

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Technical Assistance (TA) to document bottlenecks, implementation experiences, challenges, and opportunities through a nutrition governance lens for the proper implementation of the MMNP at sub-national levels

Background

For nearly 30 years, Nutrition International (NI)¹ has focused on delivering low-cost, high-impact, nutrition interventions to people in need. Working alongside governments as an expert ally, NI combines deep technical expertise with a flexible approach, increasing impact without increasing complexity or cost. NI serves as a force multiplier across the development ecosystem, using a unique combination of capabilities to help countries overcome barriers to scaling up nutrition, domestic resource mobilization as well as local government capacity and ownership.

Nutrition International (previously Micronutrient Initiative) has been working in Bangladesh since 1995 as a trusted partner of the government in addressing the malnutrition burden through various nutrition-related programs, including micronutrient supplementation, adolescent nutrition, food fortification, and nutrition governance.

The Government of Bangladesh is obligated to respect, protect, and fulfill the right to health and nutrition of all citizens. Over recent decades, the government of Bangladesh has adopted some international standard laws and policies to strengthen and promote health services and achieved admirable progress in improving the health and nutrition status of its population. Particularly between 2017–18 and 2022, with under-5 mortality for the preceding 3 years declined from 43 to 31 deaths per 1,000 live births, Infant mortality declined from 36 to 25 deaths per 1,000 births. Apart from that, between 2011 and 2022, births attended by medically trained providers increased from 33% to 70% and child stunting reduced from 31% in 2017/2018 to 24% in 2022. Largely accountable for these progresses has had in mainstreaming nutrition into national policy and action plans; The National Nutrition Policy has been translated into the country's Second National Plan of Action on Nutrition (NPAN2) 2016-2025, and nutrition has been mainstreamed as a key component of food systems planning in the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (NFNSP) 2020. However, there are still some challenges that have hindered the achievement of universal health coverage and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including a shortage of trained health providers, high out-of-pocket expenditures for households, inequitable access to healthcare, as well as poor inter-ministerial coordination also responsible to ensure the provision of essential services in rural and hard-to-reach areas of Bangladesh.

The challenges to the delivery of primary healthcare, multisectoral nutrition actions, and social protection are evident in Cox's Bazar, one of the poorest districts, ranked in the bottom five in Bangladesh, with a poverty rate of 32.7 percent, which is considerably higher than the national rate of 24.3 percent. About 10 percent of children are wasted, 29 percent are underweight, and 35 percent are stunted (higher than the national average). Only 17 percent of children receive a minimally acceptable diet and only half of them have access to lifesaving treatment once they become malnourished. Less than a third of pregnant women are enrolled in an antenatal care program, and only about 35 percent of women initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth (lower than the national average).

¹ www.nutritionintl.org

To address these situations and to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable and hard-to-reach people in Cox's Bazar, Nutrition International (NI) has been implementing a 30-month project titled "Adopting a Multisector Approach for Nutrition" (AMAN)" in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and implemented in partnership with the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC), National Nutrition Services (NNS) and the World Food Program. AMAN will work with the host community to improve the health and well-being of the vulnerable and hard-to-reach people in Cox's Bazar.

The AMAN project is designed to support the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) address the multiple and interrelated determinants of malnutrition in host communities with use of a three-pronged approach of strengthening: (i) health systems, (ii) multisectoral actions for nutrition and (iii) social safety net programs in Cox's Bazar. AMAN promotes a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach to the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of interventions in nutrition. The overall aim of the project is to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable and hard-to-reach people, particularly women, children, and adolescents in Cox's Bazar. AMAN will work with the host community to improve the health and well-being of the vulnerable and hard-to-reach people in Cox's Bazar. The project has three streams of work:

1. The provision and uptake of essential nutrition services delivered through the public health system that meet the specific needs of women, newborns, children, and adolescent girls.
2. The coordination and implementation of nutrition actions of the multisectoral minimum nutrition package (MMNP) by priority departments and overseen by district and Upazila nutrition coordination committees and
3. Strengthening the reach and quality of Social Security Programs that target the poorest and most vulnerable, the linkages and referral systems to essential nutrition services, and the integration of gender and nutrition considerations to better meet the needs of beneficiaries.

Improving nutrition cannot be achieved by the health sector alone, the deliberate actions of the MMNP– developed with the objective of prioritizing high-impact, low-cost interventions to improve the nutrition situation of a particular area or vulnerable group of people in Bangladesh. Nutrition International has been implementing the AMAN Project in close coordination with the priority departments (Department of Agriculture Extension, Department of Fisheries, Department of Livestock, Department of Public Health and Engineering, Department of Secondary Education, Department of Women Affairs, Department of Food, Department of Family Planning and Department of Health Services) in Cox's Bazar. Together with these government partners, a multisectoral social behavior change communication (mSBCC) strategy and accompanying mSBCC materials will be developed to leverage the connections of the programming by the different sectors, mutually reinforcing their behavioral change interventions.

NI through AMAN project is going to hire a competent and highly experienced individual consultant to document bottlenecks, implementation experiences, challenges, and opportunities through a nutrition governance lens for the proper implementation of the MMNP at the sub-national levels.

Objectives

Overall objective:

The objective of this TA is to document and synthesize the bottlenecks, implementation experiences, challenges, and opportunities through a nutrition governance lens of the implementation of the MMNP at the sub-national levels.

Specific objectives:

- 1) To identify the key implementation challenges or bottlenecks for the implementation of gender responsive MMNP for the priority government departments at Cox's Bazar.
- 2) To document the functionality and effectiveness of the innovative approaches, including the mSBCC strategy and tools, initiated by AMAN project to address the implementation challenges of gender responsive MMNP for the priority government departments at Cox's Bazar.
- 3) To identify and capture the key learnings and provide a set of recommendations for improving the implementation of gender responsive MMNP (specific focus on key gender specific learnings and recommendations).

Scope of Work

1. Workplan

- Detailed plan that clearly outlines key steps and timelines for completion of deliverables as outlined in the Terms of Reference and engagement with relevant stakeholders in the process.

2. Stakeholders Consultations

- Consult with officials from BNNC, district MOHFW, and other priority line departments on the scope of work.

3. Analysis of key bottlenecks, implementation experiences, challenges, Governance, and key lesson learned

- Conduct Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with relevant stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels (with the specific focus on hard-to-reach area) to identify and capture the key bottlenecks for implementation of MMNP, relevancy, functionality, and effectiveness of innovative approaches including mSBCC strategy and tools initiated by AMAN Project, challenges, opportunities, and lesson learned.
- Review monthly progress reports from partners and from the AMAN team to review data and findings coming out of supportive supervision activities at national and subnational levels regarding key bottlenecks, implementation experiences, challenges, governance, and key lessons learned.

- Develop a draft report with findings from KIIs and FGDs including a list of recommendations for improving the implementation of gender responsive MMNP at sub-national levels.

4. Dissemination and Validation of Findings

- The consultant will facilitate two multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder dissemination and validation workshop workshops both at national and specifically in Cox's Bazar with the priority government departments and local level experts to discuss key findings from KIIs and FGDs, with recommendation to address the gaps and improve the implementation of gender responsive MMNP in a governance framework at sub-national levels.
- Update the report incorporating feedback or recommendations from the dissemination and validation workshops.

5. Final Report

- Submit Final Report.

6. Policy Brief

- Develop roughly 4 pages of a policy brief based on gender responsive multisectoral approaches implemented in Cox's Bazar to facilitate the implementation of selected MMNP activities to district and upazila functionaries in other districts of Bangladesh.

Deliverables:

- Workplan plan
- Framework and methodology for KIIs and FGDs
- KII and FDG tool both in Bangla and English for each target audience
- All field notes and interviews legibly transcribed and translated in electronic form.
- Draft analysis report which includes the KII, and FGD findings, and findings that come out of partners progress reports and supportive supervision activities conducted by the AMAN team.
- Power point presentation on the findings and recommendations of KII and FGD
- National and Sub-National level dissemination and validations meetings report with key recommendations.
- Final review report with key recommendations for the government on gender responsive multisectoral nutrition actions
- A policy brief on gender responsive multisectoral approaches to facilitate the implementation of selected MMNP activities to district and upazila functionaries by addressing the existing key Bottlenecks.
- Final project and financial report

*All technical documents are subject to approval by the NI technical team before moving on to the next activity/deliverable.

Duty Station/Location

This is a full-time consultancy for a period of 06 months, with potential for renewal depending on need and performance. The consultant will be embedded with the Bangladesh Country Office of Nutrition International for the duration of the assignment and is expected to visit AMAN Project Office, Cox's Bazar regularly for programmatic purposes including interviews and discussion and to share the progress of the assignment with the team.

Travel

The consultant/agency will be expected to undertake extensive some domestic travels to the AMAN Project Office, Cox's Bazar, and adjusted locations for field visits. All travel required under this consultancy will be provided for by NI.

Timeline and Deliverables

This Technical Assistance to the AMAN Project of Nutrition International would be for a period of 6 months from January 2024 to June 2024, with potential for renewal depending on need and performance.

The applicants are requested to provide the proposed activity and deliverable-wise timeline for this assignment as a part of their technical proposal. When building their proposal, consultants should clearly indicate how they plan on transferring knowledge and capacity for all activities conducted before the end of the consultancy.

Management and reporting/Coordination Mechanism

1. The consultant or agency will directly report to the Country Director of Nutrition International for the Bangladesh Country Program and work closely with the National Program Manager and Technical Advisor of the AMAN Project. The consultant will also work closely with the Gender Equality Advisor, NI -Asia, Project Officer, Multisectoral Nutrition Action, AMAN Project, the NI Global Lead for Nutrition Governance, the focal person of BNNC for the Multisectoral Nutrition Action Component of the AMAN Project, and key Officials of BNNC and AMAN team members.
2. The NI will facilitate the operational linkages with all the other relevant sectors and stakeholders under this TA.
3. The consultant or agency will be expected to work in close coordination and harmony with other consultants/development partners working with the AMAN Project of Nutrition International.
4. NI will provide the funding for the assignment, and payment will be subject to performance and reaching deliverables as agreed upon at the time of contract signing.
5. NI will provide technical input into the assignment and is responsible for assuring the quality of the work being delivered by the consultant.

Profile/qualifications of the Consultant or Agency

The Consultant or Agency will be selected through a competitive recruitment process. The profile of the consultant or agency is presented below.

Education:

- At least full-time post-graduate level qualifications in Nutrition/ Food and Nutrition/Community Nutrition/ Public Health Nutrition/ Public Health/ Public Policy/ Public Administration/ any other related field(s).
- Qualification in Nutrition would be preferred.

Experience:

- At least 8-12 years of technical experience in the field(s) of nutrition and/or health policy planning including program designing and/or implementation and/or monitoring.
- Excellent working knowledge of the Government of Bangladesh's nutrition and health portfolios and programs.
- Proven experience in managing multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral working groups in national settings.
- Experience in designing and implementation of reporting and monitoring mechanisms, preferably in nutrition.
- Demonstrated experience in the use of Sex, Age, Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) and information through gender analysis, preferably applied to nutrition and sound understanding on gender responsive and gender transformative concepts.
- Experience in strengthening the capacity of ministries/ governments/ other partners in being able to sustain interventions.
- Strong skills in facilitation, project management, and tracking outcomes.
- Experience in working with multi-donor organizations, civil society networks, UN agencies, government, and academic/ research institutions.
- The experience of working in a multicultural environment is an asset.
- Experience in advocacy and communication for multisectoral nutrition.
- **Language Skills:** Fluency in written and spoken English is mandatory.

Application Process:

Interested candidates or agency from national or international are invited to submit the following by email to proposalsbangladesh@NUTRITIONINTL.ORG before December 11, 2023.

- Technical proposal: not exceeding five pages, describing the consultant's understanding of the tasks and key responsibilities and how (s)he meets the mentioned candidature.
- Up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV).
- Financial proposal: including monthly fee rate, suggested number of trips/days in-country, and any other expenses required to fulfill the terms of the consultancy (field trips, meetings, materials, etc.).

Kindly mention '**Application for Technical Assistance (TA) to the Multisectoral Nutrition Action under AMAN Project**' in the subject line of the email.