

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR CONDUCTING A MIDLINE ASSESSMENT FOR PROGRESS (PROMOTING GREEN GROWTH IN THE RMG SECTOR THROUGH SKILLS) PROJECT

1. Introduction

The Promoting Green Growth in the Ready-Made Garments Sector through Skills (PROGRESS) is a four-year (2022–26) project funded by the Embassy of Sweden and the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh and implemented by Swisscontact. The project supports RMG factories to advance in green transition by building their resilience and competitiveness. The PROGRESS project drives sustainable growth in the RMG sector through a market-driven approach. The project has two major components. **The first component: Skills & Productivity**, aims at improving the technical skills and productivity of RMG workers. Under this component with support from the project, the Consultancy Service Providers (CSPs)¹ develop the skills of the RMG workers in areas like low performance, zero defect, women leadership etc. which make them more competent and productive. Besides, the project supports the factories developing an in-house training system to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives. **The second component: Environment & Social Compliance**, supports RMG factories in their journey of decarbonisation. The CSPs with support from the project assess the factories' status of carbon emissions at baseline and help them develop tailored pathways to reach net-zero emissions, while also promoting sustainability reporting. PROGRESS facilitates partnerships between CSPs and RMG factories to deliver commercially viable solutions. Especially, the project strengthens the local service market, enabling factories to access affordable solutions. Additionally, by leveraging collaborations with international brands, PROGRESS ensures solutions are aligned with industry demand. The ultimate objective is to increase the retention rates and income of the workers, including 60% women while fostering improved productivity, and environmental and social compliance at factory level.

To measure project's early signs of impact brought about by the project interventions, PROGRESS will conduct a midline assessment. This will also assess project's progress towards the key log-frame targets. This ToR outlines the tasks needed to be carried out for the assessment.

2. The objective of the midline assessment

The objectives of the midline assessment will be, but are not limited to:

- Collection of quantitative and qualitative midline data against the log frame indicators.
- Captures insights from CSPs, brands, factory management and workers regarding enhance productivities, and ESG compliance
- Analyse how well gender is integrated in intervention strategy, what result is it producing and how it be improved further.

¹ Consultancy service providers (CSPs) are reputed national/international commercial consultancy firms that have certain expertise to implement interventions in partner factories for PROGRESS. They have legal, technical and financially binding contracts with the project. Beyond project, then are expected to provide similar services to the factories in exchange of service fees.

2.1 Tasks: Skills and Productivity

- I. Collect data on **wages** and **additional increment** earned by trained workers (gender disaggregated) during 2023–2024 because of the Industry-Based Training (IBT) system facilitated by the project. Additionally, conduct interviews with the management and workers on project's contribution to wage growth and productivity.
- II. Assess **productivity improvements** in Tier 2² and Tier 3³ factories resulting from project interventions, including the average **increase in hourly productivity** (monetised).
- III. Assess the project's contribution to the **adoption of IBT models** in Tier 2 and Tier 3 factories, including the **investments** made by factories for their implementation. The study will also assess the technical skills and **productivity of workers** who have attended the training. Additionally, gather feedback from factory management and staff (trainers, assessors, and supervisors) on the **impact of IBT on productivity** and their commitment to sustaining and scaling up the IBT models.
- IV. Examine whether any modifications are needed in the implementation of the IBT model to enhance its scalability and sustainability. Additionally, gather feedback from factory management and workers on the effectiveness of the training, and measure their satisfaction with the training content and the improvements in technical skills.

2.2 Environmental and Social Compliance Objectives

- I. Discussion with Tier 2 and Tier 3 factories that have **adopted environmental and social standards** and **undertaken initiatives** related to environmental and social compliance along with the scalability and sustainability of these initiatives regarding factory management's mindset. The study will also measure the **factory investments** made to adopt these standards and explore the impact **on workers** through interviews.
- II. The study will also evaluate changes in average **environmental and social compliance scores** using an industry-recognized ESG compliance index.
- III. Assess the **awareness and understanding** of factory management regarding environmental and social compliance and gather insights from RMG management on how **project support** contributed to improvements in environmental and social compliance.

2.3 Local Technical Consultancy Providers (LTCP) Objectives

- I. Assess the outcome of the training received by local Technical Consultancy Service Providers (**LTCPs**) on skills, productivity, and ESG-related technical consultancy services.
- II. Investigate whether LTCPs from local consultancy firms, industry associations, and supported institutes are **offering consultancy services** to RMG factories and the quality of services rendered by gathering testimonials from the management of their client RMG factories.
- III. Explore the **challenges** they face and the **opportunities** available for LTCPs.

² **Tier-2 factories** are located outside the EPZs. They are both large and medium in size; mostly owned by domestic entrepreneurs but have direct long-term business relations with the international buyers.

³ **Tier-3 factories** comprise of medium and small-scale factories that have no direct links with international buyers or no capability to open a letter of credit. These factories often operate in rented buildings and usually rely on subcontracted orders from the Tier-2 factories. Most of these factories have challenges in compliance with social and environmental standards.

2.4 Gender

- I. Assess the **gender-inclusive interventions** undertaken by the project and provide the **key learnings**.
- II. Captures the **current inclusive practices** among management and workers in Tier -2 and Tier -3 factories
- III. Assess the status of the barriers identified in the gender study, along with the successes achieved and lessons learned from the initiatives implemented to address these barriers.

3. Methodology and Sample Size

The assessment will be carried out in alignment with the OECD evaluation principles, using six lenses to analyse the project and its results: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Suggested assessment questions for each criterion are outlined below:

Relevance:

- To which extent are the interventions consistent with the needs of the workers/ factories?
- Are the interventions adapting to the changing contexts and emerging needs?

Coherence:

- To what extent are the interventions logically connected and complementary to other development efforts?
- How does the intervention align with national, regional, and international standards, policies, or strategies?

Effectiveness:

- To what extent were the intended results (outputs and outcomes) achieved?
- What factors contributed to or hindered the achievement of the intended outcomes?

Efficiency

- Were resources (financial, human, technical) used economically and efficiently?
- Were timelines respected, and were there alternative approaches that could have been more efficient?

Impact

- What significant changes (intended and unintended, positive and negative) can be attributed to the interventions?
- How have the interventions contributed to systemic change?

Sustainability

- Are the benefits of the interventions likely to continue after the end of the support?
- What factors enhance or undermine the sustainability of the outcomes?

These questions will be jointly revisited and finalised with the selected firm during the questionnaire development stage.

This study will employ a multidisciplinary approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods, and will triangulate data collected from various sources, including sample surveys, Focus

Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and a tracer study. A representative sample will be drawn from 27 factories (from Dhaka, Narayanganj, Chittagang, Gazipur) (comprising both Tier 2 and Tier 3) that the project reached by 2024. The analysis will be disaggregated by location, age range, and gender. The sampling plan is outlined as follows.

Interview Method	Respondents	Number of Respondents	Purpose/remarks
Factory survey	1. Factory senior management (Owners, industrial engineers (IEs), compliance managers), 2. Middle management, 3. Supervisors/line chiefs. 4. Brands	27 (minimum)	For quantitative indicators related to productivity, investments, and Environmental & Social Compliance (E&S) initiatives and scores.
Tracer study (Individual interview)	Factory workers (minimum 60% should be women)	680 (minimum)	Wage, additional income, job security and resilience
	Factory workers (minimum 60% should be women)	300	From newly onboard factories across the area
	Factory workers (minimum 60% should be women)	680	It will be held in November 2025, followed by a consecutive tracer study in July 2026. The firm is requested to include a per-sample budget in the financial proposal.
FGD (Focus Group Discussion)	Workers (a group of 5-6 workers where 60% should be women)	27 (minimum)	Insights on wage increment, contribution of interventions on wage increment, benefit of project interventions and effectiveness of training, their challenges and learnings, gender insights
Key Informant Interview (KII)	Factory senior management	27 (minimum)	Awareness and understanding of factory management regarding IBT model, ESG compliance, insights of training effectiveness, challenges of adopting ESG initiatives, learnings and gender analysis
	Factory middle management		
	Brands		

Note: The proposed methodology above may change upon mutual discussion between Swisscontact and the consultancy firm.

4. Geographic Location

- The project location(s) (Upazila-specific) are:
 - a. Dhaka (Possible Upazilas: Dhaka Metro, Savar)
 - b. Gazipur (Possible Upazilas: Gazipur Sadar, Tongi, Kaliakair, Kapasia, Sreepur, Kaligonj)
 - c. Narayanganj (Possible Upazilas: Narayanganj Sadar, Araihaar, Rupganj, Sonargaon)
 - d. Chattogram (Possible Upazilas: Chattogram Metro, Anwara, Karnaphuli)

5. Duration of Study, Specific Activities and Targets

- The duration of the study is two months, starting tentatively from June 2025.

6. Deliverables

- Detailed work plan
- Final study tools
- Enumerators CV along with orientation attendance sheet
- Final dataset along with analysis
- Final report along with a 2-pager concise report
- Final presentation on the assessment

7. The role of Swisscontact will be to:

- Provide approval of the work plan.
- Provide a list of factories for the study
- Review and approve the questionnaire.
- Provide relevant datasets from the project's data repository.
- Supervise data collection, cleaning and analysis through active participation.
- Provide feedback on the draft report and initial findings.
- Approved personnel proposed for conducting surveys, FGDs and KII.
- Provide approval for the final report after findings validation.

8. Selection Criteria

While the exact set of criteria will usually vary based on the nature of the study, the following criteria are generally applicable for evaluation of the potential consultant/firm:

SL	Selection criteria	Points
1	Technical Proposal	80
1.1	Understanding of the study	20
1.2	Relevant experiences in the RMG industry (relevant studies/reports)	10
1.3	Quality of the proposed methodology and tools	20
1.4	Quality and the relevant experience of the proposed team	20
1.5	Experience of working with INGOs, in similar studies	10
2	Financial Proposal (consistency and relevance of the proposed budget-value for money)	20
Total		100

9. Reporting

The consultancy firm/consultant will collaborate closely with the PROGRESS MRM team, providing regular updates and reporting directly to the PROGRESS Team Leader. Additionally, the consultancy firm/consultant is expected to maintain seamless communication with team members to ensure timely execution of tasks.

10. Required Documents

Bidding consultancy firms/Consultant are required to submit the following:

- A technical proposal showing an understanding of the study, proposed methodology, study tools, timeline (activity plan), key staff profiles, roles, and individual time to be spent in the midline study.
- A separate financial proposal setting out a detailed budget for the study.
- A summary of relevant services i.e., midline (particularly in the skills development sector, if any) provided during the last 3 years.
- Submission of an organisational profile, with the CVs of key personnel (gender expert/analyst is a must) who will be involved in the study.
- A list of the existing clientele of the organisation.
- It is mandatory for the bidding Consultancy firm/Consultant to submit documentary evidence demonstrating their legal, taxation and financial status. This includes:
 - a. A certificate of incorporation.
 - b. NGO bureau registration (if applicable).
 - c. An organisational organogram of key personnel, inclusive of the names of such personnel.
 - d. Tax identification number (TIN).
 - e. VAT registration number.
 - f. Updated trade license.
 - g. PSR (Proof of submission return).
 - h. A signed statement testifying that all information contained within the proposal is correct and true.

N.B. Consultancy firm/Consultant will receive payment upon achieving target of the decided sample size and deliverables.

Please note that the shortlisted consultancy firm/Consultant will be contacted to present their detailed methodologies.

6. Submission Details

The consultancy firm is requested to specify the proven experienced technical expert within the proposed team in respect to factory level productivity, environmental and social compliance, and gender.

Hard and Soft copies of the proposal must be submitted (Financial and Technical proposal separately) to the following address:

For soft copy: The Technical and financial proposals must be sent as two separate files to the following email address: bd.progress@swisscontact.org by **22 May 2025 at 5:00 PM (Bangladesh Time)**.

Please mention in the E-mail subject line: **“Midline Assessment for PROGRESS Project”**

For hard copy: Swisscontact Bangladesh, Promoting Green Growth in The RMG Sector Through Skills (PROGRESS) project office, House 20, Road 68, Gulshan 2, Dhaka by **22 May 2025 at 5:00 PM (Bangladesh Time)**. Addressing to: Manager - Business Administration, Promoting Green Growth in The RMG Sector Through Skills (PROGRESS), Swisscontact Bangladesh.

For the technical proposal, please mention on the top of the envelope **“Technical proposal for Midline Assessment for PROGRESS Project”**

For the financial proposal please mention on the top of the envelope **“Financial proposal for Midline Assessment for PROGRESS Project”**

No late submission will be accepted.

PROGRESS programme reserves the right to accept or reject any of all proposal without assigning any reason whatsoever. Please note that if any application does not meet all the above eligibility criteria, the application will be disqualified without further evaluation.