



Request for Proposal

Consultancy for Baseline measurement (Prevalence and Reliance) of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in Four divisions of Bangladesh

1. Summary

Purpose: To generate robust, reliable data to measure and analyze:

1. Prevalence of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC):

- a. Estimate the proportion of children (girls and boys under 18 yrs) who have experienced or are currently experiencing commercial sexual exploitation in Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, and Mymensingh.
- b. Assess the nature of CSEC exploitation experienced by vulnerable child victims.
- c. Examine the characteristics of the criminal networks that perpetrate or facilitate CSEC in the 4 regions.

2. Reliance on the Criminal Justice System:

- a. Assess the extent to which vulnerable people rely on the criminal justice system for protection from CSEC, including their reporting behaviors and victim participation in justice processes.
- b. Assess the factors that enable or discourage reporting of CSEC cases as well as victim participation in justice processes.
- c. Assess existing social networks and mechanisms for reporting of CSEC cases.

Dates: July 2025 to July 2026 – Detailed timelines are provided in Section 6

Location: Bangladesh – (Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, and Mymensingh).

2. Background

International Justice Mission (IJM) is a global organization dedicated to protecting people living in poverty from violence. With offices in over 30 countries and a team of over 1,200 professionals, IJM works in partnership with local authorities to rescue victims, bring criminals to justice, restore victims, and strengthen justice systems to prevent future abuse. Together we are on a mission to rescue millions, protect half a billion, and make justice unstoppable.

IJM's protection model aims to move governments from apathy to independent action to ownership (described as "phases") in protecting people in poverty from violence. Building from two decades of experience, we identified six key dimensions to be strengthened in Bangladesh:

- **Capacity Development:** Educating and mentoring public justice system (PJS) actors.
- **Casework:** Supporting the PJS with case management and effective legal application. (Performance in this dimension also informs capacity development initiatives.)
- **Advocacy:** Inputting into policy, providing implementation assistance, and assisting with government infrastructure updates.
- **Community Engagement:** Mobilizing community members to address CSEC through perception change and collective action.
- **Survivor Leadership:** Empowering people with lived experience to help solve the problem at scale and influence decision makers.
- **Data Management:** Enabling accessible and accurate data for improved monitoring, decision making, and resource allocation.

IJM implements its Justice System Strengthening (JSS) Projects using the Protection Model, which measures progress through four key domains:

- Prevalence of the crime,
- Performance of the justice system,
- Key stakeholders' confidence in the justice system, and
- Vulnerable people's reliance on the justice system for protection.

In this baseline study, IJM will focus on two domains:

Prevalence of the crime – to assess how widespread commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is in targeted areas; and

Reliance on the justice system – to understand the extent to which vulnerable children and communities trust and seek protection from law enforcement and legal institutions.

In Bangladesh, IJM focuses on ending the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) by supporting justice system actors, training law enforcement, and advocating for victim-centered, trauma-informed interventions.

Bangladesh has been identified as a high-prevalence country for CSEC. Children are exploited in both formal and informal venues, including brothels, hotels, massage parlors, public parks, and bus stations. Girls are disproportionately affected, often trafficked from rural areas with false promises of jobs or marriage. However, boys are also vulnerable, particularly those from institutional care or street situations, although their exploitation is more hidden due to stigma. In all cases, children face significant

physical and emotional abuse, and many are kept in exploitation through coercion, debt bondage, and threats.

To develop effective interventions, it is critical to understand the scale, distribution, and forms of CSEC. This includes estimating the number of children involved, identifying high-risk areas, and analyzing how gender, technology, and trafficking patterns shape exploitation.

Equally important is understanding the level of reliance on the criminal justice system (CJS). A strong justice system cannot achieve meaningful impact if victims and communities do not trust or engage with it. Measuring reliance helps assess public confidence, uncover barriers to reporting (such as fear, stigma, or inaccessibility), and track whether reforms are resulting in real-world change.

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1. Prevalence of the crime
2. Performance of the justice system
3. Key stakeholders' confidence in the justice system
4. Vulnerable people's reliance on the justice system for protection

In this baseline study, IJM will focus on two domains:

1. **Prevalence of the crime** – to assess how widespread commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is in targeted areas
2. **Reliance on the justice system** – to understand the extent to which vulnerable children and communities trust and seek protection from law enforcement and legal institutions

Over the past 25 years, IJM has pioneered justice system strengthening initiatives that have reduced slavery and violence by 50–85% in large populations living in poverty. These results are driven by IJM's Protection Model, which delivers protection through six core intervention areas—Casework, Capacity Development, Data Management, Survivor Leadership, Community Engagement, and Advocacy—across five programmatic phases from Initial Engagement to Sustained Leadership. We are commissioning a comprehensive baseline study on CSEC in Bangladesh and invite proposals from consulting firms and research organizations with proven expertise in mixed-methods research on sensitive topics.

This study will generate crucial evidence to support policy, programming, and advocacy efforts to combat CSEC in Bangladesh and strengthen community protection mechanisms across the country.

3. Purpose and Study Objectives

The study aims to:

1. Estimate the prevalence (including modalities and patterns) of CSEC affecting both girls and boys under 18 years of age, across the four targeted divisions (Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, and Mymensingh. Specifically, the study aims to:
 - Estimate the proportion and characteristics of girls involved in CSEC across public and private establishments.
 - Estimate the proportion and characteristics of boys involved in CSEC, with attention to distinct exploitation pathways.
 - Estimate the overall number and distribution of children (girls and boys) involved in CSEC disaggregated by age group, venue, and geographic location.
 - Identify hotspots of CSEC activity for both sexes with the four divisions.
 - Examine gender-specific vulnerabilities, recruitment methods and trafficking routes that contribute to the sexual exploitation of children.
 - Examine the networks and *modus operandi* of individuals or groups facilitating or profiting from CSEC, and whether these differ by the gender of the child victim.
 - Investigate how digital platforms and emerging tools facilitate the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in its various forms.
2. Assess the reliance of vulnerable people on the justice system for protection and resolution of CSEC. Specifically, the study aims to:
 - Determine the extent to which vulnerable people and victims of CSEC report incidents of CSEC.
 - Assess the extent to which victims of CSEC participate in justice system processes to secure justice.
 - Identify the existing pathways for reporting CSEC cases, including social and community mechanisms.
 - Explore the factors that support or discourage reporting and victim participation in CSEC justice processes.

Note: "Estimate the proportion and analyse the gender-specific characteristics of children involved in CSEC across both public and private establishments. Particular attention should be given to the differing experiences and exploitation pathways of girls and boys, ensuring a gender-responsive lens in understanding vulnerabilities, recruitment, and patterns of abuse"

3.1. Key Research Questions

A. Prevalence of Children Available for CSEC

Primary Questions:

1. 1. What is the prevalence of children under 18 involved in CSEC in each division, disaggregated by gender?
2. What are the common contexts and locations where:
 - a. Girls are commercially sexually exploited?
 - b. Boys are commercially sexually exploited?
3. What are the key geographic hotspots for CSEC in each division, and how do these vary by gender and type of venue?

Secondary Questions:

1. What are the entry pathways into CSEC for girls and boys (e.g. trafficking, coercion, familial pressure), and how do these differ for each gender?
2. What forms of exploitation are commonly experienced by:
 - a. Girls?
 - b. Boys?
3. What are the common *modus operandi* of individuals or networks facilitating the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and how do these strategies differ (if at all) for boys and girls across settings and regions?
 - a. How are technological tools being used to facilitate CSEC and do patterns of use differ between:
 - i. Girls?
 - ii. Boys?

B. Reliance on the Criminal Justice System

Research Questions:

- To what extent do vulnerable people and victims of CSEC report on incidents of CSEC?
- To what extent do victims of CSEC participate in justice system processes to secure justice on CSEC cases?
- What are the existing pathways for reporting of CSEC cases in the population? How are they used?
- What are the factors that support or discourage reporting and victim participation in CSEC justice processes?

4. Research Study Methodology for the Prevalence & Reliance Domains

The study could adopt a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively assess both the prevalence of CSEC and the reliance of vulnerable populations on the criminal justice system. While IJM will not prescribe a specific methodology, a rigorous and appropriate methodology tailored to the research objectives is expected.

To estimate the prevalence of children involved in CSEC, the study will require a primarily quantitative approach. Applicants are encouraged and expected to propose a scientifically rigorous and contextually responsive methodology for estimating prevalence across the four target divisions, disaggregated by gender. Proposals should

demonstrate an understanding of the gendered, sensitive and hidden nature of CSEC, while ensuring ethical, safe and robust data collection strategies.

To assess the reliance of vulnerable populations on the criminal justice system in the context of CSEC, the study will require a mixed-methods approach. Data collection must enable analysis against IJM's core set of reliance indicators through both quantitative survey (shared with prevalence) and complementary qualitative methods such in-depth interviews. Proposals should articulate how the selected methods will generate reliable insights into perceptions of justice system access, barriers to reporting and victim experiences, while also safeguarding respondent well-being in an ethical way.

To ensure data quality, the proposal should include plans for pilot testing survey instruments and qualitative guides, especially for sensitive topics and require the agency to establish audit methods both during data collection and for the data thereafter.

The methodology should also outline strategies for data management, ensuring confidentiality and security, and include ethical procedures for obtaining approval, securing informed consent, and applying trauma-informed approaches when working with vulnerable populations.

The study must be replicable at the endline at which point baseline and endline will be compared to show change.

Finally, applicants are required to obtain ethical clearance from a recognized Institutional Review Board (IRB) in Bangladesh. Adherence to local and international ethical guidelines is essential to ensure participant safety, privacy, and the credibility of research findings.

Note: Applicants should use this framework as a starting point. The final detailed methodology for the Prevalence and Reliance domains will be refined through a co-creation workshop with IJM and partner organizations, ensuring that the approach is both scientifically rigorous and contextually responsive to the needs of the target populations.

4.1. Guidelines for Measuring Prevalence and Reliance

To ensure alignment with IJM's strategic objectives and global standards, applicants must incorporate IJM guidelines (Annex-1) into their proposed methodologies for measuring both prevalence and reliance on the Public Justice System (PJS). These guidelines emphasize standardized indicators and the critical role of reliance in achieving IJM's mission to protect vulnerable populations through strengthened justice systems.

4.2. Considerations for Measurement: Applicants should propose how to operationalize CSEC definitions (e.g., per the Palermo Protocol) given the lack of consensus on trafficking typologies. Methods like the Delphi process may be explored to refine prevalence estimates with expert input during the co-creation phase.

5. Consultancy Scope and Responsibilities

The selected consultant(s)/firm will be expected to:

1. Desk Review & Co-Creation:

- a. Review all relevant IJM and external documents related to CSEC and the justice system in Bangladesh.
- b. Lead co-creation workshops with IJM and partner organizations to refine research methodology, tools, and sampling strategies.

2. Inception Report, Co-creation report Protocol Development:

- a. Producing inception report, co-creation report and detailed research protocol detailing the problem statement, methodological approach, roles and responsibilities, detailed work plan, timeline, and ethical considerations.

3. Tool Development and Ethical Approval:

- a. Design and finalize quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments, ensuring cultural and linguistic appropriateness (with Bengali language support where required).
- b. Coordinate and complete the ethical approval process with relevant national/institutional authorities

4. Pilot Testing, Field Data Collection and Supervision:

- a. Conducting pilot testing and incorporating stakeholder feedback for refinement.
- b. Recruit, train, and deploy a local field team under the direction of a designated Team Leader/Principal Investigator (TL/PI).
- c. Oversee day-to-day field operations and perform regular data quality and supervisory checks.

5. Data Management and Analysis:

- a. Develop a comprehensive data analysis plan, integrating both statistical and thematic methodologies.
- b. Analyze collected data to generate key insights on CSEC prevalence and reliance on PJS.

6. Reporting and Dissemination:

- a. Prepare interim reports, including a desk review summary, preliminary findings, and analysis reports.
- b. Conduct a validation workshop with key stakeholders including government agencies, NGOs, and victim networks.
- c. Finalize the study report incorporating stakeholder feedback and prepare presentations/PPTs for dissemination.

7. Ethical Compliance:

- a. Demonstrating a clear plan for maintaining ethical standards, including confidentiality, informed consent, and participant safeguarding.
- b. Ensuring strict adherence to confidentiality and safeguarding protocols throughout the study.

6. Timeline and Deliverables

The project will be executed over a series of phases with key deliverables as follows:

Key Deliverable	Timeframe
Contract Signing	June/July 2025
Co-Creation Workshop and submission of inception Report and co-creation report	July/August 2025
Finalization of Protocol, Tools development and Ethical Review Approval	August - Dec 2025
Pilot Study	Dec 2025
Field Data Collection & Team Deployment	Jan 2026- April 2026
Data Tabulation & Preliminary Analysis	April/May 2026
Draft Report Submission & Validation Workshop with Stakeholders	May/June 2026
Final Report Submission	July 2026

Note: All data, reports, and materials will be the exclusive property of IJM Bangladesh.

7. Required Consultancy Skills and Experience

Applicants must demonstrate:

- **Research Expertise:** Proven experience in designing and implementing large-scale mixed-methods studies, particularly in sensitive contexts such as CSEC, trafficking, and child protection with particular emphasis on experience with quantitative methods for prevalence studies
- **Sector-Specific Knowledge:** Deep understanding of the dynamics and legal frameworks surrounding CSEC, including vulnerability factors, exploitation modalities, and challenges related to justice system responsiveness. If an international organization requires a credible local research partner.
- **Technical Competence:** Expertise in survey design, robust data analysis (both statistical and qualitative), and clear, impactful report writing.
- **Local Context and Language:** Familiarity with the Bangladeshi socio-cultural context is essential. Proficiency in Bengali and existing relationships with local CSOs or government agencies will be highly preferred.
- **Ethical Rigor:** A demonstrable commitment to ethical research practices, including the management of sensitive information, informed consent processes, and strict confidentiality protocols.

- **Project Management:** Proven ability to lead multidisciplinary teams, manage complex fieldwork operations, and ensure adherence to agreed timelines and budgets.

8. Application Process and Submission Guidelines

8.1. Submission Requirements

Interested applicants should submit the following documents in PDF format:

- **Cover Letter:** Explaining qualifications, experience, and team composition.
- **Technical Proposal (Maximum 7 pages):** Include an overview of the proposed methodology, work plan, sampling strategy, and expected deliverables.
- **Resume:** Provide résumés for all team members involved (maximum 4 pages per resume).
- **Financial Proposal:** A detailed breakdown of costs covering consultancy fees, travel, per diems, and any other expenses.

8.2. Submission Process and Timeline

Applicants should adhere to the following submission details and timeline. Please note that all dates and times are provided as examples and must be finalized in consultation with IJM. This section also includes provisions for an online meeting to address any queries before proposal submission.

8.2.1. Submission Details

- **Questions Deadline:** Submit any queries regarding the RFP by **May 25, 2025**. All queries must be sent to the designated email contacts, mabir@ijm.org CC: mjoji@ijm.org
- **Response to Questions:** Consolidated answers to all queries will be provided by **May 28, 2025**.
- **Informational Call:** An online informational call will be held on **June 02, 2025, at 20:00 GMT+6** for interested candidates. This call will be an opportunity to clarify any remaining questions about the proposal requirements and the co-creation process. To attend this call, please express your interest through the [LINK](#) by **May 29, 2025**
- **Submission Deadline:** Complete proposals must be submitted in PDF format by **23:59 on June 8, 2025 (GMT+6)** to mjoji@ijm.org and mabir@ijm.org
- The email subject line should read: “Baseline Measurement (Prevalence and Reliance) for CSEC in Bangladesh – [Last Name/Firm Name]”.

8.2.2 Timeline Overview:

Milestone	Date/Time (Example)
Queries Submission Deadline	May 25, 2025
Response to Queries Posted	May 28, 2025
Informational Call (Online Meeting)	June 2, 2025
Submission Deadline for Complete Proposal	June 8, 2025, 23:59 (GMT+6)
Evaluation and Interview Scheduling	By 3rd week of June 2025
Award Decision Notification	2 nd week of July 2025
Contract Signing	July 30, 2025

Applicants are encouraged to ensure that their proposals are comprehensive, clearly addressing the methodology for the Prevalence and Reliance domains, and include all required documents as specified in the RFP. All proposals will be reviewed in accordance with the evaluation criteria provided by IJM.

We invite qualified agencies, organizations, or consortia to submit detailed proposals that address the criteria above. The insights generated from this study will be fundamental in driving IJM Bangladesh's data-driven strategy to protect vulnerable children, improve the efficiency of the Public Justice System, and ultimately reduce the incidence of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

For additional information or clarifications regarding this RFP, please contact the IJM Bangladesh team via the provided email addresses.

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IJM Bangladesh – Dhaka Office

Annex-1:

Indicators: IJM has developed nine Global Standardized Indicators (SIs) to measure PR, as listed below:

1. RC1 – Crime Reporting Rate: % of [crime type] incidents reported to relevant justice system agencies
2. RC2 – Intermediary Crime Reporting Rate: % of [crime type] incidents reported to non-justice system agencies
3. RC3 – Crime Reporting Gap: % of [crime type] incidents that were not reported anywhere
4. RC4 – Willingness to Report Crime to Justice System: % of vulnerable people who would report incidents of [crime type] to relevant justice system agencies if they experienced the violation
5. RC5 – Willingness to Participate in Criminal Proceedings: % of vulnerable people who would participate in all relevant criminal proceedings, if they experienced and reported the incidents of [crime type] to relevant justice system agencies
6. RC6 (IC1) – Registered Incidents: # of registered incidents of [crime type]
7. RC7 - Survivor Case Participation Rate - ILED: % of survivors who fully participated in key investigation processes either directly or through legal representation
8. RC8 - Survivor Case Participation Rate - Legal: % of survivors who fully participated in key legal processes either directly or through legal representation
9. RC9 - Survivor Case Participation Rate - Aftercare: % of survivors who fully participated in key aftercare processes either directly or through legal representation