

Terms of Reference

Selection of consultant/vendor of “Shifting the power to grassroots communities through strengthening farmer-led CSOs and improving their engagement in the sustainable development process (SWABOL)” project of Traidcraft Exchange for the following assignment_

Evidence-based research on legislations and other issues affecting the enabling environment in small-scale agriculture in their own regions.

1. Introduction:

Project Name	Shifting the power to grassroots communities through strengthening farmer-led CSOs and improving their engagement in the sustainable development process (SWABOL) project
Project Location	Bangladesh – Mymensingh, Sherpur, Netrokona, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj, Faridpur, Jashore, Khulna & Satkhira Districts
Project duration	42 months from 1 st April 2023
Co-Donor	European Union
Implementing agency and partners	The project is led by Traidcraft Exchange and co-implemented by RDS, GUK, USS, Bikash BD, ASSEDO & BEDS

“Shifting the power to grassroots communities through strengthening farmer-led CSOs and improving their engagement in the sustainable development process (SWABOL) project” is a consortium initiative of Traidcraft Exchange implementing through six local partners RDS, GUK, USS, Bikash BD, ASSEDO and BEDS. The project is underway in 33 Upazilas under Mymensingh, Sherpur, Netrokona, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj, Faridpur, Jashore, Khulna & Satkhira Districts. The European Union is providing financial support with an aim **to enhance social capital and capacities of Federated Smallholder Farmer-Led Civil Society Organisations (FSFCSOs) to become active actors of good governance and promote inclusive sustainable development.**

The project targets 46 FSFCSOs and their 1,580 LFOs (Local Farmer Organizations) in 33 Upazilas across 13 districts. The final direct participants of the project are 47,400 small and marginal farming households (farmers with landholdings less than 1 hectare), of which 50% are women, 7% are from ethnic minorities and 5% are disabled people.



Table: Target Districts, Upazilas (Sub-districts) and Unions

Project Location and Target Beneficiaries							
Working Zone	District Name	Upazila Name	No. Unions	No. FSFCSOs (Upazila)	No. FSFCSOs (district)	No. LFOs	No. Direct Beneficiaries
Zone 1	Mymensingh	Mymensingh Sadar	3	1	1	29	870
		Gouripur	3	1		40	1,200
		Phulpur	8	1		30	900
		Haluaghat	8	1		51	1,530
		Dhobaura	7	1		40	1,200
		Tarakanda	5	1		30	900
	Sherpur	Sherpur Sadar	10	1	1	40	1,200
		Nakla	9	1		40	1,200
		Sreebordi	6	1		42	1,260
		Jhenaigati	7	1		51	1,530
	Netrokona	Sadar	8	1	1	56	1,680
	Khulna	Dacope	4	1	1	60	1,800

Zone 2	Jashore	Jashore Sadar	5	1	1	54	1,620
		Jhikorgacha	3	1		64	1,920
		Manirampur	5	1		55	1,650
	Faridpur	Sadar	3	1	1	45	1,350
		Boalmari	4	1		44	1,320
		Bhanga	4	1		48	1,440
Zone 3	Gaibandha	Gaibandha Sadar	8	1	1	48	1,440
		Fulchuri	4	1		50	1,500
		Sundorganj	5	1		52	1,560
		Shaghata	4	1		38	1,140
		Gobindaganj	5	1		45	1,350
	Kurigram	Rowmari	3	1	1	39	1,170
		Rajibpur	3	1		28	840
Zone 4	Panchagarh	Sadar	6	1	1	65	1,950
		Tetulia	5	1		79	2,370
	Thakurgaon	Baliadangi	5	1	1	65	1,950
Zone 5	Rajshahi	Tanore	5	1	1	40	1,200
	Chapai Nawabganj	Nachole	4	1	1	110	3,300
Zone 6	Satkhira	Assasuni	3	1	1	42	1,260
		Shamnagar	3	1		30	900
		Debhata	3	1		30	900
Total	13	33	168	33	13	1,580	47,400

Specific Objective of the project: To strengthen the legal identity and operational capacity of FSFCSOs and build their civic space to influence effective delivery of services in line with national policies and regulations.

Outputs:

Output 1: 46 FSFCSOs are legally registered with state authorities and sustainably supporting their members, LFOs, to lead their own development and advocacy.

Output 2: FSFCSOs engage with duty bearers to facilitate representation in local governance and effective implementation of policies, contributing to an enabling environment for civil society.

Output 3: FSFCSOs work in alliance with their networks to promote inclusion of marginalized groups' priorities at family, society, and national level.

Output 4: FSFCSOs actively promote, and practice locally led climate adaptation to protect their agricultural ecosystem and ensure greater resilience to climate shocks.



গণ উন্নয়ন কেন্দ্র
Gana Unnayan Kendra



2. Organizational overview:

Traidcraft Exchange

For more than 30 years, TX has been fighting poverty through trade, believing in the positive and transformational potential of trade to bring hope to millions trapped in poverty. It's our mission to use the power of trade to create lasting solutions to poverty. We believe that trade affects the life of every person and can provide the most sustainable way of overcoming poverty. Yet markets do not always work in favour of the poor and often work against them. This is a major factor contributing to their poverty. Traidcraft Exchange exists to do two things:

- To support people to harness the benefits of trade.
- To fight against injustice in global trade
- To ensure a shift of power to the vulnerable people in the value chain.

In all our areas of work, TX plays a key role as a catalyst and convenor, encouraging different actors to work together to develop approaches that lead to inclusive economic growth. We have a particularly strong track record of constructive engagement with the private sector as both trading and development partners. Over the last 11 years, Traidcraft has worked directly with over half a million vulnerable and socially excluded members developing democratically run village-based groups and associations and nurturing their links to duty-bearers and private sector players. This has resulted in significant up-skilling of marginalized producers: increasing confidence and productivity, reducing costs, improving market access, diversifying incomes, and reducing environmental impact.

TX is implementing the project as the lead organization with direct support from 6 local partner NGOs located in the 6 working zones, Ulashi Sreejony Shangha, Bikash Bangladesh, Bangladesh Environment and Development Society, Gana Unnayan Kendro, Rural Development Sangstha, and Agriculture Sustainable & Socio-Economic Development Organization. They are highly competent local organisations as they have strong and established presences in the target districts and strong competencies in necessary areas including grassroots mobilization, gender-based projects, and income generating activities. They have strong connections with and expertise in working with Elected Local Authorities and Public Extension Officials and are essential in establishing connections to LAs and other relevant stakeholders in their respective zones. All will work side by side with FSFCSOs and will guide them throughout the project, facilitating their engagement in project activities and managing the disbursement of financial support.

3. Background of the study:

Empowering grassroots communities is key to helping people identify their own challenges and develop solutions that work for them. Community-based organizations (CBOs) and social solidarity play a crucial role in this process, especially in the context of small-scale agriculture. This project is dedicated to strengthening the legal identity and operational capacity of farmer and smallholder farmer civil society organizations (FSFCSOs), so they can better advocate for their needs and effectively deliver services that align with national policies and regulations. By empowering these organizations, we aim to support them in leading social movements that address the unique challenges faced by their communities.

However, many existing laws and policies fail to create the supportive environment that small-scale farmers need to thrive. This research will delve into these issues, uncovering the socio-economic challenges and legislative gaps that often go unnoticed but significantly impact the success of small-scale agriculture. We also recognize that gender disparities play a significant role in these challenges. Women in agriculture face unequal access to resources, technology, and training, making them more vulnerable, especially in the face of climate change. Addressing these inequalities is critical to ensuring that both women and men farmers can adapt and succeed.

The insights gained from this research will be invaluable in reshaping our project's action plan and strategies. Moreover, the recommendations we develop will guide future development projects, helping them better address the needs of small-scale farmers. By focusing on the legal, policy, and social contexts, this study aims to contribute to a more equitable and effective approach to empowering grassroots communities and fostering sustainable agricultural development.

4. Purpose and Objectives of the Evidence-based research:

This research aims to find out the legislation and other issues that affect the enabling environment in small-scale agriculture in the working areas. The research findings will assist the project in redesigning the subsequent action plan and implementation strategies keeping those in consideration.

5. Audience for the Evidence-Based Research:

This independent evaluation is commissioned by Traidcraft Exchange and will be shared with project staff and participants, management and staff of Traidcraft, and their respective local partners – GUK, RDS, USS, Bikash, ASSEDO, BEDS, project associates, project funders and other relevant actors.

6. Process and Methodology:

The research should be conducted in a participatory manner to incorporate multiple perspectives from key stakeholders in assessing the current legislative and policy environment affecting small-scale agriculture and the context within which these farmers operate. A Project Monitoring & Evaluation Group will be established to inform and support the consultant throughout the research process. This group will comprise key project staff from Traidcraft and its local partners. A consultant is requested to suggest a detailed methodology for the evidence-based study including desk research, data collection & analysis and reporting formats.

7. Outputs and Deliverables:

The main deliverables include:

- An inception report (maximum five pages) outlining the approach/methodology and execution programme/timetable. This report shall be submitted for review and approval by TX BD two days before the signature of the contract.
- Data collection tools should be submitted within two days after acceptance of the methodology for review and approval by TX BD.
- Draft research report which shall be submitted within five days after completion of the analysis work and shall be accompanied with the raw data as collected by the data collection tools. (see Annex 3)
- Presentation of the key findings to the stakeholders.
- Prepare and submit an updated log frame. (The present log frame will be provided along with the original project proposal).
- A concise PowerPoint presentation of the final research report should also be prepared (to be submitted in a pen drive/USB drive or card reader form).
- The final report which shall be submitted within five days after the stakeholder's dissemination workshop shall incorporate TX BD and stakeholder's inputs.

All documents, papers and data produced during the researches are to be treated as the property of Traidcraft and its partners and are restricted for public use. The contracted agency/consultant will submit all original documents, materials, and data to the contracting organization.

8. Roles and Responsibilities:

8.1 Consultant's Responsibility

- Undertake assignments as outlined in the ToR.
- Complete the tasks in ToR in the allocated time.
- Update Traidcraft on a regular basis concerning progress.

8.2 Project Evaluation Team's Responsibility

The Project Evaluation Team is comprised of

- Shahed Ferdous, Country Director (TXBD) & Project Director
- One Responsible person from TXBD
- Representative from GUK
- Representative from RDS

- Representative from USS
- Representative from BB
- Representative from ASSEDO
- Representative from BEDS
- Abu Nur Md.Khalid, Project Coordinator/Field Team Leader (TXBD)

The main functions of this group are:

- To ensure that the evaluator has access to and has consulted all relevant information sources and documents.
- To validate the evaluation framework, questions, and methodology by the Evaluation Team.
- To discuss and comment on deliverables delivered by the evaluator at each stage of the process.
- To feedback on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

8.3 Provision of logistical and other support

For any query and logistical support, the evaluator will contact Mr. Abu Nur Md. Khalid, Project Coordinator/ Field Team Leader at Traidcraft Exchange Bangladesh Country Office. He will be responsible for informing stakeholders of any interviews or focus groups, and for providing the contacts of people to be interviewed, dates of visit and itinerary with the help of partners. The evaluator will contract to him also for support on the content and methodology of the evaluation, as well as delivery of the report.

9. Timeframe:

Activity	Deadlines
Closing date for receipt of proposals	19 August 2024
Interviews for selection	22 August 2024
Meeting to discuss detailed terms of reference and contract	27 August 2024
The first draft of the evaluation report to Traidcraft	10 September 2024
Feedback and comments from all Partners	17 September 2024
Final evaluation report to Traidcraft incorporating all feedback	24 September 2024

10. Budget and Mode of payment:

The stipulated budget for the baseline studies outlined in this Terms of Reference is fixed at 900,000 BDT. This financial provision is intended to cover all requisite expenditures associated with thorough research, data collection, analysis, and reporting, ensuring compliance with the project's specified scope and objectives.

The evaluator should develop a budget for completing the evaluation as outlined in this ToR by clearly allocating expenses and daily rates.

- 30% of the total fee will be paid on signing the contract.
- 30% of the amount will be paid after the submission of the draft report.
- The remaining amount (40%) will be paid upon acceptance of the final report.
- The payment would be made in crossed cheque in the name of the consultant.

The vendor/consultant must have VAT & Tax registration and a valid Trade license. Photocopies of these documents must be submitted along with the EOI/proposal.

11. Application Process:

Interested organizations or individuals are requested to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) electronically to the following address on or before **19 August 2024**

Please email to: TX_Bangladesh@traidcraft.org .

The EOI should include:

- Contact details and up-to-date and detailed CV of the consultant(s) with brief descriptions of similar assignments.
- A clear and detailed overview of how this piece of work will be approached, the methodology proposed, and the outputs generated, with a clear timeline for the specified activity and a budget apportioned for the assignment
- All the related legal documents (VAT & Tax registration and a valid Trade license) along with a Certificate of Incorporations and references.

The EOI, excluding the consultant CVs, should not be more than 10 pages long, should have single spacing, and use Arial typeface with a minimum font size of 10.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview.

12. Selection Criteria

On receiving the EOI designated project management team will study the proposals including an interview and take a decision about the consultant/s/ agency for the study. Selection of the consultant/s/ agency will be based on:

Selection Criteria	Scores
Technical Proposal - level of understanding of TOR (20 points)	20
Methodology (20 points)	20
Relevant Experience (20 points)	20
Knowledge and skills in conducting assignment (20 points)	20
Competency of Team Leader and Team Composition (20 points)	20
Total as per Percentage (Total x 0.7)	0.7
Budget (20 points)	20
Total as per Percentage (Total x 0.3)	0.3
Grand total:	100%

13. General terms and conditions:

- Traidcraft Exchange reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal without giving any verbal and/or written rationale.
- Any report and document prepared during the assignment will be treated as the property of Traidcraft Exchange
- The report/document or any part, therefore, cannot be sold, used and reproduced in any manner without prior written approval of Traidcraft Exchange
- Traidcraft Exchange reserve the right to monitor the quality and progress of the work during the assignment.

ANNEXES:

Annex 1: Documents to be consulted:

- Approved project proposal (including log-frame)
- List of target beneficiaries
- List of other project stakeholders

Annex 2: Key informants:

- Shahed Ferdous, Country Director (TXBD) & PD SWABOL
- Abu Nur Md. Khali, Project Coordinator/Field Team Leader (TXBD)
- Shamim Azad, Asst. Director, RDS
- Ms. Joya Prasad, Asst. Coordinator, GUK
- Kh. Azizul Haque Moni, ED, USS
- Md. Alauddin Prodhan, ED, Bikash BD
- Md. Robiul Islam, ED, ASSEDO
- Md. Alamin Gaji, Head of Accounts, BEDS
- Upazila Agriculture Officer: Respective Upazila
- Upazila Fisheries Officer: Respective Upazila
- Upazila Livestock Officer: Respective Upazila
- Chairman & Member of UP- Respective UP & Upazila
- District and Upazila Agro-Producers' associations ((FSFCSO)- Respective Upazila & district
- Lead farmers

Annex 3: Required format for the research:

The research report should be not more than 50 pages with a comprehensive executive summary, excluding annexes.

- I. Title Page
This should include: project title; date of report; authors and their affiliations; Traidcraft contact point for the evaluation.
- II. Acknowledgements
- III. Table of Contents

- IV. List of Acronyms and Abbreviations
 - V. Executive Summary
 - VI. List of Tables
 - VII. List of Graphs
 - VIII. Main Report
 - a. Project description, including: context; underlying rationale; stakeholders and beneficiaries; approach; project monitoring system. (1-2 pages)
 - b. Purpose and objectives of the research
 - c. Audience for the research
 - d. Evaluation process and methodology including the rationale for the choice of methodology; data sources; methods for data collection and analysis; participatory techniques; ethical and equity considerations; major limitations of the methodology. This should include a clear explanation of the data collection methods used so that these can be effectively replicated during subsequent monitoring and evaluation processes.
 - e. Composition of the evaluation team, including any specific roles of team members
 - f. Research findings
- Data should be disaggregated by age and economic status (poor and extreme poor). Diagrams, photographs and graphic representations can be included. Quotes from beneficiaries, stakeholders, and partners should be included if relevant. Boxes should be included if necessary to explain any elements that are specific to the project or to the understanding of the project.
- IX. Conclusions: insights into the findings.
 - X. Recommendations: especially in relation to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project.
 - XI. Annexes to the research report:
 - a. Terms of Reference for research
 - b. Research framework or matrix
 - c. Research timetable
 - d. List of key people interviewed and stakeholder groups and/ or communities consulted
 - e. List of supporting documentation reviewed
 - f. Research instruments: questionnaire, interview guides, etc. as appropriate
 - g. Project log frame, with baseline figures inserted
 - h. Specific monitoring data, as appropriate (raw data)
 - i. Short biographies of the evaluator

