project activities.

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## 3. Scope of work:

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The baseline survey consists of the following: desk review of existing documents and information; quantitative data analysis, including analysis of data of survey; qualitative data analysis, including focus group discussions and key informant interviews, with a gender-sensitive and participatory approach. The assessment will cover the 2 sub-districts and 5-7 Rohingya Camps in Cox's Bazar where the project will be implemented. The assessment will include a review of the project prodoc, and logical framework.

The consultant is expected **to apply data triangulation**—cross-verifying findings from quantitative data, qualitative insights (e.g., FGDs, KIIs), and secondary sources—to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings. Special attention must be given to capturing diverse perspectives, particularly those of marginalized women and girls, ensuring their voices inform the analysis and are not overshadowed by dominant community narratives.

The following documents will be provided to the winning bidder before the work starts: Project Prodoc, Details Implementation Plan, Logical framework. and Other Relevant Documents.

The project will finalize the scope of work and methodology in consultation with the winning bidder.

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## 4. Deliverables

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Inception report within 4 workdays. The report should include a work schedule, methodology, sampling methodology, a list of people and groups to interview for the qualitative and quantitative analysis, and a field visit plan.

The consultant/consultant firms will deliver a comprehensive baseline study package including an inception report outlining the methodology, sampling, and tools; finalized data collection instruments; and a training and pilot report for enumerators. A draft baseline report will present key findings aligned with the project's outcomes and indicators. The final delivery will be a polished baseline report incorporating feedback, along with cleaned datasets, survey tools, and actionable recommendations to inform programme implementation and monitoring.

Final version of baseline report, integrating Helvetas feedback (both in soft-PDF and Word file and one hard copy with signature) with other necessary documents like cleaned data set (Excel file preferable), all transcripts, voice records (if any), data collection instruments, PowerPoint presentation, and photograph.

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## 5. The frame of the assignment

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The duration of the assignment should be done during the period from 31 August to 11<sup>th</sup> October 2025. The consultant/consultant team will provide an Action plan that includes a detailed timetable in its

technical proposal, specifying the distribution of tasks with persons responsible for and the duration to complete each task. The proposed sequencing in the table below is an indicative proposal that could be improved in the technical offer. The budget for the study will be offered as per the proposed activity line linking with person days involved.

Activity	Deadlines
Receive Request for Proposal (RFP) from interested consultants	31 August 2025
Negotiation and signing an agreement with the selected consultant.	3 September 2025
Completion of contracting formalities with the selected consultant.	4 September 2025
Sharing of the Inception report	8 September 2025
Information collection from the field and other related stakeholders.	28 September 2025
Sharing the draft assessment report with the project team for feedback.	2 October 2025
Feedback from the project team	6 October 2025
Adjust and submit of final version of the baseline report.	11 October 2025

## 6. Evaluation/ Selection Criteria

The assessment of the quotations will start with an assessment of the administrative criteria. That means that if these criteria aren't met in your quotation, this quotation will be put aside, and the award criteria of this quotation will not be assessed. The quotations that meet the administrative criteria will be assessed against the award criteria. The award criteria are assessed according to the following distribution of points.

SN	Criteria	Max. Point
<b>1.</b>	<b>Administrative criteria</b>	
1.1	Proposal received within deadline	
1.2	Financial and technical proposals, including time planning based on this RFP	
1.3	CV('s) of the proposed consultant(s) and team, proving relevant experience	
1.4	Copy of valid Tax Identification Number (TIN), Business Identification Number (BIN) (applicable for Firms) and Trade License (if available).	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Award criteria (Technical and Financial)</b>	
	<b>Technical proposal</b>	<b>70 out of 100</b>
	<b>Understanding of RFP and Scope of Services:</b> Evaluation based on the depth of understanding of the RFP and the scope of services required.	10
	<b>Methodology:</b> Assessment of the quality, clarity, and appropriateness of the study tools, design, approach, and methodology proposed.	20
2.1	<b>Timeframe:</b> Evaluation of the ability to meet delivery dates, including the reliability and feasibility of the proposed execution timeline and workflow.	10
	<b>Skill and Experience:</b> Considering the working context dimension, project is looking for highly competent team. Thus, the proposed team must have the relevant skills and work experience of the consultant/consultancy firm/lead person in the specific sector.	20
	<b>Team Composition:</b> Evaluation of the structure and qualifications of the proposed team, including the roles and responsibilities of each member.	10
2.2	<b>Financial Proposal:</b> Assessment of the financial proposal, focusing on the cost-effectiveness and realism of the budget plan in relation to the services proposed.	<b>30 out of 100</b>

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## **7. Mode of Payment**

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Total value of the assignment will be paid in three instalments: 20% of the value of the consultancy will be paid upon acceptance of the Inception Report; 30% value of the consultancy will be paid upon submission of the draft assessment report; 50% of the final payment will be paid after the acceptance of the final report.

All the payment would be made through bank transfer or account payee cheque in the name of the consultant.

VAT will be paid by Helvetas and Tax will be deducted from before the payment at source as per the existing government rules.

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## **8. General Terms and Conditions**

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- The selected consultant/consulting firm should implement the work in coordination with the focal person of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation. The consultant should prior inform the focal person of the schedule/programme to implement the assigned task.
- The information collection will be done in coordination with the project team.
- HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal without giving any verbal and/or written rationale.
- The final version of the assessment report prepared concerning the assignment will be treated as HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh property.
- The Baseline report or any part, therefore, cannot be sold, used or reproduced in any manner without the prior written approval of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh.
- HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh or its representatives reserve the right to monitor the quality and progress of the work during the assignment.

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## **9. Annexes**

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The Code of Conduct (Annex 1), the Declaration CRFM Contracted Parties (Annex 2), the Regulations on SEAH (Annex 3), and the Regulations on Child Protection (Annex 4) form an integral part of this contract. In the event of any discrepancies, the provisions of this contract shall take precedence. The Annexes form an integral part of this contract.

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## **10. Application Process**

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Interested individual consultants/consulting firms should submit the following:

- A technical proposal not more than 10 pages, with the following sections:
  - Presentation and relevant experience of the consultant/research firm
  - Proposed approach, methodology, timeframe
  - References of similar assignments (including contracting body, scope, budget, duration, contact).
- A financial proposal: 2 pages maximum. The budget shall be provided in Bangladeshi Taka, developed as fixed amount budget per deliverable (i.e. fixed cost per deliverable). The budget shall be divided per Helvetas Bangladesh deliverable, and show the total amount, plus taxes. The consultant/firm shall indicate modalities of payment.
- Required documentation: Maximum 5 pages detailed CV of the consultant, Company profile (if applicable as annex), Copy of Tax Identification Number (TIN) / Business Identification Number (BIN) and acknowledgement slip of the recent financial year, copy of VAT Registration Certificate (as annex), copy of Trade License Certificate (if available).
- Examples of previous relevant work.

Interested consultants are requested to submit their Request for Proposal (RFP) electronically with the subject line "**Proposal for baseline study of NSSS Project for the Rohingya and Host Community**" to the following address on or before **31 August 2025**.

Email to: [procurementbgd@helvetas.org](mailto:procurementbgd@helvetas.org)

Signature:



Name: Shamim Ahamed

Deputy Country Director

Date: 17 August 2025

Signature:



Name: Tajmary Akter

Interim Field Director, NSSS

Date: 17 August 2025

Signature:



Name: Mohammad Nurul Alam

Finance Manager

Date: 17 August 2025

## Annexure- 1

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# CODE OF CONDUCT

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## 1. Introduction

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This Code of Conduct defines basic ethical principles, attitudes and behaviour which are binding for all employees of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, hereinafter named HELVETAS. It is based on the Mission Statement, the Human Resource policy and our Personnel Regulations. It thereby reflects foundational values and principles of our organisation, to be applied irrespective of cultural contexts. The Code of Conduct expresses the commitment of each collaborator to adhere to and to promote high ethical standards in our work and as part of our working culture. It constitutes a compulsory annex to the employment contract.

The individual and collective conduct of employees is of specific relevance to HELVETAS. First, the intercultural context in which collaborators of HELVETAS operate makes their conduct particularly exposed and sensitive. Unethical conduct of a collaborator can, beyond its direct consequences, have far reaching negative impacts on the effectiveness of our work and on our reputation. Second, as a development organisation receiving donations from thousands of individual and institutional donors, our organisation and its employees are accountable to these donors and subject to a high degree of scrutiny by the public and the media.

This Code of Conduct is binding for all employees worldwide in any contractual relationship with HELVETAS (including interns & volunteers, Board of Directors and its Advisory Panel as well as consultants) at all times during their assignment with HELVETAS. It is expected that principles of this Code of Conduct are also respected outside the workplace and working time. Furthermore, all partners HELVETAS collaborates with must commit to follow the key principles of this Code of Conduct.

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## 2. Loyalty, confidentiality and civic duties

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My actions are consistent with the goals, the values and principles of HELVETAS as expressed in its mission statement and strategy; I have received a copy of both documents and I am aware of their content.

Particularly, I commit to

- contributing positively to the implementation of the policies and strategies of HELVETAS;
- reflecting regularly upon my actions and behaviour, those of my colleagues and those of my environment;
- handling all information received through my employment with the necessary discretion; never using it to the detriment of HELVETAS including after termination of my contract;
- abiding by the national laws, as a citizen or resident of a specific country or as a short-term visitor.

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### **3. Commitment and respect towards organizational culture and integrity**

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I am aware of my contractual obligations with HELVETAS and strive to fulfil them to the best of my ability, knowledge and capacity.

In particular, I commit to

- contributing actively with my work and through my behaviour to the strengthening and to the public trust of our organisation;
- contributing to our objectives not only as an individual professional, but as a member of the team(s) to which I belong;
- using my competences and capacities to support my colleagues;
- making use of the means and assets of HELVETAS and its partners effectively and efficiently, according to legal stipulations, internal regulations, contractual agreements and in conformity with project goals;
- treating the material entrusted to me with diligence and due care, using it and the official logo only for professional purposes;
- actively supporting knowledge sharing within our organisation and with our partners.

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### **4. Culturally sensitive behaviour**

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I am aware that even as a private person I am subject to public interest and that I have to consider this in my behaviour and in my statements.

In particular, I commit to

- respecting local norms and conventions in contacts with authorities, partners and local people as long as they don't contravene HELVETAS policy;
- taking into account in my appearance, my manner of dress, my behaviour and my style of communication the customs and culture of the country and the function that I perform;
- avoiding indecent or offensive behaviour, insulting or accusing statements, or spreading rumours;
- avoiding giving information to the media, policy makers and donors or the public, without an explicit assignment to do so.

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### **5. Highest standards in inter-personal relations and professional conduct**

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My relations with all persons irrespective of their sex, age, origin, cultural background, religion, social position, physical ability or sexual orientation are characterized by respect, fairness and equity. I am aware that as an employee of HELVETAS I have a privileged and often powerful status vis-à-vis partners and beneficiaries.

In particular, I commit to

- behave and represent the organization at all times in such a way that the reputation of HELVETAS is not damaged;
- never request any service or favour from primary stakeholders, beneficiaries or other persons of concern in return for support or protection. I will never engage in any exploitative relationships – sexual, emotional, financial or employment-related – with primary stakeholders, beneficiaries or other persons of concern;
- using my competences in the interest of the people for and with whom we work;
- rejecting any form of disrespectful social interaction and abstaining from anything that could be interpreted as degrading or putting others down;
- refraining from abusing my hierarchical, material, or social position in any way;



- protect the rights and integrity of children and youth and refrain from all unacceptable behaviour towards them;
- refraining from actions which may place me and/or others in a dangerous situation, as well as from those which may endanger our activities as a whole;
- respecting the physical and mental health of my colleagues;
- respecting the private sphere of my colleagues;
- providing explicit reference to the sources of my information/experiences, in any public communication;
- if in a decision-making position, applying decisions in a responsible, transparent, and unprejudiced manner that is not self-seeking, but in keeping with the mission of HELVETAS.

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## 6. Mobbing and Sexual Harassment

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I abstain from mobbing<sup>1</sup>, sexual or sexist harassment<sup>2</sup> of colleagues, partners or beneficiaries.

In particular, I commit to

- refraining from any form of sexual or other type of exploitation, and striving to counter such behaviour in a decisive manner, in particular in situations involving children, young or disabled people;
- refraining from degrading or exploitative behaviour such as exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex or sexual favours, or other forms of humiliation;
- countering observed and confirmed mobbing, sexual or sexist harassment of colleagues by other employees, taking appropriate action and/or informing my supervisors immediately on becoming aware of it;
- informing a person designated by the organisation for this purpose should I feel uncomfortable to disclose suffered or observed infringements to my supervisor.

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## 7. Conflicts of interest

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I am aware that professional interests can conflict with personal interests.

In particular, I commit to

- striving to make my own interests transparent and to avoid any behaviour which could be perceived as biased towards my own interests;
- not using my position to obtain personal benefit or to provide advantage to third parties;
- in the case of professional interests conflicting, or being potentially perceived to conflict, with personal interests, to step back and to pass the decision to the next higher level in the organisation: this applies in particular to relationships with relatives and friends and refers to matters such as recruitment, consultancy and procurement of contracts, purchase and lease agreements (also for personal purposes), or others;
- as a full time employee, not engaging in paid professional activity outside my contract with HELVETAS, unless it has been specifically permitted.

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<sup>1</sup> **Mobbing** means to pick on, pester or exclude a person or a group systematically at work in verbal or non-verbal attacks which affect the physical or mental health as well as the self-esteem of the person(s) concerned

<sup>2</sup> **Sexual or sexist harassment** is an action with sexual reference or undertones unwelcome to the person addressed. Sexual or sexist harassment can be expressed in the following ways: suggestive remarks; remarks about physical advantages or weaknesses or about sexual orientation; sexist talk and jokes in any form of verbal, written or non-verbal communication; sharing suggestive material over email or social media; ambiguous invitations; making bodily advances; making advances together with promises or threats of advantages or disadvantages at work.

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## 8. Fraud and Corruption

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I am honest in all my professional activities. I avoid and counter any kind of corruption or fraud. I abstain from abusing for personal gains or for third parties financial, material and intellectual assets to which I have access as an employee of HELVETAS.

In particular, I commit to

- not compromising my integrity, freedom of action and my impartial judgement through accepting or providing gifts or other advantages (like money, loans, invitations, rewards, reduced prices or fares etc.) from or to collaborators, officials, partner organisations, beneficiaries;
- bringing to the attention of my supervisor if I am approached with demands or promises by collaborators, partners organization, consultants or officials,
- informing my supervisor in case of acceptance of a present, and using it for business or humanitarian purposes or sharing it with other employees;
- If demands, gifts or advantages have to be declined, informing the person making the advances of the standards and practices applied in HELVETAS;

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## 9. Final remarks

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The breach of this Code of Conduct, in its letter or its spirit, leads to disciplinary actions as specified in the *HELVETAS Guidelines on Dealing with Mobbing, Sexual Harassment, Child Abuse & Abuse of Authority*, and *HELVETAS Guidelines on Dealing with Corruption, Fraud and Conflict of Interest*, including warnings, dismissal with contractual notice and in severe cases dismissal without notice and withholding of terminal benefits. Additionally, HELVETAS may take further legal action according to the respective national law.

HELVETAS endeavors to ensure that employees can report suspicions without fear of reprisal and that individuals who express a suspicion are adequately protected (cf. Whistleblower Policy).

The responsibility to follow this Code of Conduct rests with each employee. All supervisors are responsible for promoting and enforcing it.

The Code of Conduct is issued in German, French, English and Spanish. It is also made available in our partner country programs, in the national language. In case of any doubts, the English version prevails.

I hereby declare to acknowledge and abide to the:

- *HELVETAS Regulations on Child Protection*
- *HELVETAS Regulations on Mobbing, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority*
- *HELVETAS Regulations on Corruption, Fraud and Conflicts of Interest.*

Irrespective of employee signature, the Code of Conduct is binding.

Read and agreed:

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Name of the Employee

.....

Place and date






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Signature

Owner (Function & Name):	Kathrin Indermaur, Co-Head Personnel Services
Version (First/Latest):	17.10.2018/19.05.2022
Original Path:	O:\FS\Teams\PES\Public\Regulation Sexual Harassment and Mobbing\Final CoC Regulations\English

## Reporting Channel of the Complaint Report and Feedback Mechanism

To ensure respectful working environment while upholding HELVETAS values, principles, Bangladesh country programme established the Complaint Report and Feedback Mechanism (CRFM). HELVETAS Bangladesh highly encouraged to initiate preventive measurement and raise concerns, any forms of misconduct, unethical practices through the established reporting channel of HELVETAS Bangladesh CRFM –

	<p><b>Speak to a 'Person of trust'</b></p> <p>Share the concerns with a person you trust to seek initial advice. This can be a peer colleague, a supervisor, or a Case Management Unit member</p>
	<p><b>Report by phone, SMS, or WhatsApp</b></p> <p>Report a concern using a secure and dedicated 'CRFM' hotline number: <b>0170 644 0263</b> (during working hours).</p> <p>The same number can be used for SMS or WhatsApp to raise any concern. The CMU will reach back for detail record of the concern.</p> <p>If you feel uncomfortable, you may reach out directly to the <b>designated woman CRFM focal person</b>.</p>
	<p><b>Send an e-mail</b></p> <p>There is a secured and dedicated email inbox to receive and deal the concerns with strict confidentiality. Write a simple email or send the report on the complaint form.</p> <p>Please report any concern to <a href="mailto:feedback.bgd@helvetas.org">feedback.bgd@helvetas.org</a></p>
	<p><b>Send a letter</b></p> <p>Send a complaint by courier/post to following address:</p> <p><b>CMU, HELVETAS Bangladesh</b></p> <p>House 30 CWN (A) (10<sup>th</sup> floor), Road 42/43, Gulshan 2, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh.</p>
	<p><b>Use a complaint box</b></p> <p>Depending on the office or project, there might be complaint boxes available, in office premises or community. It should be noted that complaints deposited in complaint boxes may be seen by persons that are not members of the Case Management Unit.</p>

HELVETAS Bangladesh is committed to keep the identity of the whistle-blower / plaintiff confidential and take appropriate measures to protect all rights of concerned parties.

**Authorized by – HELVETAS Bangladesh CRFM Committee.**  
 January 2025.

## ANNEX: 3

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# REGULATIONS ON RESPONSE TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE AND HARASSMENT (SEAH), MOBBING & ABUSE OF AUTHORITY

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## 1. Purpose and Principles

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These regulations reflect the principles and responsibility of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation<sup>1</sup> to prevent and address sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH), mobbing, and abuse of authority.

All forms of SEAH, mobbing and abuse of authority are explicitly forbidden. Such behaviour or conduct manifest a considerable encroachment on the basic principles of equality and fundamental rights of those affected and is contrary to the principles and values of HELVETAS as stated in the Human Resource Policy, Code of Conduct, Gender and Social Equity Diamonds and Policy and our mission statement.

HELVETAS promotes the respect and protection of all its employees, partners and primary stakeholders against all forms of emotional, physical and sexual misconduct and/or aggression. Everyone has a right to their physical and mental integrity, while those in breach will be held accountable. Employees of HELVETAS or any other person involved in our activities responsible for such behaviour or conduct shall be subject to sanctions and/or disciplinary measures.

### **HELVETAS is committed to the following principles:**

#### **Zero tolerance**

HELVETAS prohibits all forms of SEAH, mobbing and abuse of authority.

#### **Protection**

All employees of HELVETAS or any other person involved in our activities have a right to work in a harassment-free and respectful environment.

#### **Prevention**

HELVETAS consciously promotes a positive work environment to prevent inappropriate behavior in the workplace.

#### **Reporting**

HELVETAS establishes appropriate reporting mechanisms to respond to suspicions and formal allegations of SEAH, mobbing and/or abuse of authority and to protect whistleblowers, preventing retaliation related to the reporting of allegations.

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<sup>1</sup> In the following HELVETAS

**Rigorous sanction**

HELKETAS is committed to address inappropriate behavior by or towards its employees, by or towards partners and/or towards primary stakeholders. If a case of SEAH, mobbing and/or abuse of authority is proven, involved employees or any other person contracted by HELKETAS are to be sanctioned.

**Neutrality**

Measures to deal with inappropriate behavior will be based on principles of fairness and impartiality.

**Confidentiality**

Whistleblowers who express a suspicion of inappropriate behavior are protected. Information concerning a suspicion is confidential. The presumption of innocence applies to suspicious persons.

**Adequate information**

All persons directly involved are informed openly about cases of SEAH, mobbing, and/or abuse of authority while protecting the whistleblowers.

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## 2. Definitions

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### 2.1. Mobbing

Mobbing means to pick on, pester and exclude a person or a group systematically and to harass a person repeatedly and over a longer period of time at work. Mobbing can be expressed in verbal or non-verbal attacks which affect the physical or mental health as well as the self-esteem of the person(s) concerned.

### 2.2. Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is an action with sexual references unwelcome to the person addressed. It can happen between peers, between a supervisor and subordinate level, between members of the opposite or same sex, between an older and younger person among others.

Sexual harassment can be expressed in the following ways (non-exhaustive list):

- remarks about physical advantages or weaknesses or about sexual orientation
- suggestive remarks
- sexist talk and jokes, in any form of verbal, written or non-verbal communication
- sharing suggestive material over email or social media
- ambiguous invitations
- making bodily advances
- making advances together with promises or threats of advantages or disadvantages

### 2.3. Sexual exploitation and abuse

Helvetas and its partners must fully adhere to the IASC<sup>2</sup> six core principles as defined as follows:

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
- Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.

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<sup>2</sup> The Inter-Agency Standing Committee

- Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
- Any sexual relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection and a person benefiting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
- Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms
- Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

HELKETAS applies these principles across all areas of its work, including both humanitarian and development contexts. Reporting and enforcement follow HELKETAS' established reporting mechanisms and align with the HELKETAS' Code of Conduct.

## **2.4. Abuse of authority**

Abuse of authority means the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another colleague or group of colleagues, stakeholders or beneficiaries. This is particularly serious when an individual misuses his/her influence, power or authority to negatively influence the career or employment conditions (including - but not limited to - assignment, contract renewal, performance evaluation or promotion) of another. It can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. Abuse of authority may also include misuse of power that creates a hostile or offensive and/or submissive work environment, which includes - but is not limited to - the use of intimidation, threats, blackmail or coercion.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

SEAH, in addition to any and all other forms of abuse and harassment including mobbing, and abuse of authority violate universally recognized international legal norms and standards and as such are unacceptable and prohibited behavior for all HELKETAS employees. SEAH and mobbing constitute acts of serious misconduct and are therefore reasons for disciplinary measures, including dismissal and legal prosecution.

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# **3. Prevention & Responsibility**

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## **HELKETAS as employer**

HELKETAS at Head Office and in partner countries consciously promote a safe, respectful and equitable working atmosphere at all levels and across all offices, teams and programmes and all its activities.

HELKETAS carefully screens possible partners and employees in key functions as defined by the vetting concept before starting collaboration. The "Regulations on response to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), mobbing and abuse of authority" as well as any other policies and regulations are actively discussed with all partners.

In implementing the present regulations, HELKETAS shall act consistently and undertake the appropriate investigative and disciplinary actions required. HELKETAS ensures that persons who report alleged incidents in good faith (whistleblowers) are not put at a disadvantage. Their identity is kept anonymous as far as possible and if necessary, also after the ending of an investigation. HELKETAS ensures that in cases of alleged SEAH, mobbing and/or abuse of authority the reputation of suspects is not damaged unnecessarily. Persons who maliciously raise suspicions or damage the reputation of others are liable to face sanctions. HELKETAS ensures full adherence to its whistleblower policy at all times.

HELKETAS provides training to their employees regarding prevention of SEAH, mobbing and abuse of authority. All employees are required to participate in the training.

### **Supervisors**

All supervisors should act as role models by upholding only the highest standards of conduct in order to achieve a harassment-free environment. All supervisors are responsible for ensuring that new collaborators are made aware of the SEAH, mobbing and abuse of authority regulations and guidelines during their introduction and/or on-boarding. They provide guidance on prevention and respond to such form of misconduct.

Supervisors commit themselves to both prevent and address SEAH, mobbing and abuse of authority within their sphere of responsibility. They follow up any signs of SEAH, mobbing and/or abuse of authority according to HELKETAS organizational principles, policies and regulations, and governing legal framework as relevant. Should an incident occur during or after work, the supervisors ensure that the incident is promptly and adequately addressed. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

### **Employees**

HELKETAS demands that all employees value and safeguard basic principles of equality and fundamental rights. Reporting of incidents is essential to prevent the continuation of SEAH, mobbing and abuse of authority. Cases are normally detected quickest in the immediate environment where they occur. Any concerns or suspicions regarding SEAH, regardless whether or not within HELKETAS, must be reported through the established mechanisms in the guidelines.

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## **4. Confidential advice and initial support**

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Collaborators subjected to or witnessing SEAH, mobbing and/or abuse of authority are encouraged to seek emotional, professional and legal support, first and foremost from a person of trust. This person can be internal to the organization (Supervisor, People & Culture Director at Head Office, HR responsible in the country or Personnel Committee (PEKO) where existing and/or external (e.g. Be-Trieb in Switzerland offers confidential advice in English and German). Supervisors and the Human Resource Team have a duty of care to take action if required.

The person of trust can provide direct or indirect assistance by means of emotional support, accompanying support, information support, redirecting to relevant services or authorities and more. The internal as well as the external confidants are bound by confidentiality. In all cases across the organization, the People & Culture Director at Head Office is to be informed.

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## 5. Investigation and Sanctions

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Employees have the right to seek informal advice or lodge a formal complaint. For feedback and complaints HELKETAS has established reporting and investigation mechanisms (see “Guidelines on reporting of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), mobbing, child abuse and abuse of authority”). In case of a formal complaint and depending on the severity of the incident the Management (Management Board member at Head office or Country Director) can decide about building a grievance committee with internal and/or external specialists. The grievance committee leads the investigation. To the extent possible, safety, impartiality, and confidentiality during the course of the investigation is ensured.

In case of a proven incident, pending its severity, different types of sanctions are applicable; from apologies to warnings to summary dismissals.

The right to civil or criminal prosecution is reserved. The same sanctions apply to anyone knowingly accusing someone falsely of SEAH, mobbing, and/or abuse of authority.

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## 6. Area of applicability and date of enforcement

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These regulations apply to all employees worldwide in any contractual relationship with HELKETAS (including interns & volunteers, Board of Directors and its Advisory Council as well as consultants) at all times during their assignment with HELKETAS – both during and after working hours. The regulations are an integral part of the employment contract.

These regulations will be supplied to all employees and become effective from July 01, 2025.

Owner (Function & Name):	People and Culture
Version (First/Latest):	17.10.2018/16.06.2025



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## REGULATIONS ON CHILD PROTECTION

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### 1. Purpose and Principles

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HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation recognizes that especially in situations of poverty, humanitarian crisis and/or conflict, children can be extremely vulnerable and acknowledges its fundamental duty to protect them.

These regulations have been developed to ensure maximum protection of children within our activities from all forms of abuse and exploitation. It ensures that HELVETAS has procedures in place to prevent and deal with child abuse, child exploitation and breach of regulations. Additionally, HELVETAS aims at protecting HELVETAS staff from false or malicious allegations of misconduct. Furthermore, HELVETAS seeks safeguarding of HELVETAS' organisational integrity and reputation, as well as that of its partners, by introducing sound Child Protection Regulations.

In all aspects of our work, HELVETAS is committed to the key principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically:

- guaranteeing, without any form of discrimination, the rights of children.
- considering the best interests of children in all actions relating to them.
- recognising the right to life, survival and development of each child.
- reflecting children's views in matters affecting them.

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### 2. Definitions

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HELVETAS defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years as laid down by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Child protection** is an activity or initiative designed to protect children from any form of harm, particularly arising from child abuse or neglect.

**Child abuse** is the physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, child labour, military use of children, neglect of a child resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, dignity or integrity.

- Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take, among others, the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures. It can also include tasks and errands which clearly exceed the capacity of the child to manage safely.
- Emotional abuse is a chronic attack on a child or young person's self-esteem. It can take, among others, the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, stalking, intimidating or isolating the child or young person.

- Sexual abuse is when a child is used by another child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification.
- Child labour refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful. Legislation across the world prohibit child labour.
- Military use of children means engagement of children in or exposed to military activity, including as soldiers or human shields.

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### **3. Prevention & Responsibility**

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HELVETAS upholds the rights and obligations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and is dedicated to protect children engaged in its programmes from harm, exploitation and abuse. Accordingly, HELVETAS is committed to implement and maintain child protection measures. These include introduction of regulations to all new HELVETAS staff, interns & volunteers, partners, consultants and service providers as well as organisation of regular refreshers for staff directly working with children. Furthermore, appropriate recruiting processes are established for functions directly working with children.

Prior to commencement of activities involving children directly or indirectly, HELVETAS will analyse potential risks to children that can arise as part of the implementation of HELVETAS programmes. These activities can include training attended by children, data collections including discussions with children etc.

Where potential risks to children are identified, the project team must address them in the project risk analysis and mitigation strategy. If risks cannot be reduced to the required level and the project activities could cause harm to children, the project team must bring this issue to the country programme management who decides on further measures to be taken in order to address the risk(s). Activities with any risk to harm children must not be implemented.

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### **4. Standards of conduct and forms of unacceptable behaviour**

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The following behaviour should be observed and/or avoided by all HELVETAS staff and contracted partners, consultants and/or service providers when in direct contact with children.

#### **Standards of conduct**

- Make public and raise awareness of primary stakeholder groups e.g. implementing partners, consultants, service providers and local authorities in regard to HELVETAS regulations and accountability mechanisms.
- Treat children with dignity and respect regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, language, religion, sexual orientation, education, differently abled or other characteristics.

- When working in the proximity of children be visible and, wherever possible, ensure presence of another adult.
- Comply with all relevant legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour.
- Raise and report concerns about child protection and safety.

When collecting data from children (during assessments, monitoring and evaluation, etc.) reduce the risk of potential harm by using culturally appropriate ways of communicating, obtaining informed consent e.g. from parent(s) or guardian in case of minor, ensuring confidentiality and being gender, conflict and trauma sensitive. If distressing data has to be obtained, endeavour to facilitate sensitive methods and consider options for professional psychosocial intervention and care.

When getting and/or using children's images for visibility purposes (i.e. photographing or filming a child/children):

- Comply with the standard approach as explained in the HELVETAS communication and photos taking guidelines.
- Ensure that the products (e.g. photographs, videos) present children in a dignified and respectful manner, with children being adequately clothed and not in poses that could be misleading or seen as sexually suggestive.
- When taking an image of a particular child for a specific purpose (media, advocacy, fundraising, etc.), explain in advance how the product will be used.
- Ensure that images of children is only used for the public with explicit consent of the child and from a parent or guardian.

### **Forms of unacceptable behaviour (non-exhaustive list)**

- Touch a child in an unwanted, inappropriate or culturally insensitive manner.
- Use language or demonstrate behaviour that is harassing, abusive, demeaning, sexually provocative or culturally insensitive towards children.
- Engage children in any form of activity that is demeaning, offensive, sexually provocative, abusive or culturally inappropriate or insensitive.
- Physically assault or punish children.
- Engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts.
- Access, produce or spread child pornography through any medium.
- Invite unaccompanied children without their and parent's or guardian's approval into solitary places, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- Sleep in close proximity to unsupervised unrelated children.
- Hire children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage and which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which puts them at risk of injury.
- Act or facilitate interactions in gender biased or discriminatory manner.
- Exclude or favour a particular child in context of our activities without objective reason.

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## **5. Reporting on child abuse**

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HELKETAS strives to create an environment in which children and persons concerned about the child's safety within HELKETAS programmes feel free to report on it. HELKETAS therefore requests all HELKETAS staff, interns & volunteers, contracted partners, consultants and service providers to report to HELKETAS any suspicion or disclosure of child abuse within HELKETAS programmes/projects.

For feedback and complaints HELKETAS has established reporting and investigating mechanisms, as described in the guidelines on mobbing, sexual harassment, child abuse and abuse of authority.

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## **6. Area of applicability and date of enforcement**

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These regulations apply to all employees worldwide in any contractual relationship with HELKETAS (including interns & volunteers, Board of Directors and its Advisory Council as well as consultants) at all times during their assignment with HELKETAS – both during and after working hours. The regulations are an integral part of the employment contract.

All partners we collaborate with are made aware of our policies and regulations during partnership negotiations.

These regulations will be supplied to all employees and become effective from March 02, 2018.