



Terms of Reference

Study on the Impacts of Disasters and Extreme Environmental Stressors on the Protection of Individuals and Multi-Sectoral Services in Displacement Contexts

Project:	Multi-sector Recovery and Empowerment Support for Crisis-affected Communities in Cox's Bazar
Project Start and End Dates	September 2024 to August 2027
Project Location	Cox's Bazar (Ukhiya, Teknaf, Ramu, Chakaria)
Sectors (s)	EPR/DRRPP
Overall Objective of the Project	The Multi-Sector Recovery and Empowerment Support for Crisis-Affected Communities in Cox's Bazar activity aims to reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience among populations affected by recurrent natural hazards, economic shocks, and long-standing protection risks in host communities. The project responds to complex, intersecting challenges resulting from the Rohingya refugee influx, ongoing social tensions, limited access to essential services, and exposure to multiple hazards, including cyclones, flooding, and storm surges.
Donor	GD100

1. Background and Context

Cox's Bazar District, Bangladesh, is among the most climate-vulnerable settings in the world. Recurrent hydro-meteorological hazards including cyclones, floods, storm surges, salinity intrusion, heatwaves, and riverbank erosion intersect with compounding vulnerabilities: deep poverty, gender inequality, high population density, the presence of over one million Rohingya refugees alongside an estimated 600,000 vulnerable Bangladeshi host community members, and severely strained service delivery systems. The IRC has been operational in Cox's Bazar since 2017, delivering integrated services to Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi host communities across protection, health, WASH, education, and livelihoods sectors.

Natural hazard-induced displacement - whether seasonal, temporary, or protracted - significantly heightens protection risks, including gender-based violence, child protection concerns, human trafficking, housing, land and property disputes, loss of legal identity documentation, and constraints on mobility and safety. These risks are experienced differently across gender, age, disability status, and refugee or host community identity. At the same time, local institutions and coordination mechanisms often operate with limited capacity to anticipate, prevent, and respond effectively to hazard-induced displacement.

While significant humanitarian and development programming has been implemented in Cox's Bazar, context-specific evidence on the interplay between climate-related stressors, displacement dynamics, and protection outcomes remains limited, particularly for host community populations and for slow-onset stressors such as salinity intrusion and riverbank erosion. This study builds on existing assessments, including DTM displacement tracking data and protection sector analyses, and differentiates itself by generating cross-sectoral evidence on how environmental stressors shape protection risks and service delivery gaps across different phases of displacement.

The findings will directly inform IRC's programming, preparedness planning, and policy engagement, as well as contribute to partner strategies and coordination platforms in Cox's Bazar and at the national level. The study aligns with U.S. Department of State priorities on protection-centered service delivery, resilience building, and strengthening institutional systems to prevent and respond to displacement.

2. Purpose, Objectives, and Scope

The overall purpose of this study is to examine how extreme weather events and environmental stressors contribute to displacement by disrupting or limiting multi-sectoral services, and how these service gaps affect the protection, safety, and well-being of displaced populations in Cox's Bazar. The study will generate actionable, evidence-based recommendations to strengthen policy, programming, institutional preparedness, and advocacy for effective displacement risk management.

Specific Objectives

The study will:

1. Assess how extreme weather events and environmental stressors drive hazard-induced displacement, examining patterns (seasonal, temporary, cyclical, and protracted), scale, and duration across the study upazillas.
2. Examine key protection risks arising from displacement across disaster phases - before, during, and after displacement including GBV, child protection, trafficking, HLP issues, legal identity challenges, and safety and security risks, with attention to differentiated impacts on vulnerable and marginalized groups.
3. Assess the availability, accessibility, continuity, and quality of multi-sectoral services including protection, health and MHPSS, WASH, shelter, education, livelihoods, and social protection in displacement-affected settings, for both Rohingya and host community populations.
4. Evaluate the institutional capacity of local authorities, service providers, and frontline responders to prevent, prepare for, and respond to hazard-induced displacement and associated protection risks, including the effectiveness of existing coordination mechanisms and the extent to which protection is mainstreamed into multi-sectoral disaster response.
5. Identify preparedness measures, anticipatory actions, and resilient service delivery models that show promise in strengthening protection outcomes and service continuity during extreme weather events, including community-level adaptive strategies developed from past experience.

The study team will propose a dissemination and utilization plan including how findings will be shared accessibly with community members during the inception phase.

The study will cover Ukhiya, Ramu, Teknaf, and Chakaria Upazillas of Cox's Bazar District, encompassing ~~both Rohingya camp settings and~~ host community areas. It will examine interlinkages among extreme weather events, displacement, protection risks, and multi-sectoral service delivery, with explicit attention to gender, age, disability, and equity (GADI) dimensions throughout.

3. Key Study Questions

The following indicative study questions will be further refined and prioritized during the inception phase in consultation with IRC. Consultants are not expected to address all questions with equal depth; prioritization should be guided by feasibility and evidence gaps:

1. How do extreme weather events and environmental stressors drive the scale, patterns, and duration of hazard-induced displacement in the study areas?
2. What protection risks emerge before, during, and after displacement, and how do these risks differ across population groups and disaster phases? This should include psychosocial and mental health impacts of displacement, including climate anxiety, trauma, and grief associated with loss of home, livelihood, and community.
3. How is income generation and economic security affected following hazard-induced displacement? (Probes: What occupations are in demand? How are wages and livelihoods impacted for affected households and employers? How do households ensure continued access to cash through debt, asset sales, diversified income, or other coping strategies?)
4. To what extent does hazard-induced displacement disrupt the availability, accessibility, continuity, and quality of institutional multi-sectoral services? Where services are available, how do affected populations rate their adequacy and effectiveness, and what factors contribute to gaps between service provision and actual need?
5. What is the level of awareness and understanding of climate-related hazards, displacement risks, and available services among population groups? What are the main sources of climate and hazard information, and what misconceptions or gaps in knowledge exist?
6. To what extent are displaced and affected communities meaningfully engaged in planning, delivering, and monitoring services through accountability and feedback mechanisms? How have communities learned from past hazard experiences and adapted their coping strategies over time including shifts toward positive or negative coping mechanisms and what conditions enable or hinder such adaptive learning?
7. What institutional capacities and gaps exist among local authorities, service providers, and frontline responders in responding to hazard-induced displacement, and how effectively do existing coordination mechanisms support integrated, protection-centered service delivery in practice?
8. How adequate and responsive are current policy, legal, and institutional frameworks (including NPDM 2021–2025, SOD 2019, Bangladesh NAP, and sector/cluster guidelines) in addressing hazard-induced displacement and associated protection risks?
9. What preparedness measures, anticipatory actions, and resilient service delivery models show promise in strengthening protection outcomes and service continuity during extreme weather events?

4. Methodology

Study Design

A mixed-methods approach will be employed, with a primary emphasis on qualitative methods given the study's focus on lived experiences, institutional capacity, and contextual processes. Quantitative data collection through a household survey will complement qualitative findings by providing community-level data on displacement events, service utilization, and protection concerns. The methodology must be participatory, gender-responsive, disability-sensitive, and protection-sensitive.

Indicative data collection methods include: a desk review of national and sub-national policies, strategies, assessments, and operational documents; semi-structured key informant interviews with government, coordination platform, and service provider stakeholders at district and upazilla levels; focus group discussions with displacement-affected populations disaggregated by sex, age, and disability status; a structured household survey across ~~Rohingya camp and~~ host community settings; and direct field observations to map services, referral pathways, and preparedness infrastructure. Full methodological details, including data collection tools, sampling strategy, and analytical approach, will be developed and finalized by the study team during the inception phase.

Sampling

The study team will propose a detailed sampling strategy during the inception phase, ensuring representation across all four upazillas, coverage of both Rohingya camp and host community settings, and disaggregation by sex, age, disability, and displacement status.

Ethical Considerations

The study must adhere to the highest ethical standards throughout, including:

- **Informed consent:** Voluntary, informed consent obtained from all participants prior to data collection, using age-appropriate and accessible formats.
- **Confidentiality:** No personally identifiable information will be disclosed; robust data protection measures will be implemented.
- **Protection of vulnerable groups:** Special care will be taken with women, children, persons with disabilities, and other at-risk populations, including maintaining referral pathways for any protection concerns arising during data collection.
- **Do no harm:** All methods and tools will be reviewed for potential risks to participants; sensitive topics (GBV, trafficking) will be addressed using validated, trauma-informed approaches.

Known Limitations

Access constraints in some camp areas and potential seasonal disruptions during the data collection period may affect the comprehensiveness of fieldwork. The study team should propose mitigation strategies for these limitations in their technical proposal. The reliance on retrospective self-reporting for some data points, and potential power dynamics in KII settings, should also be acknowledged and addressed methodologically.

The study team should also identify, during the inception phase, which specific data points are already available through existing assessments and avoid duplicating them, focusing primary data collection effort on documented evidence gaps.

5. Expected Deliverables

Deliverable	Description	Timeline
Inception Report (max. 8 pages)	Study framework, refined research questions and questions matrix, methodology, sampling approach, data collection tools, ethical protocol, risk and mitigation plan, stakeholder engagement plan, and implementation timeline	Week 3
Primary Data Collection	Fieldwork across all four upazilas	Weeks 4–9
Draft Report	Preliminary findings on displacement patterns, protection risks, service gaps, institutional capacity, coordination, and good practices, with initial recommendations; submitted to IRC for review	Week 11
IRC Review Period	IRC will review the draft report and provide consolidated feedback to the study team	7 days
Validation Workshops	Facilitated stakeholder workshops in study locations to validate findings and gather feedback	Week 12
Policy Brief (max. 5 pages)	Priority findings and practical recommendations for national and local decision-makers	Week 13
Stakeholder Presentation	Concise presentation of key findings and recommendations for government, humanitarian actors, and development partners at national level	Week 14
Raw Data Handover	All encrypted raw data (quantitative and qualitative datasets) handed over to IRC	Week 14

All reports will be submitted in MS Word and PDF formats. PowerPoint presentations will be provided in editable format. All deliverables will be in English.

IRC will provide consolidated written feedback on all submitted deliverables within 7 working days of receipt.

6. Reporting and Governance

The study team lead will report to the IRC Bangladesh [MEAL Coordinator/Head of Emergency and Resilience Program](#), with technical oversight from the IRC [Head of MEAL and Program Quality, Sr. Integrated](#) Protection Coordinator and relevant sector leads. A Study Working Group (SWG) comprising IRC technical staff across protection, health, WASH, education, livelihoods, and MEAL will review key deliverables and provide consolidated feedback. The SWG will meet at inception, mid-data collection, and draft report stages. Written progress updates (1 page) will be submitted by email to the IRC [MEAL Coordinator/Head of Emergency and Resilience Program and Head of MEAL and Program Quality](#) every two weeks, documenting progress, emerging issues, and planned activities.

7. Payment Schedule

The following payments will be made to the consultant using and agreed mode of payment.

Upon approval of inception report and tools:	30%
Upon submission of draft report:	30%
Upon approval of final report, policy brief, presentation and raw data:	40%

8. Study Team and Selection Criteria

Criteria	Description	Weight
Eligible documents	Referring to Bidder's ability to demonstrate that they have valid: 1. <i>A Certificate of updated (2025-2026) Local Business Registration documents or Trade License in Bangladesh (Mandatory).</i> 2. <i>TIN with Updated (2025-2026) Taxpayers documents/tax return certificate in Bangladesh (Mandatory).</i> 3. <i>VAT Registration Certificates/ Business Identification number (BIN) (Mandatory). (Provider should have ability to process invoice in Musak 6.3)</i> N.B. Its only bidders who will submit all mandatory documents to qualify for the next level of evaluation. Please find VIF form, Conflict of Interest, Code of Conduct in here .Bidders must submit the above mandatory documents and other mentioned documents with necessary signature along with proposals.	Pass/ Fail
Criteria: 1 Organizational/Team Experience and composition with expertise	Demonstrated experience conducting analytical studies, assessments, or evaluations related to extreme weather events, hazard-induced displacement, protection, and multi-sectoral service delivery within humanitarian/ development contexts. At least three reference documents related to similar assignments/studies must be submitted as part of the proposal. The proposed team must be multidisciplinary in nature, with proven expertise in areas including extreme weather and environmental risk analysis, forced displacement and protection, Gender, Age, Disability, and Inclusion (GADI) analysis, multi-sectoral humanitarian and	20%

	development systems, and both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. To ensure inclusive and context-sensitive engagement with affected populations in displacement settings, the assignment strongly encourages a gender-balanced team composition. A minimum of 20% female representation within the team is mandatory. All team members must demonstrate fluency in both Bangla and English, while proficiency in local dialects and languages will be considered a distinct advantage.	
Criteria: 2 Technical Proposal and Methodology	Demonstrated understanding of the assignment; clear alignment with ToR focus. Proposed methodology must be justified, feasible, gender-responsive, and appropriate to a complex humanitarian setting. Sampling strategy, data collection methods, and analysis approach must be clearly articulated.	20%
Criteria: 3 Workplan	A realistic and detailed timeline with clearly defined milestones, roles, and contingency measures for potential access constraints, ensuring effective planning and timely completion of the study within the shortest feasible timeframe.	10%
Criteria: 4 Presentation (<i>invited shortlist only</i>)	Only shortlisted teams achieving a minimum score of 30 out of 50 across Criteria 1–3 will be invited to deliver a presentation. The presentation will be assessed based on the team's demonstrated understanding of the assignment scope, relevant technical and operational competencies, and capacity to deliver the assignment within the proposed timeline.	10%
Criteria: 5 Financial Proposal	Detailed budget including personnel allocation (role, days, daily rates), other direct costs (travel, translation, etc.), and applicable taxes and VAT. IRC seeks value for money, not necessarily the lowest cost, but quality of service and cost reasonableness.	40%
Total		100%

How to Apply

Interested firms/consultants should submit a proposal in English comprising:

1. Cover letter
2. Technical proposal including methodology
3. Detailed workplan with milestones and timeline
4. Financial proposal
5. CVs of all proposed team members
6. Examples of at least ~~two~~three previous relevant consultancy reports
7. The following mandatory eligibility documents:
 - Gender-balanced team composition (male-female)
 - Valid Trade License (for consultancy firms/companies)
 - Updated VAT/BIN Certificate
 - e-TIN Number/Certificate
 - Last Tax Return Certificate
 - Signed Vendor Information Form (VIF), Conflict of Interest Declaration, and Code of Conduct (available at: <https://rescue.app.box.com/v/VIF-COC-COI-ITB>)

*Contact for queries and submissions: IRC Bangladesh Procurement Contact - **to be specified***