

Request for Proposal (RfP)

A Comparative Affordability Assessment of Agroecological and Conventional Nutritious Foods in Bangladesh

Organization	Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Bangladesh (SAF Bangladesh)
Assignment Type	Short-term Consultancy
Title of Assignment	A comparative affordability assessment of agroecological and conventional nutritious foods in Bangladesh
Date	May 2026 – June 2026
Duration	60 days
Location	Dinajpur and Rangpur

1. About SAF Bangladesh

The **Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Bangladesh (SAF Bangladesh)**, formerly known as the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (SFSa Bangladesh), is the Bangladesh country office of the Sustainable Agriculture Foundation — a Swiss-based not-for-profit organisation with a 40-year legacy of driving inclusive agricultural transformation. Our vision is *"a world in which smallholders, communities, and nature thrive together."* Since 2011, SAF Bangladesh has spearheaded transformative projects across agriculture, climate resilience, nutrition, and rural economic development, positively impacting over one million smallholder farmers through strategic collaborations with local, regional, and international partners. Learn more at <https://susagfoundation.org/>

2. Background and Rationale

The **Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE)** project is part of the Global Food Systems portfolio of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The NICE project aims to improve nutrition and reduce poverty among vulnerable city populations. It operates in secondary cities — defined as settlements with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants — and focuses on increasing the supply of and demand for nutritious foods produced locally using agroecological practices, alongside cross-cutting issues of good governance, gender, and social inclusion (leaving no one behind). More information is available at nice-nutrition.ch.

The NICE project cities in Bangladesh are Dinajpur Municipality and Rangpur City Corporation. The project is also implemented in Busia and Bungoma (Kenya) and Rubavu and Rusizi (Rwanda).

The project operates through four integrated workstreams:

1. The first workstream promotes good governance of food systems through the strengthening of multisectoral platforms at the city level (M/CLMNCC). These platforms facilitate access for vulnerable city populations to project interventions.
2. The second workstream relates to increasing the availability and production of nutritious, locally produced, and agroecologically produced foods through Nutrition Sensitive Value Chains (NSVCs) and social business models such as the Network Manager and Thursday Bundle programme.
3. The third workstream focuses on demand generation — using consumer insights, Behaviour Change Communication (BCC), youth engagement, and school-based nutrition programming to increase consumption of nutritious, local, and agroecologically produced foods.
4. The fourth workstream facilitates peer learning between cities, across workstreams, and among the three countries, including scale-up strategies for national learning.

Agroecology (AE) is increasingly promoted as a pathway toward sustainable, nutritious, and resilient food systems. However, evidence on the **affordability** of agroecologically produced food relative to conventional alternatives — particularly for urban and peri-urban consumers in Bangladesh — remains limited. This consultancy supports an empirical affordability assessment of the NICE project's promoted Nutrition Sensitive Value Chain (NSVC) commodities in Dinajpur and Rangpur, Bangladesh.

3. Objectives of the Consultancy

The overall objective of this consultancy is to design, implement, analyse, and report a rigorous affordability assessment comparing NICE-promoted agroecologically produced nutritious food value chains and conventionally produced equivalents in Dinajpur Municipality and Rangpur City Corporation, Bangladesh.

Specific objectives:

- Develop a robust analytical and sampling design appropriate to the Bangladeshi urban and peri-urban context.
- Define clear variables, indicators, and affordability metrics, including diet cost approaches (e.g., Cost of a Healthy Diet – CoHD) and household expenditure benchmarks.
- Design and digitise household and market survey questionnaires (using ODK/KoboToolbox).
- Conduct household and market surveys in Dinajpur and Rangpur for primary data collection.
- Conduct data cleaning, validation, and rigorous statistical analysis.
- Produce a policy-oriented technical report and a concise policy brief for stakeholder audiences.
- Generate and submit at least two peer-reviewed journal manuscripts based on study findings.

4. Scope of Work

4.1 Geographic Scope

The study will be conducted in the two NICE project cities in Bangladesh:

- Dinajpur (Dinajpur Sadar, Chirirbandar, Birol)
- Rangpur (Rangpur Sadar, Mithapukur, Pargacha)

4.2 Nutrition Sensitive Value Chain (NSVC) Products

The assessment will cover the following NICE NSVC commodities:

#	Commodity	Nutrition Significance	Production Type
1	Brinjal (Eggplant)	Rich in fibre, potassium, antioxidants	Agroecological & conventional
2	Bitter Gourd	Anti-diabetic properties; vitamins B & C	Agroecological & conventional
3	Sweet Gourd	High in beta-carotene, vitamins A & C	Agroecological & conventional
4	Tomato	Lycopene, vitamin C, antioxidants	Agroecological & conventional
5	Cucumber	Hydration, low-calorie, micronutrients	Agroecological & conventional
6	Egg	Complete protein, iron, vitamin B12	Agroecological & conventional
7	Mango	Vitamin A & C, fibre, energy-dense	Agroecological & conventional

5. Consultant Responsibilities

The Consultant shall be responsible for the following tasks:

- Designing and developing a sampling framework for affordability assessments of the NSVC commodities specified in Section 4.
- Defining relevant affordability variables and indicators, including Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) metrics, household food expenditure shares, price premium analysis for agroecological versus conventional produce, and willingness-to-pay estimates.
- Designing, digitising, and finalising data collection questionnaires (ODK/KoboToolbox), subject to approval by SAF Bangladesh.
- Conducting field surveys and all associated data collection activities in Dinajpur and Rangpur in accordance with the approved methodology.
- Cleaning, managing, and securely storing all data generated, in accordance with applicable data management and confidentiality requirements.
- Conducting data analysis and calculating the agreed affordability indicators, including disaggregation by gender, age group (youth vs adults), and economic status.
- Synthesising key findings and recommendations into a policy brief aligned with Bangladesh national nutrition policy (National Nutrition Policy 2015 and its subsequent updates) and urban food systems governance.

- Preparing and submitting a minimum of two (2) peer-reviewed academic journal articles based on study findings, in coordination with SAF Bangladesh and subject to authorship and publication terms agreed in writing.

6. Approach and Methods

This consultancy will be conducted by a small, mixed-gender team with demonstrated knowledge of urban food systems in Bangladesh, particularly in Dinajpur and Rangpur cities. The assignment will combine quantitative household and market surveys with qualitative stakeholder interviews and key informant interviews.

6.1 Methodology Development

The consultant will develop a detailed methodology and workplan for quality data collection, analysis, and reporting as per the scope of work. The methodology must account for seasonal price variation across the identified NSVC commodities.

6.2 Data Collection

- Review existing secondary data including NICE project monitoring data, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) household expenditure surveys, and relevant academic literature.
- Conduct household surveys in Dinajpur and Rangpur to capture food expenditure patterns, dietary diversity, price sensitivity, and willingness to pay for agroecologically produced foods.
- Conduct market surveys covering retail, wholesale, and informal market actors for all seven NSVC commodities.
- Visit NICE project agroecological production zones, Farmers' Hubs, Network Manager operations, and Thursday Bundle distribution points in both cities.

6.3 Stakeholder Interviews

- In-depth interviews with value chain actors: producers, transporters, wholesalers, retailers (mobile sellers, kitchen market vendors, departmental stores), and diverse consumer segments.
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with: Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM), City Corporation officials, Dinajpur and Rangpur M/CLMNCC platform members.
- National-level stakeholder consultation with: Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC), Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA), Hortex Foundation, and relevant NICE project partners.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with NICE City Food Systems Women Groups and Youth Groups to capture gendered perspectives on food affordability and purchasing decisions.

6.4 Data Analysis

- Statistical analysis of price differentials between agroecological and conventional produce across actor levels.

- Affordability calculation using Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) framework adapted to the Dinajpur and Rangpur context.
- Disaggregation of findings by city, gender, age group, and economic quintile.
- Correlation analysis linking dietary diversity scores with food affordability indicators.

7. Timing, Duration, and Deliverables

The work will be undertaken between May and June 2026. The timeline for each output/deliverable is as follows:

Output	Key Activities	Timeframe	Responsible
Inception Report	Review ToR, refine methodology, confirm workplan	May 2026 (Week 1)	Consultant
Questionnaire Design	Draft survey instruments, internal review, pilot testing	May 2026 (Week 2)	Consultant
Indicator Definitions	Define affordability and CoHD indicators	May 2026 (Week 2)	Consultant
Digitization of Questionnaire (ODK/Kobo)	Programme survey, test skip logic and validations	May 2026 (Week 3)	Consultant
Field Survey / Data Collection	Conduct field surveys in Dinajpur and Rangpur	May 2026 (Week 4)	Consultant
Clean Survey Dataset	Data cleaning, validation, and documentation	June – July 2026	Consultant
Data Analysis & Indicator Calculation	Statistical analysis, CoHD indicator computation	June 2026 (Weeks 1–2)	Consultant
Technical Report	Draft and finalise full technical documentation	June 2026 (Weeks 3–4)	Consultant
Policy Brief	Synthesise findings and recommendations for policymakers	July 2026	Consultant
Two Peer-reviewed Journal Manuscripts	Draft academic papers and submit to relevant journals	August 2026	Consultant

8. Qualifications and Experience

Team Composition

The consultancy team should consist of:

- Team Leader: PhD in Agricultural Economics, Nutrition, Public Health Nutrition, or a closely related field; minimum 10 years of post-doctoral or post-graduate research experience in food security, affordability analysis, and survey design in Bangladesh or South Asia.

- Co-investigator/Data Analyst: Master's degree in Agricultural Economics, Statistics, or Epidemiology; demonstrated experience in statistical software (STATA, SPSS, or R) and survey data management.
- Field Research Associates (2): Bachelor's or Master's degree in agriculture, nutrition, or social sciences; fluent in Bangla; experience conducting household and market surveys in secondary cities.

Required Experience

- Demonstrated strong writing skills with a solid track record of publications in peer-reviewed journals.
- Proven experience in designing and implementing large-scale household and market surveys in urban/peri-urban Bangladesh contexts.
- Demonstrated experience in qualitative and quantitative data analysis; proficiency in KoboToolbox/ODK for digital data collection.
- Prior experience with food value chain analysis and/or nutrition-sensitive agriculture programming is highly desirable.
- Familiarity with the NICE project, SAF Bangladesh, or SDC programming in Bangladesh is an advantage.

9. Reporting

The Consultant will report directly to the NICE Project Manager for Bangladesh (SAF Bangladesh) and to the Global Lead for NICE Outcome 2 (City populations enjoy the enhanced availability of affordable, safe, and nutritious foods that are locally produced using agroecological practices).

10. Copyrights

All outputs, data, and intellectual products produced under this consultancy remain the intellectual property of the NICE project. The Consultant may not publish or share any data or findings without prior written consent of SAF Bangladesh and the NICE consortium.

11. Required Proposal Components

Qualified individuals or firms are invited to submit proposals including:

- Description of previous relevant work (maximum 1 page).
- Composition of team, with names and brief CVs of all key staff (maximum 3 pages).
- Detailed technical proposal explaining how the scope of work will be addressed, including methodology, sampling design, and analysis plan (maximum 15 pages).
- Detailed budget with cost breakdown (personnel, travel, data collection, and other costs).
- Risk and mitigation strategy.
- Proposed timeline.

12. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

Criterion	Weight (%)
Technical understanding and clarity of proposed methodology	30%
Qualifications and experience of the team	25%
Demonstrated track record in peer-reviewed publications and reports	20%
Feasibility and detail of workplan and timeline	15%
Cost-effectiveness and budget justification	10%

13. Submission

Qualified consultants or firms are invited to submit their proposals, CVs, and links to relevant previous work electronically by **20 April at 11:59 PM Bangladesh Standard Time** to:

saf.bangladesh@susagfoundation.org

Please use the subject line: "Affordability Assessment – Dinajpur and Rangpur, Bangladesh"

Disclaimer: The Applicant shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of their proposal. SAF Bangladesh reserves the right to amend this ToR, negotiate with the successful respondent prior to awarding a contract, or reject any proposal without obligation to enter a contract.