**Terms of Reference (ToR): Hiring a consultant for** **Capturing Lessons Learnt from the *‘Girls Get Equal (GGE)’* Project**

**1. About Plan International**

Founded over 85 years ago, Plan International is one of the oldest and largest children's development and humanitarian organizations in the world. Plan International plays an important role in mobilizing children, communities, and civil society organizations to claim the rights of children, especially girls and achieve agreed-upon local development priorities, towards a commitment to ensuring the well-being of children in support of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Plan International works in fifty-two developing countries across Africa, Asia and South America, and twenty-one countries raise funds to support these efforts.

**1.1 About Plan International Bangladesh**

Plan’s vision is of a world in which all children realize their full potential in societies that respect people’s rights and dignity, with high-quality programs that deliver long-lasting benefits. Children are at the heart of everything we do.

Plan International has been operating in Bangladesh since 1993. Plan International Bangladesh’s Country Strategy (2020-2030) is designed to empower adolescent girls and young women, to be heard, to live without fear of violence and to achieve their rights. In doing so, Plan international Bangladesh (PIB) will:

* empower children and young people as drivers of systemic change to gender norms and power relationships;
* promote an enabling environment for girls and young women to realize their sexual and reproductive health and rights and to live free from violence;
* raise public and private sector support for young women to access decent work opportunities in the twenty-first century labour market and have control over resources.

Plan International Bangladesh (PIB) has the country office in Dhaka, from where we are operating projects in Dhaka, Rangpur, Barisal and Chittagong divisions. Since 2017, we have a strong presence at Cox’s Bazar district under Chittagong division. Along with our main office at Cox’s Bazar, we have two more field offices i.e., Ukhiya and Teknaf. By following the global mandate on emergency response and Disaster Preparedness Process (DPP) 4[[1]](#footnote-1), PIB supports both the Rohingya and host communities through humanitarian projects that provide lifesaving and resilience building assistance, while incorporating disaster risk management in its development work, to ensure protection of the most vulnerable groups, such as children, girls and young women, from the harmful impacts of conflicts, disasters and climate change. PIB also is attempting to strengthen its position within the climate resilience sphere, through a climate resilience model to contribute towards a long-term program that will provide durable solutions for girls, young women and youth in climate impacted areas, with a specific focus on their resilience and adaptive capacity building to the effects of climate change. Through this initiative, PIB will also be a host to the global climate hub which will support the implementation of the model.

**2. Details of the Girls Get Equal (GGE) Project**

The "Girls Get Equal" project in Bangladesh, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development(NORAD) and operating from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2024, focuses on Barguna Sadar and Taltoli in Barguna District. Partnering with South Asia Partnership Bangladesh and Resource Development Foundation, the program targets 26,000 children and youth to combat child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) through interventions spanning girls' retention in school, youth economic empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education, social norm change, and child protection. Bangladesh's prevalent gender inequality, poverty, educational disparities, and weak child protection frameworks drive the alarming rates of CEFM, with girls often perceived as financial burdens and married off early. The program aims to address these root causes, targeting vulnerable populations to achieve outcomes such as improved SRHR knowledge, increased economic opportunities, changed social norms, and bolstered child protection mechanisms. By aligning with national priorities and engaging in comprehensive strategies, the program seeks to create sustainable change and pave the way for a future free from CEFM in Bangladesh.

**2.1 Background of the Project**

Bangladesh has the highest percentage of girls who are married before the age of 18 in Asia, and the highest rate of child marriage among girls under 15 in the world. Two percent of women and girls in Bangladesh are married before the age of 11. A study by Plan and the International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research (2013) found that girls in rural areas are more vulnerable than girls living in urban area, with 71% of girls in rural areas married before 18, compared to 54% in urban areas.

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##### **Gender inequality**

Child marriage is a manifestation of discriminatory social norms and the gendered roles in Bangladesh. Marriage is seen as necessary to satisfy men’s sexual, emotional and reproductive needs. Acquiring a wife fulfils a need for parental care and housekeeping. Parents see marriage as a way to protect a girl’s ‘honor’, keeping her safe from sexual contact outside the religious and social sanctimony. Research also shows that girls are more vulnerable to sexual harassment in connection with natural disasters, which are common in Bangladesh. Families may choose to marry off their daughters to shift the responsibility for their security to another family.

##### **Poverty**

Poverty is an important driver of child marriage in the context of Bangladesh. The child marriage rate is overall higher in the poorest quintiles of the population, with 70.9 % of girls being married before the age of 18, whilst 49.4 % of girls belonging to the richest families are married before the age of 18. Where poverty is acute, a young girl may be regarded as a financial burden. The practice of dowries further exacerbates child marriage as dowry for a young bride is lower than for an elder bride.

##### **Girls out-of-school**

Bangladesh has gradually reached sex parity at both primary and secondary levels for school enrolment. However, almost 38% of children drop out before completing secondary school, a slightly higher share being girls (40% dropout rate). Research shows that a low level of education greatly increases the risk of marriage before 18.[[viii]](https://ukc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&actnavid=eyJjIjo1NTM1ODU5MDh9&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fplaninternational-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2Fkamrul_shawon_plan-international_org%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2Fa7e2dcb727e045a2b81c29cd4be75167&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&wdodb=1&hid=39E327A1-402C-8000-D36D-0320B670A769.0&uih=sharepointcom&wdlcid=en-US&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=055b1872-08c5-ed50-0888-f6ca7f7312c0&usid=055b1872-08c5-ed50-0888-f6ca7f7312c0&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=docaspx&muv=1&cac=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&sdp=1&hch=1&hwfh=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fplaninternational-my.sharepoint.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=Sharing.DirectLink&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_edn8) More than 70% of children with no education or with incomplete primary level education are victims of CEFM.

##### **Weak Child Rights and Protection Frameworks**

The Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 prohibits marriages of girls under the age of 18 years, and boys under 21 years. However, the bill includes a clause that allows marriage before the statutory age in ‘special cases’ without explicitly defining what a special case might be. This opens up a loophole for the practice of child marriage. Further, child marriage is still widely socially accepted and under-report to law enforcement agencies. In 2004, a new law made it obligatory for a bride and groom to have a birth certificate before their marriage can be registered. Families therefore at times provide false information about the age of the bride during marriage registration, to avoid legal issues. There is also a widespread practice of not registering marriages at all, especially when girls are under-aged. This is a more frequent challenge in rural areas as the lack of birth registration is still quite widespread in rural Bangladesh. This problem has increased since the enactment of the Child Marriage Restraint Act in 2017.

According to Child Marriage Restraint Act, Child Marriage Prevention Committees are to be formed from the Ward level (i.e. the lowest administrative tier) to the District level. Following the rule of Children Act 9, Community-Based Child Protection Committees should be established at the Union level. However, these committees are sparsely functional in many locations in the country, according to the Annual Outcome Monitoring Final Report (2018).[[xi]](https://ukc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/wordeditorframe.aspx?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&actnavid=eyJjIjo1NTM1ODU5MDh9&wopisrc=https%3A%2F%2Fplaninternational-my.sharepoint.com%2Fpersonal%2Fkamrul_shawon_plan-international_org%2F_vti_bin%2Fwopi.ashx%2Ffiles%2Fa7e2dcb727e045a2b81c29cd4be75167&wdenableroaming=1&mscc=1&wdodb=1&hid=39E327A1-402C-8000-D36D-0320B670A769.0&uih=sharepointcom&wdlcid=en-US&jsapi=1&jsapiver=v2&corrid=055b1872-08c5-ed50-0888-f6ca7f7312c0&usid=055b1872-08c5-ed50-0888-f6ca7f7312c0&newsession=1&sftc=1&uihit=docaspx&muv=1&cac=1&sams=1&mtf=1&sfp=1&sdp=1&hch=1&hwfh=1&dchat=1&sc=%7B%22pmo%22%3A%22https%3A%2F%2Fplaninternational-my.sharepoint.com%22%2C%22pmshare%22%3Atrue%7D&ctp=LeastProtected&rct=Normal&wdorigin=Sharing.DirectLink&instantedit=1&wopicomplete=1&wdredirectionreason=Unified_SingleFlush#_edn11) Child Welfare Committees are established at the district and sub-district level, but few actions have been taken in these committees. Other committees, such as the Violence against Women and Children Prevention Committee at the union and sub-district levels are also relatively inactive. Reasons for this are both inadequate human resources, and that persons in executive positions are often unaware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to CEFM.

**2.2 Project location**

Borguna Sadar & Taltali Upazilla of Borguna District.

# **2.3 Overall objective and target group 2424/3000**

The project is implemented in Barguna Sadar and Taltoli, two sub-districts of Barguna district, in the southern part of Bangladesh. The overall objective of the programme is to reduce the incidence of child marriage in 16 unions of two sub-districts within the district of Barguna. Barguna Sadar and Taltoli have been selected specifically because of their low score on SRHR indicators, such as lack of access to quality SRH services and poor knowledge of SRHR issues. Barguna is also a particularly vulnerable area in terms of natural disasters, floods and cyclones, which exacerbates child marriage. The number of extreme poor people living in Barguna Sadar is 9,9 % and in Taltoli 12% (while the national average is 12.9%). The female employment rate in Barguna Sadar is only 14%.

Specifically, the programme aims to deliver and achieve the following outcomes:

**Outcome 1: Retention of girls in school**

* 108 secondary schools, including madrassahs and TVET institutions will be supported to strengthen the implementation of ‘Safe, Inclusive and Girls-friendly schools’
* 5760 out-of-school children receive accelerated or alternative basic education
* 1040 educational staff will be trained in code of conduct and inclusive pedagogy

**Outcome 2: Knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights among adolescents**

* 13678 adolescents have knowledge of quality SRHR
* 688 educational staff and trainers are trained on SRHR
* 4936 traditional initiators, parents or relevant local actors receive training on SRHR

**Outcome 3: Strengthened economic opportunities for girls and families at high risk of CEFM**

* Facilitate skills and employment opportunities for decent incomes for 2200 youth, focusing especially on girls
* 2000 critically poor families at high risks of CEFM receive economic support so they do not need to marry off children due to poverty

**Outcome 4: Communities embrace social norms that value the girl child and support them to delay marriage**

* 23540 community members receive awareness-raising on gender equality, child rights and CEFM
* 5120 girls and boys receive training on gender equality, child rights and CEFM (using the Champion of Change methodology)

**Outcome 5: Increased responsiveness of duty bearers at national, district, and sub-district levels to prevent and respond to child rights violations, particular CEFM.**

* 133 CBCP committees/mechanisms are functional and with higher sustainability level
* 64 civil society organizations engaged in advocacy relating to CEFM, including child protection, child rights, inclusion, gender equality
* 1638 official duty bearers/CBCP members trained
* 32 civil society organisations have increased capacity on policy advocacy

**3. Details of this Assignment**

**3.1 Specific Objectives of the Assignment**

PIB is looking for an experienced consultant to capture programmatic lessons learnt from the implementation of the GGE project.

Using primarily qualitative data collection techniques, this exploratory process documentation has the following **objectives**:

* consolidate and share learnings on the programmatic and implementation aspects of GGE project;
* highlighting achievements, challenges, and intervention-focused case studies under all expected outcomes of the project; and
* provide recommendations to support similar business development in the future.

**3.2 Specific Deliverables**

The study will produce the following deliverables:

* Review of project documents and other necessary project relevant documents.
* Preparing a brief inception report (to be submitted along with data collection tools) with finalised sample, scope and plans to undertake the assignment.
* Engage qualified data collection team and train them on quality control, data collection and ethical research.
* Data management and analysis as per the study objectives.
* Undertaking data collection as per the methodology with various groups.
* Analysis of data which will include transcriptions.
* A comprehensive *Lessons Learnt* document in English detailing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in line with the specific objectives of the study outlined in section 3.1 of this ToR.
* Ensure all data including raw and analysed from all sources are maintained and submitted to Plan.
* Maintain proper communication with PIB’s focal person.

Due to various reasons (i.e., time constraint, process-related delays, any unforeseen circumstances, etc.) the details of this ToR, including the study design and timeline, are subject to change (in consultation with the consultant) until the end of the start-up phase of this assignment. Therefore, the methods and scope of the study as outlined in the contract and/or the final approved inception report will replace those described in the ToR.

**4. Methodology, Data, and Ethical Guidelines**

**4.1 Methodology**

The study will employ a qualitative approach to ensure a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the study objective(s) through the following techniques:

* Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGD), In-depth Interviews (IDI) to capture qualitative insights and understand underlying factors.

**4.2 Data Sources**

The selected consultant/firm will receive the following as part of the onboarding package:

* GGE project’s results framework with indicator definitions;
* GGE project’s annual report(s) to donor;
* Baseline and/or any other assessment report(s);
* Any other secondary materials that may be important for probing/administering tools.

**4.3 Data Quality Assurance and Limitations**

The consultant is required to submit a quality assurance plan that sets out the systems and processes for ensuring the quality of all key deliverables from the start to end of this consultancy. This should include the proposed approaches to:

* Piloting of all tools in non-selected communities;
* Training of enumerators, field supervisors, interviewers, and data entry teams including in safeguarding and research ethics.
* Logistical and management planning of the study;
* Field work protocols and data verification, including back-checking and quality control by supervisors;
* Data cleaning and editing plan.

**4.4 Ethical Consideration**

Plan International is committed to ensuring that the rights of those participating in data collection or analysis are respected and protected, in accordance with the *Ethical MERL Framework* and our *Global Policy Safeguarding*. These documents can be found in the Annexes.

Appropriate, safe, non-discriminatory participation of all stakeholders will be ensured, and special attention will be paid to the needs of children and other vulnerable groups. The data collection methods will uphold the dignity, safety, privacy, and sensitivities for the girls and young women that they interact with. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be guaranteed as these personal identifiable data will not be published anywhere and will only be used to ensure data quality by persons who have received safeguarding and ethical standards orientation.

**5. Timeframe and Responsibilities**

The total duration of this study will be distributed as per the following table. (Assignment is expected to start from **July 2024**). The timeline can vary due to various reasons, and will be finalized in consultation with the selected consultant(s)/firm after onboarding.

| **Activity** | **# of Days** | **Responsible** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Submit inception report and tools | 6 days | Consultant(s)/firm |
| First review of inception report and tools | 4 days | PIB |
| Addressing feedback on the tools and inception report | 3 days | Consultant(s)/firm |
| Review the revised inception report and finalize the report and tools | 2 days | PIB |
| Data enumerators training, data collection, review, and analysis | 20 days | Consultant(s)/firm |
| Submit 1st draft report | 7 days | Consultant(s)/firm |
| Review 1st draft report | 7 days | PIB |
| Address feedback and submit 2nd draft report | 4 days | Consultant(s)/firm |
| Review 2nd draft report | 4 days | PIB |
| Submit final report with study brief | 3 days | Consultant(s)/firm |
| **Total number of days** | **60 days** |  |

**6. Supervision/Management of Assignment**

The consultant(s)/firm will be required to work closely with the GGE project team, and PIB’s MERL team (as appropriate). The consultant(s)/firm will be directly accountable to the PIB focal person. The consultant(s)/firm will keep the focal person continually informed on the progress of the assignment updates via email and other forms of communication.

**7. Expected Competencies of Consultant/Firm**

The consultant/firm should have the following competencies and expertise:

* Demonstrated experience of at least 5-7 years in conducting qualitative research, including designing interviews, and focus group discussions. Within this, interested consultants must demonstrate their prior experience of conducting process evaluations/assessments.
* The evaluation team must include people with professional background and demonstrated experience in conducting research and evaluation on SRH, SGBV, economic empowerment, etc. in development context, including experience conducting research with or about children (below age 18) or young people (18-24 years of age).
* Proficiency in qualitative data collection and analysis (including use of software), and interpretation.
* Ability to synthesise data from various sources and provide evidence-based recommendations for future programming.
* Experience in formulating learning questions and tools to elicit learning.
* Experience in advocating for and communicating research findings to stakeholders.
* Sensitivity to cultural nuances and the ability to adapt research methodologies to different socioeconomic and cultural contexts.
* Capability to engage with diverse communities and stakeholders, particularly vulnerable communities like adolescent girls and young women, in a safe, inclusive, age-appropriate, and gender-sensitive manner
* Strong organisational skills to manage the project timeline, coordinate data collection activities, and meet deadlines.
* Effective communication skills to maintain regular updates.
* Proficient in writing comprehensive reports that present findings, conclusions, and recommendations in a clear and accessible manner.
* Ensure all aspects and processes of the lessons learnt study comply with international ethical standards on doing research with/about children (such as those outlined by <https://childethics.com/>) and clearly outline to Plan International how this will be done and how safeguarding risks to children, young people including programme participants will be mitigated.
* Awareness of ethical guidelines and considerations related to human subject research, particularly when involving students and vulnerable populations.
* Fluency in English and local language is a must.
* No history of violation of child and girls’ rights.

**8. Application Process**

The application should be submitted in two parts that include: a) technical and b) financial. The technical part of the proposal should not exceed 12 pages (excl. annexes) and will contain the following:

* Detailed methodology of the study.
* Proposed timelines as stated in the ToR.
* Account of relevant experience (consulting team profile). Applications should elaborate on the consultant’s abilities to manage work within the tentative timelines shared in this ToR along with any challenges.
* Consulting team profile including CVs of the team leader and key members of the study team.
* Copy of VAT registration certificate (for consulting firm).
* Copy of valid TIN certificate and bank account detail.
* 2 examples of previous and relevant work (in the annex)
* Names and details of 3 references
* Ethics, safeguarding and GE&I approaches, including any identified risks and associated mitigation strategies should be included in the Annexes.

## The consulting team profile should contain:

* The full names of all participating consultants and their roles, including technical expertise
* Physical address of the consultancy firm.
* Telephone number(s) of the firm (if applicable) and participating consultants
* Full name and contact information of the contact person within the consulting team
* Full names of Directors/Proprietors

The **financial proposal** should clearly identify, item wise summary of the cost for the assignment with a detailed breakdown. The budget should not contain income tax as a separate head; it can be blended with the other costs, as it will be deducted from the source. However, VAT can be mentioned in the budget as per government regulation. PIB will deduct VAT and Tax at source according to the Government of Bangladesh rules and deposit the said amount to the government treasury. The consultant/consulting firm is expected to provide a justified budget, which is consistent with the technical proposal, and should contain:

* Itemized consultancy fees/costs
* Itemized field data collection expenses
* Itemized administrative expenses
* Validity period of quotations

The application package that includes the technical and financial proposal should be submitted electronically to the email address: [**Planbd.consultant.hiring@plan-international.org**](mailto:Planbd.consultant.hiring@plan-international.org) with the title **“Proposals for hiring a consultant for Capturing Lessons Learnt from the *‘Girls Get Equal (GGE)’* Project”** as subject line.

Two separate folders, i.e., technical and financial, should be submitted into one zip folder with a cover letter. The proposals should be submitted in PDF format.

Proposal submitted to any other email account except the one stated above or in any other form will not be considered.

Submissions after the deadline of **06 July, 2024 at 5:00 pm** will be treated as disqualified.

**“*Any direct or indirect pressure/persuasion/harassment to any Plan staff shall disqualify shortlisted vendors’***

*Women-owned businesses and companies actively engaged or advancing gender equality and women empowerment in the workplace are especially encouraged to apply.*

For any technical queries related to the assignment, please communicate to Mr. Enamul Haque, Supply & Procurement Specialist, Plan International Bangladesh, E-mail: [enamul.haque@plan-international.org](mailto:enamul.haque@plan-international.org)

**9. Payment Schedule**

The payment for this assignment will be made in 3 (three) instalments, following the below schedule-

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Instalments** | **Percentage** | **Timeline** |
| First instalment | 30 | After receiving the inception report |
| Second instalment | 30 | After receiving the first draft report |
| Third instalment | 40 | After the acceptance of final report |

**10. Parameters for Selection**

The following table outlines the selection criteria-

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Score** |
| Relevant competency of team leader and team composition | 35 |
| Appropriate methodology to address study objectives | 40 |
| Amount of budget and justification | 25 |

**11. Penalty Clause**

The consultant(s)/firm is expected to provide services within the agreed timeframe as well as submit the final report maintaining the quality as mentioned in Section 3.2 of this ToR. If the quality is not maintained as agreed, Plan International Bangladesh will deduct 5% of the total agreement amount. If for any reason, the consultant(s)/firm fails to deliver services within the stipulated time, the consultant(s)/firm needs to inform Plan International Bangladesh in time with a valid and acceptable explanation. Failing to do this may invoke a penalty clause at the rate of 1% for each day of delay.

**12. Bindings**

All documents, papers and data produced during the assignment are to be treated as Plan International Bangladesh’s property and restricted for public use.

**13. Risk Management**

The Consultant/s must take all reasonable measures to mitigate any potential risk to the delivery of the required outputs of this consultancy on time and meeting the expected quality. As such, applicants should submit a risk management plan that covers (at minimum):

* Key assumptions underpinning the successful completion of the assignment anticipated challenges and estimates of the level of risk for each risk identified;
* Contingency plans will be put in place to mitigate against any occurrence of each of the identified risks.

**14. Disclaimer**

Plan International Bangladesh reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals without assigning any reason whatsoever.

**15. Annexes**  
  
**Annex 1: Plan International Global Policy Safeguarding**  


**Annex 2: Ethical MERL Framework**  


**Annex 3: Plan International Global PSHEA Policy**



**Annex 4: Plan International Global Policy on Gender Equality and Inclusion**



**Annex 5: Plan International Conflicts of Interest Policy**



**Annex 5: PII Non-Staff Code of Conduct Version: 2.0**



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1. Disaster Preparedness Plan (DPP) 4, Plan International Bangladesh, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)