

Nutrition Sensitive Value Chains for Smallholder Farmers (NSVC) Project
World Vision Bangladesh
Coastal and River Basin Cluster (C&RBC), Jamalpur.

Terms of Reference
for
Business Feasibility Study to scope inclusive business and service provision
opportunities in agricultural value chains

Nutrition Sensitive Value Chains for Small Holder Farmers (NSVC) project aims to improve nutrition of 20,000 smallholders farmers and their households including female, male and children in three Upazillas (Jamalpur Sadar, Islampur and Dewanganj) of Jamalpur District. The project adopts a nutrition sensitive agriculture approach, which seeks to maximize agriculture's contribution to nutrition in the smallholder farming households. Consistent with the DFAT's (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia) operational guidance on Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (2015), the project has been engaged in improving nutrition through agriculture as a source of income and a driver of food prices (income and market pathway), a source of diversified nutritious food (nutrition pathway), and a way to empower women (Equitable relations pathway). The project is being implemented by **World Vision Bangladesh** and Unnayan Sangha (local partner NGO) with technical guidance and monitoring from **World Vision Australia**. The six years long project (September'2017 – June'2023) supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

The major project methodology is pro-poor market systems development aligned with World Vision's LVCD model (local value chain development). Value chain of nutrition-sensitive agricultural products are being developed engaging smallholder farmer groups including women as members (65%) of the producer groups. Market focused: Responding to the lack of access to quality agri-inputs, new partnerships were developed between private companies and project, including agri-input suppliers, especially those promoting hybrid seeds, environment friendly and bio-pesticides such as Petrochem Bangladesh Limited, AR Malik Seeds. ACI Seed, BRAC Seed and Ispahani Agro. The project also engaged the agri-extension services to provide training to PGs on improved production and post-harvest technologies. The project established Community Sales Agents (CSAs) to play an intermediary role between producers and market actors, such as selling agri-inputs to PGs. This is outlined further below.

Household focused: NSVC also provided training on commercial farming and gender inclusive financial literacy, as well as establishing collection point centres. This has not only helped to create economies of scale with vulnerable groups to strengthen their engagement with market actors in a trade relationship, but also increased access to new skills and opportunities, including how to engage with market actors and how to increase production yields. The project has been working on Rice, Maize, Chili, Eggplant and Leafy Greens.

In Bangladesh like many other developing countries of the world, women are systematically excluded from business opportunities in relation to agricultural value chain. Social and cultural discriminations are barring women in the access to the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in business. In World Vision's assessments (Formative Assessment on Gender Norms in 2018), World Vision found common negative perceptions in communities such as: "If women go to agricultural land, crop production will be less". Women's work in post-harvest processing was considered "easy", despite providing an important value addition to the final selling price of crops.

The project aims to achieve Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) through an intentional approach. For example, the project has selected a mix of value chains, prioritizing those that have opportunities and lower entry barriers for Women, such as chili and leafy green. For example, in addition to strong market demand and profitability potential, chili has strong WEE potential given women were already working and accepted in this value chain. Women could more easily participate in chili given lower input costs and the ability to work close to home. NSVC Project has supported these women to take up new roles in the market system, including marketing. As per Mid Term Evaluation Report-August, 2021, progress on involvement in rewarding or influential role (renting power tiller, renting irrigation pump, renting post-harvest machines i.e., Sheller, thresher, input selling, dealing with buyer who comes to the house, going to the market to sell product) was observed for both male and female producers for each one of the target value chain (Rice, Maize, Chili, Eggplant and Leafy Greens), in each one of the five target value chains, and for all three Upazilas. NSVC Project engaged agri-input companies on opportunities to expand their customer base in Jamalpur by, highlighting that women can be good customers. Women's husbands were also engaged in the process.

To make the women visible at the different levels of agricultural value chains as well as at both the family and community levels, the project is piloting women entrepreneur (WE) development initiatives through engaging rural women with commercially viable micro business opportunities focusing on the producer groups. This followed on from the findings from NSVC Project's gender responsive market assessment, which highlighted business and service provision opportunities for women in selected value chains. The project has focused on activities such as tillage, irrigation, threshing (service market) and mobile seed selling, seedling production and marketing (input market) opportunities. To ensure 'do no harm', the project focused on male engagement, including consulting husbands of women entrepreneurs.

As outlined above, the project also introduced another group of commercial service provider (both men and women) called **Community Sales Agents (CSA)** for providing last mile service (input, service and outputs) to the group members either by himself/herself or involving appropriate market actors (private & public). CSAs are key to the sustainability strategy of the project, and as per the Mid-term Evaluation findings (2021), further efforts could be made to strengthen the capacity of CSAs to ensure their profitability, incentives and market linkages so that they will continue to function effectively after the end of the project. In the FY 2020-21, Petrochem Bangladesh, AR Malik Seed, BRAC Seed and Ispahani Agro (Agri-input companies supplying hybrid seeds, bio and environment friendly pesticides) delivered day-long technical trainings for the CSAs in presence of the respective input dealers and retailers. Input dealers of the companies ensured that they will provide a portion (maximum 50%) of the commission they get from different input companies for the CSAs. Thus the CSAs are being able to earn money against the total volume of sale in each season. On the other side, in the output market they can also earn commission from the big buyers of crops and vegetable.

Objective of the Study: As per the recommendation of the Mid Term Evaluation report, the project will conduct an in depth study on the micro business being operated by the women entrepreneur and Community Sales Agents with special focus on women CSAs. The study will analyse and reflect on the existing status and potentiality of the businesses of project promoted WE and CSA. The specific objectives of the study are to-

- I) Explore the existing business status and plans of the Women Entrepreneurs and Community Sales Agents
 - I.1 How is the current condition of business of Women Entrepreneur and CSA?
 - I.2 What is their future plan and prospect and feasibilities?
 - I.3 Assess the Return of Investment (RoI) of WE & CSA.

- 2) Assess the size of potential market for their businesses and optimum revenue; compare it against their current business plans; and suggest improvement to or restructure their business plans.
- 3) Assess their business management skills and technical knowledge in relation to respective venture. This should consider gendered differences between women and men CSAs.
- 4) Assess how the existing market system (Input companies, enlisted dealers and retailers) is responding to these groups of entrepreneurs (including differences between women and men CSAs) and identify possible horizontal (peer, support services etc.) and vertical (supplier, distributor etc.) linkages for their businesses.
- 5) Identify the constraints and opportunities to expand or grow the business, including specific barriers faced by women entrepreneurs and by women CSAs compared to men, as well as any specific opportunities that might be linked to with working with women CSAs vs. male CSAs. E.g. what are the specific opportunities with working with women sales agents?
- 6) Assess their social acceptance within the producer groups and also in the community (non-PG members and faith leaders of the community), including any barriers to social acceptance.
- 7) Analyse the price point of the services being provided by WEs and CSAs against the industry and suggest on optimizing value for money.
- 8) Provide recommendations and propose specific interventions to: 1) improve the profitability and scale up the CSA model and Women Entrepreneurships; and 2) strengthen the pro-poor and gender inclusive business model of private sector partners engaging CSAs.

Proposed methodology: For obtaining reliable and valid data, appropriate methodology is essential. The proposed methodology will be a mixed method approach (combining quantitative and qualitative) including:

- Secondary desk review
- Primary data collection, including survey, FGDs, KII

The project will be used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods during conduction of the study. Women CSAs, Women Entrepreneurs and Women PG members will be considered as the key source of primary data that would be collected through face-to-face interview. The feasibility study will help to assess the practicality of the project plan. During the study, researcher must consider many factors, including economic, technical, social and readiness to determine whether the project initiative can succeed. Focus on the issues, the research initiatives dig-down the factors using qualitative research methods including FGD, KII. Some stakeholders will act as focal point persons to provide information and advice to properly meet the objectives of this study.

Key stakeholders will include:

- Producer groups
- CSAs /WEs (including those that have and haven't engaged in the MenCare model)
- Input suppliers /enlisted dealers and retailers
- Output dealers/traders
- Representative from department of Agriculture Extension Department
- Representative from department of Agricultural Marketing
- Male and Female PG members
- Non-PG farmers
- Religious Leaders and social leaders

Sampling process:

A census survey have to be conducted over 122 WEs and 108 CSAs. The study team will collect elaborate information by investigates over the eligible population.

Sample size:

Total 230 samples will be covered for quantitative survey (108 from CSA both male-female and 122 WEs).

Proposed number of FGD and KII

SL#	Respondent Category	Number of FGD/KII	Remarks
1	Community Sales Agent (Female)	03 FGDs	One event from each sub-district
2	Community Sales Agent (Male)	03 FGDs	One event from each sub-district
3	Women Entrepreneur	03 FGDs	One event from each sub-district
4	Female PG members	06 FGDs	Two events from each sub-district
5	Male PG members	06 FGDs	Two events from each sub-district
6	Non-PG members	06 FGDs	Two events from each sub-district
7	Community Facilitator	03 FGDs	One event from each sub-district
8	Project staff	01 Group Discussion	
Total FGD		31 FGDs	
1	Value Chain Specialist	01 KII	NSVC Project
2	Market Facilitator	03 KII	One event from each sub-district
3	District Agricultural Marketing Officer	01 KII	
4	Upazila Agriculture Officer (UAO)/ Sub-assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAO)	03 KII	One event from each sub-district
5	Religious leader	03 KII	One event from each sub-district
6	Input dealer	06 KII	Two events from each sub-district
7	Output traders	06 KII	Two events from each sub-district
8	Private Company Representative	05 KII	From selective company
9	Project Manager	01 KII	
Total KII		23 KII	
Case Study of successful CSA/WE (in these case, both quantitate and qualitative evidence have to be reflected)			
1	Women CSA to find out their learning, success, experiences, challenges and overcome strategy	03 no	One case from each sub-district
2	Men CSA to see the success, learning, challenges and way out	03 no	One case from each sub-district
3	WE to explore the promising practice, success, learning, challenges and way out	03 no	One case from each sub-district
Total		09 case study	

Geographical location of the study:

The specific geographical coverage of the study will be the three Sub-districts (Jamalpur Sadar-09 Unions, Islampur-06 Unions and Dewangonj-06 Unions) of Jamalpur which include 21 Unions.

Timeline:

Mid-January to Mid-April' 2022

SL#	Activity description	Date		Total days
		From	End	
1	EoI submission with both technical and financial proposal in separate document	05 January'22	13 January'22	09 Days
2	Technical and financial proposal analysis for potential consulting firm selection	16 January'22	17 January'22	02 Days
3	Agreement with awardee consulting firm	N/A	23 January'22	06 Days
4	Inception meeting with selected consulting firm	N/A	27 January'22	01 Day
5	Study tools shared with project management	N/A	31 January'22	04 Days
6	Feedback provide on tools by project management	01 February'22	07 February'22	07 Days
7	Data collection	08 February'22	25 February'22	18 Days
8	Report submission (First draft)	N/A	15 March'22	18 Days
9	Review and Feedback sharing by WVA, NO and project team	16 March'22	24 March'22	09 Days
10	Feedback incorporation on report (1 st draft)	25 March'22	31 March'22	07 Days
11	Final Report sharing with project team and stakeholders	N/A	04 April'22	01 Day

Responsibility of the Consultant/Organization:

- Develop a methodology and inception plan including manning plan for the study.
- Review relevant documents.
- Survey questionnaire development and validation.
- Form a survey team consisted of experienced persons and oriented them accordingly before data collection.
- Data collection and triangulation.
- Data entry and preliminary analysis, including providing a high level overview to NSVC staff.
- Validation workshop on preliminary analysis and findings.
- Draft report preparation and submission to World Vision Bangladesh for feedback. It is expected that there will be 2 draft report reviews.
- Finalization of the report and deliver to World Vision Bangladesh.
- Consultant firm should write separate FGD/KII report for further reference.
- Ensuring compliance with safe guarding policies and take consent of participants in the various assessment steps. Should strictly follow World Vision's Safeguarding Policy and other compliance documents by reading and signing on the hard copies.

Standards of Ethics and Child Protection:

Attention should be placed on ensuring 'do no harm' for women and girls through gender sensitive data collection following "Do No Harm" approach.

If children (under the age of 18) are to be interviewed, it will be in the presence of a responsible adult from the child's family, or other implied guardian from the community. Children will not be exposed to questions of a highly personal, sensitive, potentially distressing or embarrassing nature.

If children are to be interviewed, child protection reporting protocols will be established and all staff made aware of when and how to report any issues that arise from data collection.

Staffs of consultancy firm will read and sign **WVB Safeguarding Policy, WVB Behavioral Protocol, Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest**. One orientation on Safeguarding Protocol will be provided to the consultancy firm staffs before visiting field.

During taking photos and preparing publications documents, consultancy firm staffs will read and follow the donor required document listed below:

1. ANCP Manual, section 8 Acknowledgement and Engagement, sub section 8.1 Acknowledging the Australian Government, page 34 to 40: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australian-ngo-cooperation-program-manual.docx>
2. Logos and style guide of DFAT: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/corporate/logos-and-style-guides>
3. Ethical photography guideline of DFAT: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/corporate/Pages/consent-for-use-of-images-videos>

Responsibility of World Vision (NSVC project and WVA):

- Provide orientation to the assignment and to the project
- Support to assignment and review plan, provide documents.
- Provide reviews of 1st and 2nd drafts
- Ensuring necessary supports at field level.

Deliverable from the Consultant:

- Submission of the inception plan based on the project and assignment orientation
- Present preliminary findings and provide raw data/pictures (both quantitative and qualitative)
- Draft report of the study along with 9 Case Studies.
- Submission of the final report after addressing all feedback and suggestions from World Vision Bangladesh and World Vision Australia.
- Consultant firm should write separate FGD/KII report for further reference.
- Data pack submission along with all reports soft-copies through ITB hard disc.
- After finalization (cleaned version) of report, five (05) color printed hardcopies should be submitted before final payment.

Competencies, Required Skills and Experience of the consultant firm:

Applications (in English) must be sent by email to wvb_scm@wvi.org by (DATE), at (TIME) Bangladesh time indicating 'Business Feasibility Study to scope inclusive business and service provision opportunities in agricultural value chains at NSVC Project – 2021-22' in the subject line. It should contain the following elements:

- The eligible person/organization must have adequate experience on conducting study for reputed international organizations especially in the field of market system development, value chain assessment, micro entrepreneurship, women economic empowerment etc. It would highly be appreciable if the consultant can provide a previous study report as a sample.
- The eligible person/organisation has to form a research team consisted with Value chain Specialist and Gender/WEE Specialist.

- The eligible person/organisation has to submit the technical and financial proposal (as separate document) which may consists of methodology, tools, detail budget, timeline, reporting and CV of key personnel or organizational profile (not more than 10 pages).
- Assigned person/organisation will submit a work plan with guideline before starting the study and take approval from World Vision.
- During this study period the concern person/organisation will take suggestion/ feedback from WV.
- The assigned organisation will arrange all required logistics (vehicle, food and accommodation and other data collection tools like tabs etc.) for field visit and primary/secondary data collection.
- The Consulting person/organization will submit all the soft copy of report and raw data.
- The selected person/organisation will be adhere to WV's safe guarding Policy.

Technical Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The proposal will be reviewed by the evaluation committee and will be evaluated in line with the guidelines of World Vision Bangladesh. The evaluation committee will evaluate the proposals based on their responsiveness to Terms of Reference, applying the evaluation criteria and point system specified here. Each receptive technical proposal will be given score. Proposal(s) will be rejected at this stage if it does not respond to important aspects of the Terms of Reference or if it fails to achieve the minimum technical score indicated below. The technical part of the proposals will be evaluated on the basis as detailed below

Evaluation criteria	Weighted score
Understanding about evaluation objectives and Terms of References details	20
Details and quality of methodology proposed for the assignment/study	10
Demonstration of the quality assurance plan (Data collection & quality assurance process/Monitoring tools/ reporting plan, etc.)	20
Experience in relevant field	25
Experience in designing and conducting/working with DFAT funded assignments (relevant field)	10
Team composition and task assignment	15
Total score	100

Pass Mark: 60% points.

Financial Proposal will be evaluated separately.

Note: It is noted that call for presentation does not guarantee that applied consulting firms are commissioned the project, It is just a process of evaluating technical proposal. World Vision Bangladesh reserves all rights to accept or reject any proposal or cancel this circular without giving any verbal or written rationale and whatsoever more happen in any context.

Payment Procedure:

- The agreed cost will be paid to the awarded person/organisation in 3 instalments.
- After signing the agreement and submission of agreed Inception Report 30% of agreed consultancy fee will be given, while submission of first draft report 30% will be given and rest of the amount (40%) will be paid after approval of final study report.
- The cost will be given through S2B (straight to Bank), applicable VAT & TAX will be deducted from the source as per Bangladesh Government rule and policy.

Key Documents to be provided:

- Mid-term Evaluation Report
- Theory of Change
- Logical Framework
- Guideline on CSA development
- List and contact numbers of the CSA and WE

Contact persons:

1. Khandoker Ruhul Amin
Value Chain Specialist
NSVC Project
Email: khandoker_ruhul_amin@wvi.org
Cell: +880-1755638162
2. Md. Mofackharul Islam
Monitoring & Evaluation Manager
NSVC Project
Email: MofackharulIslam_Heru@wvi.org
Cell: +880-1713257150