

Terms of Reference for Mid-Term Evaluation of Nari Shakti, Samaz Shakti (NSSS) Project

Background

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is an independent development organization based in Switzerland, working towards a just world where all people can live in dignity and security while sustainably managing environmental resources. Promoting good governance, gender equality, and social inclusion is integral to HELVETAS' organizational values and programming approach. HELVETAS is one of Switzerland's largest and most experienced development organizations and operates in more than 30 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

In Bangladesh, HELVETAS commenced its operations in 1997 and was registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) in 2000. Over the years, the organization has implemented a wide range of development initiatives focusing on livelihoods and value chains, enterprise development, migration, skills development, local governance, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and climate change adaptation. Its work is organized under three strategic domains:

- Water, Food and Climate (WFC) – Ensuring Basic Rights;
- Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion (VIC) – Strengthening Good Governance; and
- Skills, Jobs and Income (SJI) – Creating New Perspectives.

Under the Skills, Jobs and Income (SJI) domain, HELVETAS Bangladesh is implementing the “Nari Shakti, Samaz Shakti (NSSS)” project, which aims to create a gender-transformative environment that empowers women and marginalized groups to contribute to safer, more inclusive, and resilient communities.

Brief Overview of the NSSS Project

Cox's Bazar remains one of the most vulnerable districts in Bangladesh due to the combined challenges of climate and disaster risks, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and the presence of a large displaced Rohingya population. The NSSS project addresses these challenges by promoting women's empowerment and social transformation in both Rohingya refugee camps and adjacent host communities.

The project adopts a gender-transformative approach that seeks to address structural barriers, discriminatory social norms, and unequal power relations that limit the participation and agency of women and girls. Through social, economic, and resilience-building interventions, the project aims to strengthen the ability of women and marginalized groups to protect their families, participate in decision-making processes, access economic opportunities, and contribute to community resilience.

The project is being implemented through local partners in both refugee camps and host communities in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox's Bazar District, targeting vulnerable women and girls aged 10 to 35 years.

Recognizing the complex intersection between gender inequality, climate vulnerability, and displacement, the project promotes inclusive and sustainable solutions that enhance social cohesion, economic opportunities, protection mechanisms, and disaster preparedness and response capacities.

Project Objective

The overall objective of the project is:

To build a gender-transformative enabling environment that empowers women and marginalized groups to foster safer, more inclusive, and resilient communities in the vulnerable contexts of Cox's Bazar.

Project Outcomes

The project is structured around three interrelated outcomes:

Outcome 1: Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment of vulnerable and marginalized women to become lead change champions.

Key outputs include:

- Market assessment and identification of viable livelihood opportunities for vulnerable women aged 18-35.
- Selection and capacity strengthening of women entrepreneurs;
- Creation of safe spaces for income generation, market access, and promotion of women-led enterprises; and
- Engagement and capacity strengthening of private sector actors to create business opportunities for women.

Outcome 2: Social Protection and Social Cohesion

Transforming social norms and attitudes to reduce social conflict and strengthen community cohesion.

Key outputs include age range 10-35 years

- Leadership and management capacity development of women leaders and change champions.
- Community assessment and implementation of collective actions by engaging men and boys of the communities addressing local issues and barriers;
- Strengthening referral and protection mechanisms to address harmful social norms, gender-based violence (GBV), and early and child marriage (ECM); and
- Promotion of social cohesion and community-based protection initiatives.

Outcome 3: Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

Building safer and more inclusive communities through strengthened resilience and response capacity.

Key outputs include:

- Establishment and strengthening of community-based disaster risk reduction and emergency response systems; and
- Enhanced disaster risk management and humanitarian response capacity of implementing organizations and partners.

Project Duration

The NSSS project is being implemented from 01 April 2025 to 31 March 2028.

Project Locations

The project is implemented in both Rohingya refugee camps and host communities in Cox's Bazar.

Rohingya Refugee Camps:

- Camp 3
- Camp 4
- Camp 11
- Camp 12
- Camp 25

Host Communities:

Ukhiya Upazila

- Jalia Palong Union
- Haldia Palong Union
- Palongkhali Union

Teknaf Upazila

- Hnila Union
- Whykong Union

Rationale for the Mid-Term Evaluation

As the NSSS project has reached the midpoint of its implementation period, a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is being commissioned to assess progress towards the achievement of the project's objectives, outcomes, and outputs. The evaluation will provide an evidence-based assessment of the project's performance by comparing current results against the benchmarks established during the baseline study.

The MTE will generate insights into the extent to which planned interventions are contributing to desired changes in women's economic empowerment, social protection, social cohesion, climate resilience, and disaster preparedness. The review will also examine the relevance, effectiveness, and emerging sustainability of project interventions.

In addition, the MTE will identify key implementation challenges, operational bottlenecks, good practices, and lessons learned to date. Findings and recommendations from the review will support adaptive project management, inform strategic decision-making during the remaining implementation period, and help ensure that the project remains on track to achieve its intended results by the end of the project cycle.

The review is therefore expected to serve as a critical learning and accountability exercise for HELVETAS, its partners, donors, and other stakeholders, while providing practical recommendations to strengthen project effectiveness and maximize impact during the remainder of the project period.

Objectives of the Mid-Term Evaluation

1. To assess progress against project outcome indicators as defined in the project logframe and compare achievements with baseline values and project targets.
2. To assess whether the project has contributed in improving the leadership, confidence, decision-making, economic participation, and community involvement of women and girls, especially those who are most vulnerable, changing social norms and acceptance of women's leadership, etc.
3. To examine the continued relevance of the project design, strategies, and interventions in addressing the needs, priorities, and vulnerabilities of women and girls in host and Rohingya communities and in contributing to the achievement of the project goal.

4. To identify key achievements, challenges, risks, and factors influencing project performance, including contextual changes that may have affected implementation and results. In addition, document lessons learned, emerging good practices, and innovative approaches that can inform the remaining project period and future programming.
5. To assess the likelihood of sustainability of project outcomes, especially Women Change Champions, youth groups, community-based committees, referral mechanisms, and local government engagement platforms
6. To provide practical and actionable recommendations for strengthening project implementation, enhancing results, and designing future interventions.

Methodology

The project invites interested consultants or consulting firms to propose a methodology for the Mid-Term Review (MTR). The proposed methodology should be aligned with the approach used in the baseline study. A mixed-methods approach to data collection is preferred to ensure comprehensive and robust findings, that should assess not only the progress of the project but also understand the underlying reasons.

The methodology should integrate approach to collect feedback from community members and relevant institutions and stakeholders, on project activities, acceptance of women's leadership and participation, awareness and use of CRFM and referral mechanisms, and any remaining social or institutional barriers. Consultants are expected to adhere to all relevant ethical standards and considerations throughout the data collection and analysis process.

The Mid-Term Evaluation will assess progress by comparing current findings with baseline data and will document key achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations. Helvetas and its local partner will provide necessary field-level support to facilitate data collection and stakeholder engagement during the review process.

Scope of work and Deliverables

The selected consultant/consulting firm will be responsible for carrying out the Mid-Term Review (MTR). The scope of work includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Conduct a comprehensive desk review of relevant project documents, including the project proposal, logical framework (logframe), baseline report, technical studies, monitoring data, strategic guidelines, and other pertinent materials.
- Develop and implement a robust MTR methodology aligned with the approach used in the baseline study to assess project progress and performance. This includes:
 - Designing the study methodology and tools;
 - Conducting quantitative and qualitative data collection;
 - Ensuring adherence to ethical standards throughout the review process;
 - Analyse and interpreting data findings by sex, age, disability, FDMN and host community status, where relevant, to identify differences in project outcomes, participation, access to services, and any groups that may be left behind;
 - Assess factors that support or limit the acceptance, effectiveness, and sustainability of women's leadership, social norm change, referral mechanisms, and community-based structures established by the project; and
 - Producing a high-quality report that addresses all review objectives and key evaluation questions.
- Present preliminary findings to Helvetas and its project partners through a validation workshop or presentation and incorporate their feedback into the final report.

- Finalize and submit the MTR report, ensuring that comments and recommendations from Helvetas and relevant stakeholders are adequately addressed.
- Prepare a concise study brief summarizing the key findings, conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations of the Mid-Term Review for broader dissemination and stakeholder engagement.

The selected consultant/consulting firm shall deliver the following outputs:

1. Inception Report (maximum 15 pages), including:
 - Detailed methodology and study design;
 - Data collection tools and techniques for primary data collection;
 - Sampling approach and data analysis plan;
 - Work plan and timeline;
 - Key deliverables and reporting schedule.
2. Presentation of Preliminary Findings
 - Presentation of draft findings, conclusions, and preliminary recommendations to the Helvetas project team and partner staff for review and validation.
3. Draft Mid-Term Review (MTR) Report
 - Submission of a draft MTR report that assesses project progress against the baseline and logical framework (logframe) indicators.
 - The report should clearly compare baseline values with current values and analyze the extent to which project outcomes and outputs have been achieved.
4. Final Mid-Term Evaluation Report
 - Submission of a final MTE report incorporating feedback received from Helvetas and partner staff.
 - The report should include clear findings – where relevant, by gender, age, disability, and refugee/host community status to highlight differences in participation, outcomes, and access to project benefits, conclusions, lessons learned, challenges, and actionable recommendations.
5. Study Brief
 - A concise study brief summarizing the key findings, achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations emerging from the Mid-Term Evaluation.

Report Format Requirements

All reports shall comply with the following formatting requirements:

- A4 page size;
- Standard page margins;
- Arial font, size 11;
- Executive Summary not exceeding three pages;
- Dedicated sections on findings, lessons learned, challenges, conclusions, and recommendations.

All deliverables shall be submitted in both MS Word (editable) and PDF formats.

Timeframe

The duration of the assignment should be done during the period from 01 October to 10 December 2026. The consultant/consultant team will provide an Action plan that includes a detailed timetable in its technical proposal, specifying the distribution of tasks with persons responsible for and the duration to complete each task. The proposed sequencing in the table below is an indicative proposal that could be improved in the technical offer. The budget for the study will be offered as per the proposed activity line linking with person days involved.

Application Process

Interested consulting firms are invited to submit a proposal comprising both a Technical Proposal and a Financial Proposal. The two proposals should be prepared as separate documents and submitted together in a single compressed (ZIP) folder.

Technical Proposal

The Technical Proposal should include:

- The firm's understanding of the assignment and its objectives;
- A detailed methodology and proposed approach for conducting the Mid-Term Review (MTR);
- A work plan with key activities, deliverables, and timelines;
- A description of the proposed team composition and roles;
- A brief CV of each proposed team member (detailed CVs may be attached as annexes);
- Identification of the Team Leader, who will serve as the primary focal point for all communications with Helvetas throughout the assignment.

The Technical Proposal should not exceed 15 pages, excluding annexes.

Financial Proposal

The Financial Proposal should include:

- A detailed and itemized budget aligned with the proposed methodology and team composition;
- Breakdown of professional fees, travel costs, field expenses, and other relevant costs;
- VAT, if applicable, may be shown separately in the budget.

Note: Tax should not be presented as a separate budget line item.

Submission of Proposals

Required Competencies of the Consultant/Firm

The consulting firm should demonstrate the following qualifications and experience:

Technical Expertise

- Proven expertise in one or more of the following areas:
 - Women's empowerment;
 - Gender and social norms and safeguarding
 - Climate change and environmental sustainability; and
 - Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

Relevant Field Experience

- Demonstrated experience in conducting research, assessments, or evaluations in both Rohingya refugee camps and host communities in Cox's Bazar.
- Strong understanding of the local context, stakeholders, and humanitarian-development nexus in the region.

Research and Evaluation Capacity

- Proven experience in designing and conducting research studies, evaluations, and assessments using both primary and secondary data sources.
- Demonstrated expertise in developing quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, sampling approaches, and data collection instruments.
- Extensive experience in quantitative and qualitative data analysis and interpretation.

Team Management and Quality Assurance

- Proven capacity to recruit, train, supervise, and monitor research assistants, enumerators, and data entry personnel to ensure high-quality data collection and management.
- Strong quality assurance mechanisms to maintain data reliability, validity, and ethical compliance throughout the study process.

Analytical and Communication Skills

- Excellent analytical, report-writing, and presentation skills.
- Strong command of written and spoken English, with the ability to produce high-quality analytical reports and communicate findings effectively to diverse audiences.

Selection Criteria

The proposals will be assessed based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Score
Understanding of the assignment	20
Appropriate methodology and work plan	30
Relevant competency and experience of the team leader and appropriate team composition	30
Amount of budget and justification	20

Eligibility Assessment and Shortlisting

Prior to the technical assessment, all applications will undergo an initial screening against the eligibility criteria outlined below. Only applicants who meet the eligibility requirements will be shortlisted for the final assessment.

To facilitate the screening process, consultants/consulting firms are required to provide adequate evidence demonstrating compliance with each eligibility criterion. Failure to submit the required supporting documents may result in disqualification from the shortlisting process.

Eligibility Criteria and Required Evidence

- *Relevant Study Experience*

Demonstrated experience in conducting studies, assessments, evaluations, or research in the thematic areas outlined in this ToR, particularly within the Rohingya camps and host communities in Cox's Bazar.

Required Evidence: A list of relevant assignments conducted during the past years, including a brief description of each study, scope of work, location, and period of implementation.

- **Legal Status and Business Registration**

Required Evidence: Copies of valid and up-to-date:

- Trade License
- TIN Certificate
- Latest Tax Return/Tax Clearance Document
- BIN Certificate (where applicable)

Only applicants who satisfactorily meet the above eligibility criteria and submit the required supporting documentation will be considered for the final assessment stage.

Method of Payment

Total value of the assignment will be paid in three instalments:

- 30% of the value of the consultancy will be paid upon acceptance of the inception report,
- 30% of the value of the consultancy will be paid upon submission of the draft report.
- 40% of the final payment will be paid after the acceptance of the final report.

The payment would be made through bank transfer or account payee cheque by the name of the consultant.

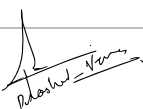
VAT will be paid by Helvetas and Tax will be deducted from before the payment at source as per the existing government rules.

Other Terms and Conditions

- The selected consulting firm should implement the work in coordination with the focal person of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation. The consultant should prior inform the focal person of the schedule/programme to implement the assigned task.
- The information collection will be done in coordination with the project team.
- HEVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal without giving any verbal and/or written rationale.
- The final version of the study will be treated as HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh property. Therefore, cannot be sold, used or reproduced in any manner without the prior written approval of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh.
- HEVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh or its representatives reserve the right to monitor the quality and progress of the work during the assignment.

Contact Person

For any technical clarification please communicate to Amina.Mahbub@helvetas.org

Signature: 	Signature: 
Name: Prashant Verma	Name: Sheikh Khalquzzaman
Designation: Country Director	Designation: Lead- Humanitarian Response and Emergency Management
Date: 17.09.2026	Date: 17.09.2026