

SWISS
FOUNDATION
FOR TECHNICAL
COOPERATION

We create opportunities

We are a leading organisation for the implementation of international development projects. We promote inclusive economic, social, and ecological development to make an effective contribution towards sustainable and widespread prosperity in developing and emerging economies.

INTRODUCTION

Swisscontact, Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation, is headquartered in Zurich and was founded in 1959 by leading figures from the Swiss private sector and Swiss universities. It is exclusively involved in international cooperation and since 1961 has carried out its mandated projects. In Bangladesh, Swisscontact is registered as an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) under the NGO Affairs Bureau, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The Promoting Green Growth in the Ready-Made Garments Sector through Skills (PROGRESS) is a four-year (2022–26) project funded by the Embassy of Sweden and the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh and implemented by Swisscontact. The project supports RMG factories to advance in green transition by building their resilience and competitiveness. The PROGRESS project drives sustainable growth in the RMG sector through a market-driven approach. The

project has two major components. **The first component: Skills & Productivity**, aims at improving the technical skills and productivity of RMG workers. Under this component with support from the project, the Consultancy Service Providers (CSPs)¹ develop the skills of the RMG workers in areas like low performance, zero defect, women leadership etc. which make them more competent and productive. Besides, the project supports the factories developing an in-house training system to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives. **The second component: Environment & Social Compliance**, supports RMG factories in their journey of decarbonisation. The CSPs with support from the project assess the factories' status of carbon emissions at baseline and help them develop tailored pathways to reach net-zero emissions, while also promoting sustainability reporting. PROGRESS facilitates partnerships between CSPs and RMG factories to deliver commercially viable solutions. Especially, the project strengthens the local service market, enabling factories to access affordable solutions. Additionally, by leveraging collaborations

¹ Consultancy service providers (CSPs) are reputed national/international commercial consultancy firms that have certain expertise to implement interventions in partner factories for PROGRESS. They have legal, technical and

financially binding contracts with the project. Beyond project, they are expected to provide similar services to the factories in exchange of service fees.

with international brands, PROGRESS ensures solutions are aligned with industry demand. The ultimate objective is to increase the retention rates and income of the workers, including 60% women while fostering improved productivity, and environmental and social compliance at factory level.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is a core, cross-cutting priority of the PROGRESS project. The project's GESI Strategy and Action Plan, guided by Swisscontact's organisational principles and the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) framework, seeks to ensure that women, people with disabilities, and other marginalised and gender-diverse groups are not left behind as the sector transitions towards higher productivity, automation, and green transformation.

The project aims to conduct a study to examine the status, opportunities, and challenges of GESI initiatives within Bangladesh's RMG sector. The study will go beyond a descriptive assessment and will focus on identifying practical, forward-looking, and market-relevant pathways to strengthen inclusion, equity, leadership, and participation across factories, service providers, and industry systems.

OBJECTIVE

At the current stage of the project, it seeks to undertake a research-driven assessment of the reflection of what has been achieved and future opportunities, shaping Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) within Bangladesh's RMG sector.

Moving beyond descriptive analysis, the study will generate evidence-based insights into the structural, institutional, and market dynamics that influence inclusion, equity, leadership, and participation across factories, service providers, and industry systems.

It will further identify practical, forward-looking, and market-relevant pathways to strengthen inclusive practices and inform policy, industry action, and investment decisions.

Specifically, the assignment will pursue the following four objectives:

- 1. Assess the current status and effectiveness of GESI initiatives under PROGRESS and across the sector:** Evaluate the design, implementation, and outcomes of GESI-related strategies and interventions under PROGRESS and across the sector, with particular attention to how they address the needs and constraints of women, people with disabilities, gender-diverse workers, and other marginalised groups.
- 2. Identify structural and normative barriers limiting meaningful inclusion and equitable**

participation: Analyse the structural, institutional, normative, and market-level factors that constrain equitable participation, leadership, and economic advancement, and generate insights to inform refinement of the PROGRESS GESI Strategy and Swisscontact's WEE framework.

- 3. Develop forward-looking, practical, and scalable recommendations to strengthen GESI in the sector:** Propose prioritised, scalable, and market-relevant interventions to advance inclusive practices within the RMG sector, ensuring alignment with PROGRESS objectives and emerging sector trends, including automation and green transition. *The study is expected to be future-oriented rather than only diagnostic and to generate recommendations that can directly inform programming, partnerships, and policy dialogue.*
- 4. Develop a practical framework for integrating gender-responsive budgeting within the project management cycle:** Design operational guidance and tools to embed gender-responsive budgeting within PROGRESS's planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting processes, enabling alignment of financial resources with GESI priorities and strengthening accountability for gender and inclusion outcomes.

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected firm/individual will be responsible for proposing a research methodology and work plan to achieve the study objectives. This should include, but not be limited to:

- Analytical framework:** Outlining how the study will assess existing GESI systems and practices, identify priority gaps, and generate implementable, market-relevant recommendations aligned with the PROGRESS GESI Strategy and WEE framework.
- Thematic focus areas:** The study is expected to cover, at minimum:
 - Access to skills development (including green skills) for women, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups; Career progression and leadership pathways, including supervisory and mid-level management roles;
 - Workplace policies and practices related to pay, benefits, working

- hours, childcare, and work-life balance;
 - Health, wellbeing, and occupational safety with a gender and inclusion lens;
 - Workplace dignity, gender-based violence and harassment, and grievance redress mechanisms;
 - Representation, voice, and access to collective or institutional support mechanisms;
 - Family and community dynamics that affect economic participation and resilience in the long term.
 - Inclusion within LTCPs/CSPs and service markets, including barriers faced by female and underrepresented consultants;
 - Implications of automation and green transformation for inclusive employment and skills transitions.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Describing how workers (including women, PwDs, and other marginalized groups), supervisors, factory management, LTCPs/CSPs, industry associations, brands, and policymakers will be engaged.
 - **Evidence gathering tools:** Detailing qualitative and quantitative approaches such as desk review, KIIs, FGDs, surveys, and case studies, with appropriate disaggregation (e.g., by gender, role, factory tier, and vulnerability).
 - **Validation and reliability:** Explaining strategies to triangulate data, cross-check findings, and ensure robustness, inclusivity, and practical relevance of conclusions.

The agency/individual is expected to bring strong contextual understanding of the RMG sector, methodological rigor, and a clear focus on producing **practical, implementable, and sector-relevant** recommendations.

DELIVERABLES

The selected firm/individual will deliver a final report at the end of the assignment. The report should include:

- A clear analysis of the current GESI landscape in RMG;
- Identification of key gaps and structural barriers across gender and social inclusion dimensions;
- A set of prioritised, actionable, market-relevant and forward-looking recommendations aligned with the PROGRESS GESI Strategy and Swisscontact's WEE framework.

- A structured review of the existing PROGRESS GESI Strategy, including practical recommendations for refinement, strengthening, or upgrading based on emerging sector needs, evidence, and future positioning;
- A proposed Gender-Responsive Budgeting methodology tailored to PROGRESS, outlining tools, processes, and tracking mechanisms to integrate gender budgeting across the project management cycle;
- Facilitation of at least one practical workshop/session with the PROGRESS team to present findings and provide hands-on guidance on applying the Gender-Responsive Budgeting methodology within planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes.

Additional deliverables (e.g., presentation of findings, policy brief, validation workshop) can be suggested by the firm/individual in their proposal.

Payment schedule will be finalised after discussion prior to contract signing.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The geographic focus of the project includes selected upazilas across Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, and Chattogram districts.

DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The assignment is initially planned for three (3) months, up to 30 person-days, from the day of the contract signing. However, the firm/individual is expected to suggest a detailed timeline with breakdown in the proposal. A detailed timeline with milestones will be agreed upon at contract signing.

REPORTING

The selected agency/individual will report directly to the PROGRESS Team Leader and work in close coordination with the project's Knowledge and Communication Management (KCM) Team, Business Administration (BA) team, and Swisscontact's Regional GESI Advisor.

SELECTION CRITERIA

For the evaluation of the proposal the following criteria will be applied:

Sl	Criteria	Weight
1. Technical Proposal		
1.1	Technical Capacity and Team Composition	
1.1.1	Proven expertise and demonstrated capacity in Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE), disability inclusion, and inclusive market systems development	15

1.1.2	Strong understanding of Bangladesh's RMG industry, including workplace dynamics and compliance context	15
1.1.3	Experience in conducting sectoral studies, institutional or policy reviews, and applied research on gender, inclusion, labour, or social compliance	10
1.1.4	Demonstrated capacity to apply mixed-method research approaches and translate findings into practical, actionable recommendations	10
Total		50
1.2	Relevant Experience	
1.2.1	Track record of successfully completing similar assignments in Bangladesh or comparable contexts	15
1.2.2	Experience working with private sector actors, factories, industry associations, or development projects	10
1.2.3	Quality of previous reports/publications submitted as samples	5
Total		30
2. Financial Proposal		
2.1	Financial Proposal (Value for Money)	20
Grand Total		100

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

All interested firms and individuals are required to submit the following documents:

- a) A technical proposal outlining in detail, understanding of the assignment, methodology, team composition, and work plan.
- b) A financial proposal (in BDT) inclusive of all applicable taxes. The financial proposal must be supported by detailed budget notes for each line item, clearly justifying the cost assumptions, calculation basis, unit rates, quantities, etc (as applicable).
- c) Relevant documents and evidence of past work in related areas.
- d) Applicable supporting documents as evidence demonstrating the legal, registration and taxation status.
- e) A list of the existing clientele of the organisation.
- f) It is mandatory for the bidding organisations to submit documentary evidence demonstrating their legal, taxation, and financial status. This includes:
 - I. A certificate of incorporation (for individual companies, a trade license), Registration-related documents (trade license, registration with any government entities/NGO bureau registration).
 - II. An organisational organogram of key personnel, inclusive of the names of such personnel.
 - III. Tax Identification Number (TIN).
 - IV. Business Identification Number (BIN).

V. Latest PSR (Proof of Submission of the Return).

VI. A signed statement testifying that all information contained within the proposal is correct and true.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

Interested applicants must submit their proposals (**separately technical and financial proposal**) via email to bd.progress@swisscontact.org by **25 April 2026**. The email subject line must state: **“Strategic Assessment and Actionable Roadmap on Strengthening Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Bangladesh’s RMG Sector.”**

Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered. Only shortlisted vendors/firms will be called for the next steps.

Swisscontact reserves the right to accept or reject any application, in part or full, or cancel the entire procurement process without assigning any reason whatsoever. Submission of an application does not guarantee the award of the contract.