## **Practcal_Action_Logo_RGB_400px**Consultancy Services Terms of Reference

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| --- | --- |
| 1. **Assignment title:** | Baseline assessment on digital advances in jute trade for local economic development in climate stress Northwest Bangladesh. |
| 1. **Description:** | A Baseline assessment will be commissioned jointly by the Consultant and Practical Action on digital advances in jute trade for local economic development in climate stress Northwest four districts in Bangladesh. |
| 1. **Location:** | Kurigram, Rangpur, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari |
| 1. **Duration and timing:** | 2 years, 21 Sep 2020 to 20 Sep 2022 |
| 1. **Number of working days:** | 60 days (01 Jul’21-30 Aug’21), The detail timeline of the assessment is available in the ***Annex-1***. |

1. **Background and purpose of the assignment:**

**6.1 Background**

Practical Action (PA) is an innovative international development organization putting ingenious ideas to work so people in poverty can change their world. We help people find solutions to some of the world's most difficult problems, namely catastrophic climate change and persistent gender inequality. We do things differently so that answers that start small can grow big and bring people together in bold collaborations, combining knowledge with innovation to change the systems that keep people poor and vulnerable. We work with communities to develop ingenious solutions for water and waste management, agriculture, climate resilience and clean energy access. Then we share what’s proven to work with others, so many more people can change their world and we also believe in the power of small to change the big picture.

Practical Action has been implementing a project tilted “Digital advances in jute trade for local economic development in climate stress Northwest Bangladesh” with funding support from Internet Society Foundation (ISF). The project is being implemented in four districts of Bangladesh namely; Kurigram, Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, and Nilphamari, during the time frame of two years, 21 Sep 2020 to 20 Sep 2022. In brief, this project intends to demonstrate that by facilitating appropriate entrepreneurial skill development training and awareness raising, gender sensitizing on women’s role in jute SME sector, linking them to online marketing platform, extending linkage to financing institutions and expanding market demand of bio-degradable natural products enable 22160 beneficiaries that includes 2,000 women weavers, 100 youths and 15 SME actors, 45 SME staff and 20,000 jute farmers attaining economic independence in climate stress Northwest Bangladesh in COVID-19 context.

A COVID-19 awareness and support with hygiene materials in the workplace and at home for a safe and decent job in the jute diversified products trade and online marketing to be ensured under the project. The online marketing capacity of 15 jute SMEs, 45 SME staff, 2000 women weavers and product makers and intermediate youth and girls in digital literacy to support weavers and SMEs will also be improved. As weavers are engaged in making products, they are planned to be supported by a group of 100 youths (60% girls and 40% boys) from schools or colleges to provide ICT support for them in business expansion and market linkage.

With a view to capture the present situation of the targeted 22,160 jute value chain actors covering 15 SMEs, 45 SME staff, 2000 women weavers and 100 youth ICT entrepreneurs, in order to improve the capacity on online marketing and digital literacy skills, Practical Action intends to conduct a baseline assessment under this project. The assessment will be commissioned jointly by consultant/firm and Practical Action.

**6.2 Objective of the assignment**

Practical Action wants to conduct a baseline assessment to observe the current situation of jute production, trade, online marketing, capacity development of weavers, SMEs and ICT hub owners on ICT knowledge and online marketing, women roles in various stakeholders in jute value chain including export market.

The specific objectives of the assessment are, but not limited to, as follows:

* To assess the current status of farmers, weavers, Jute SMEs and ICT Hubs in connection with COVID-19 health & awareness, jute production, online marketing and income.
* To assess the capacity on using ICT tools and present status of digital/online marketing of jute SMEs, weavers and ICT Hub owners.
* To identify constraints and challenges of jute SMEs, weavers and ICT Hub owners for promoting digital/online marketing of diversified Jute Products
* To assess the current market system on diversified jute products and linkage position between SMEs and local buyers as well as foreign buyers.
* To assess the scopes, policy and willingness of government and private sectors to support/service to the jute weavers, SMEs, and ICT Hubs.

1. **Scope of work and key questions:**
   1. **Scope of work**

The assessment team will work as per the following job description:

* Review of relevant documents namely proposal, work plan, previous study report, relevant national documents, etc.
* Develop appropriate tools and guideline for data/information collection and conduct field test of assessment tools to see the authenticity of tools.
* Orientation of enumerators on assessment tools and methods.
* Observe the economic loss of jute actors in pandemic situation and also their knowledge on COVID-19 safety measures.
* Conduct FGDs with women jute weavers, jute SMEs, jute farmers, intermediate actors (girls and youths of ICT Hubs).
* Conduct KII with ICT hub, SMEs. In addition, the assessment will cover District council, Upazila council, representative of BJRI and Ministry of Textiles and Jute and, civil society representatives, etc. under qualitative assessment.
* Analyse qualitative data and information regarding existing jute production and textile sector that includes jute farmers, women weavers, SMEs, ICT-hubs and the intermediate actor (youths).
* Develop final report based on assessment of “Digital advances in jute trade for local economic development in climate stress Northwest Bangladesh” project.
* questionnaire should be developed by the consultant in consultation with Practical Action according to mention objectives
  1. **Key questions**

The following key questions under each component will prioritized in the assessment:

1. *Current status of farmers, weavers, Jute SMEs and ICT Hubs in connection with COVID-19 health & awareness, jute production, online marketing and income.*

* The questionnaire should be about the current situation of farmers, weavers, Jute SMEs and ICT Hubs in connection with COVID-19 awareness, jute production, online marketing and income.
* How the COVID-19 pandemic affected the jute farmers, weavers, SMEs and ICT hubs and what kind of losses they faced due to the pandemic
* What is the knowledge, attitude and practice that they have on COVID-19 safety and security measures and what initiative they took?

1. *Capacity on using ICT tools and present status of digital/online marketing of jute SMEs, weavers and ICT Hub owners.*

* How does the determine the capacity on using ICT tools and online marketing of jute SMEs, weavers and ICT Hub owners?
* What is the scope of digital marketing and advisory support for SMEs to connect with local and international buyers?
* What is the perception of the jute stakeholders (SMEs, Weavers, Farmers, ICT hub owners) on production, jute trade and online marketing?

1. *Constraints and challenges of jute SMEs, weavers and ICT Hub owners for promoting digital/online marketing of diversified Jute Products*

* What constrain and challenges are facing by SMEs, Weavers, Farmers, ICT hub owners on jute product and trade to strengthen their business?
* What the stakeholders (SMEs, Weavers, Farmers, ICT hub owners) are thinking to solve the constrain and challenges.

1. *Current market system on diversified jute products and linkage position between SMEs and local buyers as well as foreign buyers.*

* What is the current market system on diversified jute products and linkage position with between SMEs and local buyers as well as foreign buyers?
* What type of products SMEs are making and marketing?
* Demand and supply gap?

1. *Scopes, policy and willingness of government and private sectors to support/service to the jute weavers, SMEs, and ICT Hubs*

* What are the scopes, policy of government and private sectors to support/service to the jute weavers, SMEs, and ICT Hubs?
* What types of service and support provided by Government, NGOs/INGOs and financial institutes to the stakeholders (SMEs, Weavers, ICT hubs, farmers)?
* Any lobbyist of the SMEs to strengthen their business

1. **Outputs and deliverables:**

The specific deliverables for this assessment are detailed in the following table.

| **Assignment/**  **Deliverables** | **Format** | **Length** | **Detail** | **Responsible** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Data collection tools | MS Word | As per need | Both draft and final versions of qualitative tools/checklist | PA and Consultant |
| Orientation on tools, and data collection methods | Physical/  Virtual | As per plan/  Need | Qualitative | PA and Consultant |
| Quantitative data collection | Questionnaire | As per need | Field survey by data enumerators | PA |
| Qualitative assessment | Tools/Checklist | As per need | Field assessment by the consultant | PA and Consultant |
| Data analysis | STATA/SPSS | As per need | Data analysis and result production | PA |
| Qualitative script writing/analysis | Atlas.ti or Nvivo | As per need | Script preparation and summary findings [FGD, KII, Case Study] | Consultant |
| Draft Baseline Assessment Report | MS Word | 30-40 pages (excluding annex) | The structure of the report will be developed as guided by PA. | Consultant |
| Presentation on the draft report | ppt | As per need | The feedback/input on the presentation should be incorporated in the final report | Consultant |
| Final Baseline Assessment Report | MS Word and PDF | 40-50 pages (excluding annex) | Based on the feedback on draft report the report should be finalised. It should be in English | Consultant |
| Assessment Summary/Fact Sheet | MS Word | 2-3 page | Based on final report a 2-3 pager for assessment summary | Consultant |

1. **Methodology of the assessment:**

Practical Action is looking for a suitable methodology to achieve the assessment objectives that will help to identify the real scenario of the areas in which the project is being implemented. Considering the active participation and response from different stakeholders, a mixed method approach, both quantitative and qualitative, will be applied in this study. The MEL and Research Unit of Practical Action will also specify an appropriate sampling methodology, taking into account the project timeframe, resources and the representativeness of the project beneficiaries i.e., jute farmers, SMEs, etc. A combination of methods and tools will assist grasping perception, attitude and practice of households. The consultant will develop qualitative and qualitative tools including case stories in discussion with the Practical Action. The qualitative evidence will help in digging out the real scenarios such as what exact knowledge, practices and problems on Jute production and marketing. A field test and accommodation of feedback from the field test will also be done to finalise the questionnaire and related tools.

**Assessment areas:** This baseline assessment survey is planning to be conducted in northwest part of Bangladesh, districts are Kurigram, Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, and Nilphamari. These areas have been selected for project implementation.

**Quantitative Survey:**

The assessment will apply quantitative method for data collection to obtain primary data and information from the project beneficiaries. Primary quantitative data will be collected from jute farmers and women weavers using structured coded questionnaire. As part of secondary sources relevant documents will be reviewed and analysed. A standard sampling procedure will be applied to determine the sample size for the quantitative survey.

**Sample size and distribution:**For this survey, the study team is planning to utilise a cross-sectional survey design that will be carried out in each of the four districts where the project is going to be implemented. Each of the districts is further, administratively, sub-divided into progressively smaller thanas, unions, wards, and villages. An enumeration area (EA) is either a union or village, or a group of small villages, or a part of a large village. Firstly, we will select at least one upazila of each project implementing districts and secondly, two unions from each upazila will be selected randomly as enumeration area. A fixed number of primary sampling units (PSU), could be union (for jute farmers), will be selected with the probability proportional to the unit size. A representative sample of farmer households will be determined using standard sampling design. The jute farmers will be selected using simple random sampling in each enumeration areas and the women weaver will be selected via systematic sampling method. The sample size will be distributed proportionately among each PSU. The sample will be considered at a 95% confidence level, with an accuracy rate or amount of admissible error margin, of 5% for jute farmers and 7% for women weavers, as there is an issue of hard to reach during countrywide mobility restriction in COVID-19 situation. We will set the probability of occurring and not occurring an event, proportionately at same level (p = 0.5 and q = 0.5). The following sampling approach and statistical formula will be applied for the sample size determination:

; Where,

*Here,*

* + *n = The required sample*
  + X *= The standard sample size, was determined based on the distribution and the confidence level of the sampling population*
  + *N = The target population (Jute farmers = 20000; women weavers = 2000)*
  + *e = The sampling error,* 5% for jute farmers and 7% for women weavers
  + *p = The precision consider for the sample was 0.5 and the q was 1-p = 0.5*
  + *Z = Confidence level was 95% (1.96) according to the geographical variation.*
  + *The sampling variation is considered here, 3* for jute farmers and 1 for women weavers*, (standard 1-3)*

Calculated sample size,

* **Jute farmer, n = 377 ≈ 380**
* **Women weaver, n = 179 ≈ 180**

In addition to the sample size of jute farmers and women entrepreneurs, the assessment will also capture youth ICT entrepreneur, SMEs and SME staff through quantitative survey. So, in determining the sample size of those target groups, we will apply the following methods which is usually applied mostly[[1]](#footnote-2):

**Youth ICT entrepreneurs:**

For youth ICT entrepreneurs, we will determine the sample size using thumb rule sample method, where we will consider 50% of the 100 youth ICT entrepreneurs as sample size, i.e. **50**. These respondents will be chosen randomly and proportionately.

**SME and SME staff:**

For SME and SME staff, we will consider all the target beneficiaries as in these two groups the population is less than 100. So, **15** respondents from 15 SMEs (focal) and **45** respondents from 45 staff under 15 SMEs will be interviewed under quantitative survey.

**Table-1:** Summary ofsample size against target population for each beneficiary types

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Beneficiary type** | **Target beneficiary** | **Sample size** |
| Jute farmers | 20000 | 380 |
| Women weavers | 2000 | 180 |
| Youth ICT entrepreneurs | 100 | 50 |
| SMEs | 15 | 15 |
| SME staff | 45 | 45 |
| **Total** | **22160** | **670** |

**Qualitative assessment**

Qualitative assessment will be done in order to get more detailed, more specific and accurate information from the community representatives. In all cases various PRA tools and techniques namely Key Informants’ Interview (KII), Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and case study will be used. This assessment will be conducted with women weavers, intermediate actors (girls and youths), ICT hub, and SMEs. In addition, the assessment will cover District council, Upazila council, representative of BJRI and Ministry of Textiles and Jute and, civil society representatives, etc. under qualitative assessment. The outputs are expected to reinforce and validate the data and information collected through the quantitative survey. The distribution of the sample/respondents in the qualitative assessment will presented in a table.

**Table-2:** Tentative/proposed qualitative assessment

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Beneficiary type** | **Target** | **FDG** | **KII** | **Case study** |
| Jute farmers | 20000 | 4 | - | 2 |
| Women weavers | 2000 | 4 | - | 2 |
| Youth ICT entrepreneurs | 100 | - | 4 | - |
| SME | 15 | - | 4 | - |
| SME staff | 45 | - | 2 | - |
| **Other stakeholders** | | | | |
| NGO |  | - | 1 | - |
| Govt. (BJRI, DAE, etc.) |  | - | 4 | - |
| Chamber of commerce/ association |  | - | 1 | - |
| Jute entrepreneurs |  | - | 2 | - |
| **Total** |  | 8 | 14 | 4 |

**Data collection methods:** The survey is preferred to be carried out using semi-structured questionnaire to capture the quantitative response through an app-based data collection tool. A structured and mostly pre-coded questionnaire will be developed through a rigorous and systematic process. To make the data representative, sample size will be distributed proportionally and the analysis will be weighted depending on the target population in the respective areas using systematic random sampling. In selecting and identifying the sample respondent, we will use the list of project beneficiaries as appropriate. It is also worth mentioning that if we fail to reach any respondent from the beneficiary list, we will consider the previous or next beneficiary as respondent.

To serve the purposes, we prefer to use “Kobo Toolbox”, a ODK based android apps to collect data. The tools using in the smartphones and tablets along with simplicity and flexibility will make it easy to streamline every step of the collection, analysis, and reporting of data. It will further reduce the errors significantly, and richer the data quality and also can locate GPS coordinates of the sample.

A structured checklist for FGD, KII and case study will be developed by consultant for each of the respondent categories through a rigorous and systematic process. These tools, both quantitative and qualitative, need to be shared with PA management for their feedback. The number of qualitative assessments will be finalised after a joint consultation between PA and consultant. The quantitative data and status will be extracted from the qualitative assessment findings and secondary data source.

**Data processing, analysis and report preparation:** The collected quantitative data will be cleaned and analysed using appropriate software such as SPSS, STATA, MS-Excel, etc. The data from qualitative assessment will expected to be analyse in Atlas.ti or Nvivo. MS-excel could also be used for data compute, editing, to produce descriptive tables (frequency, average, ration, percentage, classification). Finally, report will be produced based on analysed assessment data or findings.

1. **Terms of payment for the consultant/firm:**

The total budget for the assignment is BDT 200,000 including vat and taxes. This cost will also consider the field visit expenses during assessment.The payment will be done according to the following time frame/arrangement:

| **Instalments** | **Amount** | **Timeline** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1st instalment | 25% of the total amount | After contract signing and submission of inception report including assessment tools |
| 2nd instalment | 75% of the total amount | After submission of the final report and satisfactory completion along with relevant documents |

***Note:*** *Tax and VAT will be deducted at source from the bills payable to the selected consultants/firm. In all cases, consultants/firm may only be paid their fees upon satisfactory completion of services.*

1. **Qualification of the consultant:**

* Master’s degree/Ph.D. in Agriculture/Agri-economics/Economics/Statistic or equivalent fields having at least 7 years’ experience in the related field;
* Must have good understanding on ICT-based agriculture and market linkage.
* Good understanding about qualitative and quantitative research methodologies preferably in agriculture, especially in jute sector and ICT-based market linkage in the context of rural Bangladesh.
* Ability to analyze data/information by using appropriate software (e.g., Atlas.ti/Nvivo) and synthesize qualitative data/information.
* Ability to carry on assessment in the current pandemic situation following safety standards.
* Capacity and willingness to work in a team.

1. **Application and submission procedure:**

Interested party(s) (consultants/firm) are requested to submit their technical proposal/concept note with the individual/firm profiles including reference of relevant work experience, relevant experience especially methodology including activities and milestones, time frame and CV of expert and contact details.

The proposal from individual/firm shall contain the following sections:

* Understanding of the assignment
* Approach and methodology of baseline assessment
* Baseline assessment plan and schedule
* Firm’s Certificate, TIN and VAT registration, if applicable
* CV of 3-pages highlighting related assignment completed and his/her role

Electronic copy of the proposal duly signed should be submitted to [Procurement.BD@practicalaction.org.bd](mailto:Procurement.BD@practicalaction.org.bd)with the subject line: “Baseline Assessment of ISF” by no later than **15th June 2021.**

1. **Resignation and cancellation/termination of contract:**

The employment may be cancelled/terminated by either party as mutual agreement giving reasonable time. The services of the consultant/firm will be governed by the Human Resource and Administration Policy of Practical Action, as applicable for an employee of part time employment.

**Annexure**

**Annex-1: Duration of the assessment**

Upon completion of the assignment, the final report will have to be submitted within 60 days starting from the date of assessment relevant task.

The duration of the consultancy work is 60 days, proposed starting date is 01 July 2021 and to be completed by 30 August 2021.

| **Activity** | **Timeframe: 01 Jul’21-30 Aug’21** | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| W-1 | W-2 | W-3 | W-4 | W-5 | W-6 | W-7 | W-8 | W-9 |
| Contract signing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Document review and tools preparation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Data enumerators recruitment |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Training for data enumerators and field test |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Data collection (quantitative and qualitative) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Data/information cleaning, summarising and analysis |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Draft report preparation and submission |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Draft assessment summary/fact sheet |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Feedback sharing on the draft report and fact sheet |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Presentation on draft findings/report |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Final report submission by addressing feedback [Full and Fact Sheet] |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. https://www.tools4dev.org/resources/how-to-choose-a-sample-size/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)