

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_

“FSFCSOs develop and oversee gender mainstreaming framework”

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 – Chapai Nawabganj, Faridpur, Gaibandha, Jashore, Khulna, Kurigram, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Panchagarh, Rajshahi, Satkhira, Sherpur, & Thakurgaon 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 ASSEDO, BB, BEDS, GUK, RDS and USS

“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- Agriculture Sustainable & Socio-Economic Development Organization (ASSEDO), Bikash Bangladesh (BB), Bangladesh Environment and Development Society (BEDS), Gana Unnayan Kendro (GUK), Rural Development Sangstha (RDS), and Ulashi Sreejony Shangha (USS). The project is underway in 33 Upazilas under Chapai Nawabganj, Faridpur, Gaibandha, Jashore, Khulna, Kurigram, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Panchagarh, Rajshahi, Satkhira, Sherpur and Thakurgaon 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 1,580 LFOs 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 persons with disabilities.

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 the inclusion of marginalised groups' priorities at the 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.

2. Organizational overview:

Traidcraft Exchange (globally Transform Trade):

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 favor 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 that there is a shift of power to the vulnerable people in the value chain.

In all our areas of work, TX plays a key role as 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 - ASSEDO, BB, BEDS, GUK, RDS and USS located in the 6 working zones. They are highly competent local organizations 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.

1. Background of the assignment i.e. framework development

Shifting power to the grassroots CSOs is a critical issue in empowering the community people to identify their own problems and contextual solution measures. The community-based organizations and social solidarity is the strongest vehicle to reach the goal in this regard. As per the specific objective, **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**, the project has strong role in strengthening the operational capacity of FSFCSOs along with legal identity and civic space that will make these FSFCSOs better capacitated in designing and implementing a social movement as per the plan and objectives.

The FSFCSOs will access support to develop an overarching gender mainstreaming framework to equip them to consider how gender affects their broader activities and membership, from policy influencing to technical ~~agricultural~~ activities. This framework will be crucial for inclusion and reflecting the realities of their membership, especially considering the increased membership of women, with over 50%, and other LFOs having significant representation of women.

2. Purpose and Objectives of the Framework Development

The primary objective of this initiative is to design a comprehensive Gender Mainstreaming Framework that will strengthen the capacity of FSFCSOs to integrate gender equity across all aspects of their organizational operations, advocacy, and technical initiatives, particularly within the realm of agricultural planning and budgeting. This framework is a foundational component of the broader goal of enhancing FSFCSOs' legal identity, operational capability, and civic space. This framework will support the FSFCSOs—especially those with significant women membership

- to critically assess and adapt their strategies, plans, and programmatic workstreams to ensure meaningful participation, leadership, and empowerment of women and marginalized groups in community-based development processes.

The framework is expected to reflect the diverse realities of grassroots' actors and be aligned with national gender policies, rights-based approaches, and inclusive governance principles. It must also be operationally usable by the FSFCSOs to inform gender-responsive agricultural planning and community-level budgeting processes.

3. The framework development will adopt a participatory and iterative approach to capture community-specific insights and ensure grassroots ownership

A total of 9 workshops will be organized in the following project locations

- Mymensingh, Sherpur, Netrokona
- Gaibandha, Kurigram
- Jashore, Faridpur, Khulna
- Rajshahi, Chapai Nawabganj
- Satkhira
- Panchgarh, Thakurgaon

Each workshop will be facilitated by an experienced consultant with expertise in gender, community development, and participatory research methodologies.

The consultant is expected to:

- Propose a clear, gender-sensitive methodology and framework development approach
- Facilitate inclusive and participatory dialogue with a diverse set of stakeholders (including women farmers, youths, LFO members, local FSFCSO representatives, and field staff)
- Document and analyse key themes emerging from these consultations

- Draft and validate a unified framework that is both locally/zonal-contextualized and nationally coherent
- The consultant will submit a proposed methodology and workshop facilitation plan for review and approval before implementation. Special emphasis will be placed on the inclusion of women voices and lived experiences, ensuring the framework is rooted in practical realities.

4. Intended Audience for the Framework

The framework and accompanying report will be intended for multiple tiers of stakeholders (25-30 people), including:

- Project staff and officials of Traidcraft Exchange Bangladesh
- Executive Directors and partner staff
- FSFCSO leaders and members of the LFOs
- Project funders and development partners
- Local academic collaborators and thematic experts
- Relevant actors in the civic space and public service delivery sectors

The framework will serve both as a practical guide and advocacy tool, influencing gender-sensitive planning and resource allocation at community and organizational levels.

5. Key Deliverables

The consultant will be responsible for producing the following high-quality and timely deliverables:

i) Inception Report

- Includes proposed methodology, tools, implementation plan along with timeline
- To be submitted and approved by Traidcraft Exchange Bangladesh (TX BD) before contract finalization

ii) Zonal Workshop Plan and Timeline

- Detailed session outlines, stakeholder mapping, and logistical framework for all 9 workshops
- To be approved by TX BD prior to commencement

iii) Draft Gender Mainstreaming Framework Report

- Integrating findings from all zonal workshops (national workshop report & national cohort report)
- To include raw data and thematic analysis as annexes
- Submitted as per agreed timeline

iv) PowerPoint & Infographic Presentation

- A concise summary of the final framework and monitoring tool with guidelines
- Two-page summary version designed for printing
- To be submitted in soft copy (pen drive or USB)

v) Final Gender Mainstreaming Framework and Narrative Report

- Comprehensive and edited final document
- To be submitted within **five (5) working days** of receiving consolidated feedback from TX BD

Note: All outputs, materials, and data produced during this assignment will be considered the sole property of Traidcraft Exchange and its partners. The consultant will be required to submit all original data and documentation to the contracting authority, and these may not be disclosed publicly without written permission.

3. Roles and Responsibilities:

Consultant's Responsibility

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

4. Provision of support

The FTL-SWABOL will provide necessary support to the consultant.

5. Timeframe:

Activity	Deadlines
Closing date for proposal submission	14 June 2025
Interviews for selection	19 June 2025
Meeting to discuss the detailed terms of reference and contract	Will be fixed upon discussion with TXBD Team
First draft report to Traidcraft	31 July 2025, or As agreed and documented in the minutes of the inception meeting
Final report to Traidcraft incorporating all feedback	14 August 2025, or As agreed and documented in the minutes of the inception meeting

6. Budget and Mode of payment:

The stipulated budget for the baseline studies outlined in this Terms of Reference is maximum up to BDT650,000 (Including VAT and Tax.). 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 consultant should develop a budget for completing the assignment as outlined in this ToR by clearly allocating expenses and daily rate.

The disbursement will be made as per following schedule:

- 30% of the total fee will be paid on signing the contract (Completion of Deliverable i)
- 30% of the amount will be paid after the submission of the draft report (Completion of Deliverable ii & iii)
- The remaining amount (40%) will be paid upon acceptance of the final report (Completion of Deliverable iv & v,)
- The payment would be made in crossed cheque in the name of the consultant.

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

7. Application Process:

Interested organizations or individuals are requested to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) electronically to the following address on or before **14 June 2025**

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 approved for the assignment.

Two 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.

8. Selection Criteria

On receipt of 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 of 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%

9. 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:

- Zahir Bin Siddique, Head of Programs and Operations, TXBD
- Abu Nur Md. Khalid, Project Coordinator/Field Team Leader (TXBD)
- Kh. Azizul Haque Moni, ED, USS
- Md. Alauddin Prodhan, ED, Bikash BD
- Md. Robiul Islam, ED, ASSEDO
- Shamim Azad, Asst. Director, RDS
- Joya Prasad, Asst. Coordinator, GUK
- Md. Alamin Gaji, Head of Program, BEDS
- District and Upazila level FSFCSOs- Respective Upazila & district
- Lead farmers

Annex 3: Required format for the research:

The gender mainstreaming framework report should be informative, short and concise, and the format will include:

- 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 workshops
 - c. Audience for the framework
 - d. Workshop process and methodology. This should include a clear explanation of the workshop's conduct 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. Workshop findings
 - g. Developed Framework
 - h. Simple monitoring tool to evaluate the impact