Terms of Reference for Assessing ILO’s Skills Programme Impact on Policies, Systems and the Labour Market in Bangladesh

The ILO is looking for an international consultant for assessing ILO’s contribution to skills development in Bangladesh over the last 10 years.

Duty Station: Home based with a mission to Dhaka, Bangladesh

Nature of Contract: External Collaboration or Service Contract

Duration of the Contract: 30 working days spread over December 2018–January 2019

Introduction

ILO plans to showcase the Bangladesh skills experience by documenting the results and measurable impact of its 10 years of intervention (2007-2017) on policies, systems and people. This document would focus on what has changed in terms of skills delivery in the last ten years to come up with a user friendly publication. This would be a global knowledge product to showcase the pathways for facilitating demand driven and competency based skills reforms with a midterm and long term approach and it will be used by ILO member states, donor and other key stakeholders.

Background

For over a decade now, the ILO is assisting Government of Bangladesh in reforming its TVET system to improve its quality and relevance with due emphasis on equity and access, industry relevance and environmental sustainability.

Over the last 10 years, the three donor supported projects implemented by the ILO in Bangladesh are:

(a) The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Reform (TVET Reform) project in Bangladesh (2007 – 2015), funded by the European Union and implemented by the ILO laid the foundation of TVET reform in the country.

(b) The Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity (B-SEP) Project, January 2014 – December 2018, funded by the Government of Canada and implemented by the ILO was the successor of the TVET Reform project. It is building on the foundation of the TVET Reform project to expand, deepen and consolidate the skills reform initiated under TVET Reform project. It also supported introduction of new skills systems, further innovations and excellence.

(c) ‘Skills 21 – Empowering citizens for inclusive and sustainable growth’ project (2017 – 2020) funded by the European Union, which retained major elements of the previous projects while bringing in new elements like developing model TVET institutes, promoting skills for migration, establishing instructional materials development centre and centre for skills
excellence, developing National Qualification Framework, designing a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) in skills, and establishing Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) in skills qualifications.

Brief discussion on the three projects are in the Annex.

Beyond the scope of the implementation of the donor supported skills projects, the ILO has been acting as the Co-Chair of the Skills Development Working Group (SDWG) and the Chair of the Development Partners’ Group since 2015 for policy coordination and creating programmatic synergy. The ILO supported the Government in launching the TVET week and supported the constituents to organize “Dhaka Summit on Skills” in 2016. The ILO also supported the Institute of Diploma Engineers of Bangladesh (IDEB), to hold two international seminars on skills addressed by the Prime Minister. The ILO was the only multilateral organization invited and consulted in a major skill governance architecture reforms initiated by the Government to plan creation of a National Skill Development Authority (NSDA) in Bangladesh.

There is evidence suggesting that the ILO’s leadership in skills development in Bangladesh inspired many development partners, including the World Bank and the ADB, to step up their investment in Bangladesh TVET. At the beginning of 2011, for example, a mid-term, independent evaluation noted:

“Taking into account the challenges of the development context, the amount that has already been achieved by the project mid-term is impressive. This includes the high levels of stakeholder consensus that have been built up and are being maintained, and the abundance and quality of materials generated together with best practices introduced. The project is among the very few development efforts in Bangladesh that exemplify a strong and active partnership among key stakeholders: government, industry, labour unions, civil society and development partners. Indeed the project is serving as a public-private partnership exemplar. The EU, together with its funding and implementing partner, the ILO, has won enormous respect for what it has already achieved with the TVET Reform Project, and is now looked upon as a leader in the sector.” (ILO Evaluation Summary “Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) Reform in Bangladesh”.

The skills reforms initiated by the ILO have also influenced the 7th Five Year Plan of Bangladesh and the SDG Action Plan of the DTE for sustained implementation by the Government. Comparisons can be made between the situation in 2006-07 and now in areas such as:

- Policy scenario in 2006 compared to today
- Budget commitments by government in 2006 and now
- Gender in the skills agenda, then and now
- Curriculum framework, then and now
- Major shifts in approaches advocated successfully by the ILO since 2006.

Objective

The objective of this assignment is to document the results and measureable impact of ILO’s contribution to skills reform in Bangladesh. The ILO interventions, in their multiple facets are purported to have brought about changes in policies, systems, institutions and processes, benefiting the constituents in different ways. These changes, and their impacts, the innovations, successes and challenges faced will need to be measured and documented comprehensively so that the

1 See: https://www.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery/#bouqb5m
documentation, apart from serving as a detailed chronological account of the facts, also captures their short to medium term impacts and the potential implications for the long term development of the sector, as possible. The document should capture the lessons learnt, serve as a global knowledge product and act as a guide to skill development for Bangladesh as also for other countries.

**Scope of work**

The consultant will:

- Undertake a baseline situation analysis of the status of TVET and skills in Bangladesh during the pre-project period in order to illustrate the changes brought about by the project intervention and its relevance in sharper focus. The consultant will propose what baseline indicators will be used.
- Evolve a set of indicators to measure (in consultation with ILO) the short to medium terms impact of the ILO’s intervention including influence on initiatives undertaken by others, especially on beneficiaries.
- Assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the skills reform initiatives and processes, including skills coordination system;
- Document the key processes for replications in other countries;
- Apply the indicators, as in (c) above, to measure the outcomes and impact on skills policy, systems, institutional level; operational level; and beneficiary level to document them.

**a. Policy level**

At the policy level, the study will assess ILO’s contribution in the area of policy and strategies, e.g., National Skill Development Policy (NSDP), apprenticeship strategy, gender strategy, strategy for disability inclusion. The study will capture the wider acceptability of the policy and strategy and its components (for example reference to NSDP in the 7th Plan, SDG plans etc.). The ILO is interested to know to what extent the initial TVET reform project in 2008 served as a catalyst for further investments in skills, both by government and development partners. To what extent, for example, were ILO project experiences, materials and concepts used in subsequent technical interventions? Were gaps identified in the initial ILO project acted upon by other actors in later programmes? Did ILO effectively advocate inclusion, for example of gender, persons with disabilities, undereducated youth, etc? The consultant will examine the extent to which the reforms introduced in 2008 remain relevant and active in 2018. Have the institutions established during the initial project maintained their relevance and vitality? What are the current gaps identified in skills development that future activities may focus on?

**b. Systemic level**

At the systemic level, the study would assess the contribution made by the ILO in terms of introduction of NTVQF management information system, national competency assessment and certification system, national skills quality assurance system, industry responsive apprenticeship system and skill funding system and their impacts.

**c. Institutional Level**

At the institutional level the study would assess the ILO’s contribution in creating new institutions and strengthening existing institutions. The ILO had strengthened NSDCS, BTEB, and DTE and set up ISCs,
Centres of Excellence (COE) and contributed to strengthening of TVET institutions by setting up Employment Support Service (ESS) Cell and providing job matching software, in addition to setting up workshops/laboratories with machinery and equipment to run NTVQF courses and establishing research and knowledge management cell and ICT lab. Institutions have also been strengthened through capacity building and training of staff.

d. Operational level

At the operational level the study would document how the ILO programmes had made a difference on the ground in terms of quality assurance, competency standards, assessing standards and learning outcomes, apprenticeship, RPL, industry linkages, enterprise development, workplace improvement, green jobs and inclusion. The contribution will be assessed with reference to efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the program interventions.

e. Beneficiary level

For the market entrants the beneficiary level impact may be judged in terms of quality of skills acquired, rate of certification, employment rate, satisfaction with jobs and improved economic status. Indicators that track retention rate of the trained workers and apprentices in their first job and percentage of them switching over to better jobs are also important to consider. Additionally, gender stereotype perceptions before and after initial project implementation.

Benefits to employers may be judged in terms of gains in productivity, employers’ satisfaction with the performance of those trained by the ILO programs including through apprenticeship, and workplace improvement gained through ILO intervention.

Beneficiaries also include TVET trainers, principals and government officials in the skills ministries and social partners who have been trained through training programs, seminars, workshops, study tours etc. It will be important to assess the changes in their perception and readiness to accommodate changes brought about through TVET reforms by the ILO.

For both market entrants and other beneficiaries, it would be important to assess the awareness of competency approach for workforce development, appreciation of the value of continuous quality improvement, leadership of industry, and inclusion

- **ILO contribution through partnerships**
  The study will document the contribution to Bangladesh skills made by the ILO through partnerships with other development partners and through extending support to the constituents. The contribution through partnerships with the World Bank, ADB, UNDP, A2i, Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IDEB), and Bangladesh Employers’ Federation (BEF) etc. should be brought about.

- **ILO’s leadership in Bangladesh Skills**

  Assess ILO’s leadership role in skills reform and its contribution to skills coordination, policy dialogues (such as Dhaka Summit, ILO’s Chairing of the donor coordination group on skills, sole international invitee to the NSDC chaired by the Prime Minister, TVET week, International Conference on TVET etc.) and to the new skills governance architecture in Bangladesh.
• Document the measurable impact in terms of the incentives created for the other Development Partners and the WB and the ADB following suit of what the ILO has pioneered; how has ILO work shaped the overall approaches and investments in skills development? What elements have strong footprints of ILO and where ILO approaches might have been diluted or compromised?

• Assess the impact of the interventions in terms of sustainability of the systems and institutions created.

**Lessons learnt**

• Assess the lessons learnt and identify the gaps in skills policies, skills governance, systems and practices to come out with major recommendations to strengthen the relevance and effectiveness and deepen the impact and improve sustainability and quality of the outcome.

**Methodology**

(a) Desk review of relevant documents, progress reports, dissemination materials, monitoring and evaluation reports and different study reports done to capture the impacts/results of intervention. Drawing from these, the consultant should map the key impacts attributable to the ILO in terms of reforms in policies, systems, institutions, building national capacities for sustaining a progressive skills agenda, etc.? The consultant should propose a theory of change model that captures the ILO’s skills work.

(b) Interviews with the Project team and ILO staff associated in the past and at present with the Project.

(c) Interviews with selected partners and stakeholders associated with the Projects in the past and at present.

(d) Field trips to selected project locations for observation and more in-depth interviews.

**Tasks**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>No. of days</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desk review of the existing literature, data and documents</td>
<td>5 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inception report with work plan and time schedule</td>
<td>3 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field visit, stakeholders meetings, consultations</td>
<td>10 days</td>
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<td>Debriefing and feedback of ILO</td>
<td>2 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drafting report</td>
<td>7 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final report incorporating ILO’s feedback</td>
<td>3 days</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30 workdays</td>
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Deliverables

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<th>Sl. no.</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Payment schedule</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Inception report specifying the (i) methodologies in details to be adopted for each item of the scope of work, especially the indicators to be used to capture the impact: (ii) timeline/work plan; (iii) field visit plan; (iv) list of beneficiaries, stakeholders, events (like ILO participation in big events that contributed to ILO’s visibility) and institutions to be covered; (v) list of documents and reports to be reviewed; interview guides etc.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Draft report with key findings on items (a) to (l) indicated in the scope of work</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Final report incorporating feedback of the selected relevant stakeholder. The report should be in compliance with the ILO House Style (hard and soft version). The report should be in a ‘ready to publish’ format with relevant images, graphics and photographs inserted appropriately to make the publication suitable for circulation as an attractive knowledge product</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Timeframe/duration of the study

Total number of workdays is 30 from December 2018 to 31st January 2019. Perdiem payments will be included depending on the number of days spent out-of-home, as well as travel required.

Fees and payment terms

Fees are commensurate with the consultant’s qualifications and experience as well as with the previous applicable rates for similar assignment. Terms and conditions are as per the ILO rules and procedures for the purpose.

ILO’s responsibilities

The responsibilities of ILO will be as per the implementation agreement, such as:

- a) Provide all the project documents and other related literature relevant to the task.
- b) Assist in coordination with relevant partners and stakeholders.
- c) Review progress of the work and provide feedback as necessary.
- d) Ensure payment of agreed amounts, based on performance.
- e) Any other support considered necessary by the ILO.

Qualifications and Experience for Applicants

The assignment will be contracted to a person/team with demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the skills system and skills best practices in addition to experience in reviews of skills development works. A University Degree; Master Degree/M Phil or PhD in the relevant field will be an added value.

More specifically, the consultant(s) will have:

- (a) At least ten years of experience of reviewing projects, analysing impacts, especially with skill development projects.
(b) Technical experience on designing questionnaire and interviewing, field surveys, analytical and report writing skills to be evidenced by publications.
(c) Practical experience and knowledge of UN/Inter-agency works and of working with public, private sector and NGOs.
(d) Strong knowledge and experience of market driven skills, inclusive skills systems and green skills.
(e) Excellent working knowledge of English and computer literacy.
(f) Ability to work in a multicultural environment.
(g) Must display a high standard of ethical conduct and exhibit honesty and integrity.
(h) Gender sensitive behaviour and attitude.

Submission of Technical and Financial Proposal

The interested candidates/teams are requested to submit their application including the following:

1. A description of how the applicant’s skills, qualifications and experience are relevant to the required qualifications of this assignment.

2. A list of previous work undertaken by the applicant (s) that are relevant to the context and subject matter of this assignment.

3. A statement confirming their availability to conduct this assignment and the daily professional fee expressed in US dollars. In case of teams, role and time distribution of each team member should be presented clearly.

4. A copy of the applicant’s/team members’ curriculum vitae (which must include information about the qualifications held by the candidate(s)).

Shortlisted candidates might be requested to provide sample of their previous reports/publications.

Applications are to be submitted electronically to James Windell, Skills Branch: windell@ilo.org with a copy to Mini Thakur, EVAL: thakur@ilo.org by 16th November 2018.
Annex

A brief on the three skill projects implemented and currently being implemented by the ILO

(a) Technical and Vocational Training Reform (TVET Reform) project

Technical and Vocational Education and Training Reform (TVET Reform) project in Bangladesh (2007 – 2015), funded by the European Union and implemented by the ILO laid the foundation of this reform. The key policy initiative under the project was the National Skill Development Policy (NSDP), 2011 of Bangladesh and the introduction of National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF). The Project contributed to the strengthening of skills institution. The National Skill Development Council (NSDC), the apex authority on skills in Bangladesh, headed by the Prime Minister, was supported by the Project through strengthening of the National Skill Development Secretariat (NSDCS). The Project helped in the development of the NSDC Action Plan (Phase 1), which was approved by the NSDC. A National Skill Data System was designed and piloted under the NSDC Secretariat. A series of NSDP dissemination workshop was supported by the Project in different districts and division. The Project strengthened Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) with the Management Information System (MIS) for the NTVQF certification. The standards developed under the NTVQF also included development of courses to promote skills that have a positive environmental impact. In collaboration with the Bangladesh Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), training was organized for the solar home servicing personnel under the Project. The Project established the first Industry Skills Council; 5 ISCs were formed and 3 Centres of Excellence (COEs) were set up. Links with the business were enhanced with industry participation in curriculum development and skills assessment system; enterprise based training was initiated. Dual apprenticeship models implemented by the Project provided the scope for the industry and the training institute work together to develop balanced training programmes. The number of formal apprenticeships increased from less than 100 in 2007 to 12000 in 2015. In order to improve productivity at workplace, the Project initiated training (including for the trainers) in globally acknowledged ILO organizational tools including SCORE (Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises), WISE (Work Improvements in Small Enterprises), KAB (Know About Business), SIYB (Start and Improve Your Business) and the Japanese KAIZEN model. For improved access for the under-represented group pre-vocational NTVQF Pre-vocational qualifications were introduced as pathways for persons with low levels of education to enter into formal skill development programmes. In conjunction, the ILO’s Community Based Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (CB-TREE) methodology was introduced for improving the employment opportunities of people with low levels of literacy and numeracy living in rural areas, particularly women. Informal apprenticeship models were implemented The Project, in collaboration with UNICEF and BRAC, trained close to 7000 in urban and rural areas under informal apprenticeship models. For formal recognition of skills and competencies acquired in informal jobs, a system of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) was created for further development and implementation by the BTEB. To promote gender mainstreaming in Bangladesh TVET, National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET (2012) was designed to ensure equal access to skills training for women and men, encourage lifelong learning and promote flexibility in program design to allow both women and men to participate. The Strategy recommends specific and concrete actions and activities to increase female participation. To promote inclusion of persons with disabilities, the Project supported the development of draft National Strategy for inclusion of persons with disabilities in skills development
(2013) by the NSDC. The Project supported Bangladesh Employers’ Federation (BEF) to come out with a publication highlighting the benefits to employers of hiring persons with disabilities. In the area of skills legislation, the Project supported drafting of NSDC Act and the revision of the TVET Act.

(b) Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity (B-SEP) project

The Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity (B-SEP) Project, January 2014 – December 2018, funded by the Government of Canada and implemented by the ILO was the successor of the TVET Reform project. It further deepened the reforms process and consolidated the gains that were already achieved under the previous project in addition to introducing a number of innovations and systemic reforms. B-SEP project is supporting Government efforts to strengthen and deepen skills reform in Bangladesh for improved productivity and economic growth. B-SEP project addresses the challenges facing the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector by developing institutional capacity of the skills system as well as building industries capacity for improved productivity. In addition, B-SEP project creates linkages between institutions and industries, matching supply and demand for skilled workers as well as promoting social inclusion.

Through its actions B-SEP project contributes to the creation of a stronger skills system that provides better employment opportunities for young men and women while meeting the needs of industry. This in turn contributes to the attainment of Decent Work, sustainable economic development, poverty reduction and social inclusion in Bangladesh. This publication captures the key achievements of the B-SEP project to date as it works to create a stronger foundation upon which Bangladesh can build the skilled workforce it needs for the future. The B-SEP project has been working in wide ranging areas. It supported the NSDP implementation by introducing mechanisms for skills planning, funding and management systems; competency based training and assessment to improve the quality and market relevance of technical and vocational education and training. Industry skills development is addressed by supporting (a) industries capacity to improve productivity (b) industry-led apprenticeships to improve workplace performance and (c) increased demand for and utilization of skills in specific sectors. This includes the expansion of apprenticeship systems in both the formal and informal sectors and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). For improved access to skills the project is building capacity of skills institutions to make skills accessible to disadvantaged groups such as poor women, persons with disabilities, indigenous youth etc. It also promotes skilling disadvantaged women in non-traditional occupations. Key areas of achievement includes (a) Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) agreeing to introduce costs of NTVQF curriculum as a part of the existing revenue budget; (b) demonstrating the ways Public Private Partnership in TVET can improve industry-institute linkages, improve the relevance of the training programs and lead to enhanced financial efficiency in publicly funded TVET institutions; (c) demonstrating successfully, how employment support services in the public TVET institutions can improve industry-institute linkages and increase employment prospects of TVET graduates; (d) developing competency standards for 20 occupations to bridge the gap between provision of TVET education and the skills needed in various sectors; (e) increasing the number of formal apprenticeships and supporting the local government to implement informal apprenticeship training programmes in 55 upazilas (sub-districts); (f) establishing and strengthening five Industry Skills Councils (ISCs); (g) strengthening the national capacity to implement Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) leading to increase in RPL certification; (h) supporting the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) to make TVET institutes disability inclusive, mainstreaming disability in their annual plan, budget, monitoring system and annual appraisals of TVET institute principals, developing guidelines for disability inclusion and training vice principals and senior instructors on disability inclusion resulting in more than seven-fold increase in enrolment of
students with disabilities in DTE’s TVET institutions in one year; (i) launching by Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh in December 2016, the Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN), which promotes disability inclusion in the workplace and provides support to businesses, that are willing to make their workplaces disability inclusive; (j) organizing job fairs by BBDN, which resulted in 150 persons with disabilities getting jobs in reputed industries; (k) supporting six government and private TVET institutes to train 950 women in non-traditional occupations such as housekeeping, electrical installation, lacquer polishing, refrigeration air-conditioning, cooking, food processing and quality control resulting in 90 per cent employment rate informal sector; (l) supporting 400 green entrepreneurs to create green jobs; promoting green enterprises for self-employment of disadvantaged groups such as women and men with disabilities as well as poor women and men through skills and enterprise; developing competency standards of these occupations, which have successfully supported the livelihoods of the disadvantaged groups; (m) setting up fully equipped research centre in the NSDCS and training more than 100 officials from the TVET sector of the Government in research methodology, who wrote 9 research reports; (n) setting up fully equipped research and knowledge management cell in DTE and training of 75 DTE officials in research methodology; 10 research reports produced; (o) strengthening NSDCS by engaging them in skills coordination, inter-ministerial training and workshops, donor coordination through meetings and workshops, sponsoring research; (p) supporting NSDC in monitoring and evaluation of NSDC Action Plan Phase 1 and developing NSDC Action Plan Phase 2 and getting it approved by the NSDC under the Chair of Prime Minister.

(c) Skills 21 – Empowering citizens for inclusive and sustainable growth project

Well ahead of the completion of the B-SEP project, the ILO started implementing the EU funded ‘Skills 21 – Empowering citizens for inclusive and sustainable growth’ project that runs from 2017 – 2020. Skills 21 addresses following priority areas:

- Strengthening the quality of the TVET/skills development system, including development of a National Qualification Framework (NQF) to harmonize qualification pathways across technical and formal education.

- Establishing a framework for a more conducive legislative, regulatory and institutional Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) in the TVET/skills development sector to improve skills governance.

- Creating model TVET institutions which are inclusive, environmentally conscious, high-quality and labour-market responsive.

Areas of emphasis in Skills 21 include links with private sector; skills for migrants; inclusivity to make access to TVET open and accessible to all; establishing incubation centres inside or near the model institutions to nurture business start-ups for local entrepreneurs; paving the way for the transition to a greener, more sustainable economy by providing skills for emerging occupations in green industries and mainstreaming environmental sustainability into the overall national skills development system; carrying out the ground work for the introduction of a Sector Wide approach to the development of the Bangladesh skills sector to help ensure coherence and efficiency relating to sector development and donor support; supporting the Government to establish mutual skills recognition with the EU and the Bangladesh labour destination countries.