

# **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

## **CONDUCT IN-DEPTH RESEARCH TO IDENTIFY THE IMPACT OF SOURCING PRACTICES OF SELECTED CLOTHING COMPANIES**

### **Background:**

Oxfam Australia has been undertaking human-rights based influencing work on labour rights, with a focus on the women who make our clothes, for more than two decades. Oxfam Australia has been encouraging the Australian fashion industry to show leadership on safety in supply chains by joining the Bangladesh Fire & Building Safety Accord, as well as moving towards more transparent supply chains by publishing the names and locations of their supplier factories around the world. Leading Australian brands have shown great willingness to take the bold steps necessary in each of these areas.

In October 2017, Oxfam Australia launched 'What She Makes', campaign to tackle poverty and inequality in the garment sector. This is aligned with the broader Oxfam International 'Even It Up' campaign, a component of which is 'Decent Work', which includes the payment of a living wage through company supply chains. Supply chain development of garment companies can have a positive and negative impact on people and the environment depending on how it is managed. The root cause many of the worst working conditions lies in the failure of the companies to ensure a truly responsible and ethical supply chain. Buying practices, such as pressure to keep prices low, inaccurate forecasting, late orders, short lead times and last-minute changes put manufacturers under intense pressure and lead directly to poor working conditions and low pay for workers.

Oxfam Australia and Oxfam Bangladesh are likely to conduct research on overall concerns related to sourcing practices of selected clothing brands and its impact on business and workers. This research will be a part of our campaign for iconic brands to commit to paying living wages in the global garment supply chains.

### **Objectives:**

To conduct in-depth research to identify the impact of sourcing practices of selected brands leading to poor wages and working conditions for the women making clothes in production countries.

### **Scope of work:**

- Develop research methodology and research tools in consultation with Oxfam Australia and Oxfam in Bangladesh;
- Schedule and conduct the interviews with selected factory management from 42 factories (Merchandiser, supervisors, managers, owners) to conduct brand specific assessment of sourcing practices. This will be conducted based on a qualitative and quantitative questionnaires. Number of interview/s per factory will depend on who is being interviewed and if the persons being interviewed are able to provide necessary information to complete the research;
- Schedule and conduct ten qualitative interviews including industry experts and women union leaders, activities, representatives of civil society, owner associations, NGOs, academics to reflect their view on sourcing practices and its impact on workers and working conditions;
- Identify different sourcing channels and evaluate the strength and weakness of each sourcing channels and its impact on working conditions;

- Identify connection and impact between specific purchasing practices (aggressive price negotiation, inaccurate forecasting, late orders, short lead time, and last-minute changes etc.) and the knock-on effects for suppliers and consequently workers' health, wages and wellbeing.
- Rank different sourcing practices as an obstacle to business success. This will be presented in a graph to show among different sourcing practices, which one/s are more problematic than others from a factory management perspective. This will be followed by an analysis of its impact on workers;
- Link between different sourcing practices and supervisors stress. This will be presented in a graph to show among different sourcing practices which one/s are more stressful for supervisors to manage. This will be followed by an analysis of its impact on workers;
- Relate modern slavery with sourcing practices. Under the Australian Modern Slavery Act 2018 (MSA) companies (turnover more than AUD100m) have the obligation to monitor their supply chain for forced/bonded labour and submit a report how they are stamping out modern slavery from their supply chain.
- Collect three case studies from factories/workers/union leaders on sourcing practices and its impact on business and workers.
- Collect one positive case study on changing sourcing practices;
- Coordinate with Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)
- Support to collect contents (photos and videos), Oxfam will engage photographer and video graphed separately, research partner will support to get consent and schedule the content gathering for the report.
- Organise one validation and dissemination workshop. Workshop will be arranged in Bangladesh subject to agreement of owners association. National stakeholders, policy makers, experts, academia, CSOs on RMG sectors will be invited in the workshop. Findings and policy recommendations will be discussed in the workshop.

### **Factory list:**

The research will be conducted to provide an overall picture of the sourcing practices and its impact of the 14 brands sourcing from Bangladesh. These Brands have been selected by Oxfam Australia based on the available information. To conduct the research on fourteen brands, Oxfam Australia will request five brands who are not transparent to provide list of their supplier in Bangladesh. In case brands refuse to provide the information, research partner will approach Bangladesh Manufacturers and Exporters Association and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, other research organizations, unions to identify factories supplying to these brands. For the transparent nine brands, factory list will be provided by Oxfam Australia. Sample factories for research will be selected based on access to verifiable information and willingness of the suppliers to share information. Effort to be made to select factories based in and around Dhaka that are supplying to the selected brands for at least three years.

### **Sample size:**

Research partner will collect data from at least three factories for each brand (total 42 factories, 3 factories X 14 brands= 42 factories) for this research. Brands' sourcing practices will be assessed based on an assessment matrix developed jointly by Oxfam Australia and the research partner in addition to qualitative questionnaire. Based on the response from the factory management, brands will be ranked.

Oxfam Australia will provide the selected brands to self-rank themselves based on the same assessment matrix. This will allow Oxfam Australia to compare the findings.

### **Questionnaire development**

In addition to brand assessment matrix, questionnaire/interview questions will be developed by the research partner in consultation with Oxfam Australia. Questionnaires will be pretested by conducting one or two sample interviews before conducting the interviews and adjusted accordingly. Questionnaire will be developed in English and then translated into Bangla (if needed). Collated data will be validated, and analysed using SPSS and Excel. Expected general findings and brand assessment matrix will guide the development of the questionnaire. Interviewers need to be well experienced as they will be interviewing the industry experts. Interviewers will be trained on the questionnaires. A validation mechanism needs to be put in place to ensure data accuracy.

### **Consent**

Consent forms will be provided to the research organization. Written consent to be collected from each respondent.

### **Confidentiality**

Factory names and respondents name and contacts will not be revealed to avoid any potential retaliation for providing the information and taking part in the research.

### **Risk management**

A risk matrix and mitigating plan will be developed in consultation with the research partners and Oxfam.

### **Work Plan of the research/responsibility of the consultant/agency:**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify factories and respondents</li> </ul>	Contracted institution	October 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research methodology</li> <li>Draft survey instruments (both in English and Bangla)</li> <li>Pre-test survey instruments</li> <li>Finalize survey instruments</li> </ul>	Contracted institution and Oxfam Australia	October 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire enumerators having experienced in conducting social science surveys and well versed in navigating complex questionnaires</li> <li>Train enumerators rigorously on the instruments developed for this study</li> </ul>	Contracted institution	October 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct surveys in Bangladesh</li> </ul>	Contracted institution	Nov 19- Jan 20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One validation and dissemination workshop</li> <li>Support to collect contents (photos and videos)</li> </ul>	Contracted institution	January 2020

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide cleaned data and case studies to Oxfam with analysis in agreed format (Report Draft 1)</li> </ul>	Contracted institution	January 15, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide cleaned data and case studies to Oxfam with analysis in agreed format (Report Final)</li> </ul>	Contracted institution	February 10, 2020

### **Deliverables/conditions:**

The consultant/agency will have to provide following deliverables which must be approved by Oxfam:

- Research methodology
- Data collection tools in English and Bangla
- Clean data and four case studies to Oxfam with analysis in agreed format (Report Draft 1)
- Clean data to Oxfam with analysis in agreed format (Report Final)
- Notes of the one validation and dissemination workshop in English

### **The general Terms and Conditions:**

- The eligible consultant/agency has to form a research team
- All soft and hard copy of the assignment will be treated as the property of Oxfam
- Consultant/agency are not permitted to alter the timeline and planning of data collection and submission of first draft and final report; however if exceptional circumstances arise, they must inform Oxfam Australia in writing the cause of delay with proper justifications as soon as practicable. Oxfam Australia has all right to accept or reject such application of justification
- The consultant/agency must maintain the standard quality in data collection, processing and reporting
- The consultant shall have the responsibility to rewrite the analysis, modification of sections until the satisfaction of quality required by Oxfam

### **Oxfam's responsibilities**

Oxfam will provide the following feedback/support throughout the research:

- Technical support to develop research methodology and tools
- Feedback on strategy and implementation of the assignment
- Frequent monitoring and follow-up of data collection activities
- Feedback on the draft analysis and case studies
- Approval final analysis and case studies
- Support to organize one validation and dissemination workshops.

### **Required Competencies**

The following skills and competences are required of individual consultant/agency for the assignment:

- Extensive social science research skills;
- Theoretical knowledge and research experience on issues related to Bangladeshi RMG sector; particularly workers wage, rights, livelihood, living conditions and wellbeing;
- Experience in collecting and managing large scale qualitative and quantitative data;
- Strong statistical and graphical analysis, articulation and presentation;
- Strong report writing and presentation skills;
- The research team should have knowledge on gender and the team must be gender sensitive

### How to Apply

Interested consultant/agency should provide technical and financial proposal:

- A one-page description of the consultant/agency
- One page statement of the understanding of the assignment
- CV of the consultants/researchers who will undertake the assignment (female interviewers preferred)
- A list of previous research or evaluation experiences relevant to this assignment
- Sample research study relevant to this assignment
- Proposed Methodology
- Work schedule
- Budget (including applicable VAT & TAX), including logistic/administrative costs

### Evaluation process:

In response to the invitation, the consultant/agency will have to submit a technical and a financial proposal as per the 'ToR'. The selection committee will evaluate both the technical and financial proposal according to following evaluation criteria.

Criteria	Weight
<b>Technical</b>	<b>80</b>
1. Expertise of the consultant/agency	
Understanding of the ToR	10
Demonstrated knowledge and research experience on garment workers status and sourcing practices.	10
Experience in conducting research using both qualitative and quantitative method and tools	10
2. Methodology	
Appropriateness of methodology	20
Data collection strategy and management	10
Quality assurance	10
3. Management structure and qualifications of key personnel	
Team composition	10
<b>Financial</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The deadline to submit Expression of Interest (Eoi) for the research is by close of business day on **DATE**. EoIs should be sent by e-mail to [hbrd@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:hbrd@oxfam.org.uk) indicating in the email subject line: **Oxfam: research to identify the impact of sourcing practices of selected clothing companies.**

For any clarification please contact (both? Or one of Nayeem and Saiful?) Syed Nayeem Emran, Labour Rights Advocacy Lead at [nayeeme@oxfam.org.au](mailto:nayeeme@oxfam.org.au) and Saiful Alam, Advocacy Coordinator, at [salam@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:salam@oxfam.org.uk)