

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Assessment of the Community Paramedic Information Ecosystem and Digital Readiness

1 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.

2 Overview of the project

As part of its ongoing engagement in Bangladesh, Swisscontact implements the **ASTHA (Achieving Sustainability Towards Healthcare Access)** project, which contributes to improving access to quality healthcare in rural communities. Following the successful completion of Phase II (2019–2022), which demonstrated the commercial viability and sustainability of Community Paramedic Training Institutes (CPTIs) and Community Paramedics (CPs), ASTHA entered Phase III (2023–2026). Operating across 12 districts, the current phase focuses on consolidation, scale and systemic change, while strengthening the institutionalisation of the Community Paramedic model.

As key last-mile healthcare providers, CPs manage and exchange information throughout the patient care journey, including patient history, treatment, referrals, follow-up and reporting. However, there is limited understanding of how this information is recorded, used and exchanged between CPs and other actors across the healthcare system.

Against this backdrop, Swisscontact intends to commission a study to understand the Community Paramedic information ecosystem, assess digital readiness, and explore opportunities for an integrated digital platform to support CP-led care. The study will also examine the potential of AI-enabled and voice-based interfaces to make digital health solutions more accessible and practical in last-mile settings, particularly for users with limited literacy and digital skills.

3 Objectives

To assess how Community Paramedics receive, record, use and exchange information across the patient care journey, evaluate their digital readiness, and identify the requirements and opportunities for an integrated, AI-enabled platform to strengthen information management, care coordination and continuity of care.

4 Scope of work

The study will adopt a human-centred, workflow-based operations research approach to understand Community Paramedic practices and their interactions with patients, communities and the wider healthcare system. It will examine representative patient and information journeys, covering the pathway from initial community contact and consultation through referral and higher-level care to community-based follow-up, drawing on insights from CPs, patients, communities and relevant public and private health-system actors.

The study will also assess where and how digitalisation, including AI-enabled solutions, can add practical value to existing workflows and information exchange. Rather than presupposing a technology-based solution, it will identify areas where digital interventions are appropriate, as well as existing practices that should be retained or strengthened.

The specific scope of work will include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- **Map current information flows:** Assess the information CPs receive from patients and communities, as well as what they generate, record, retain and communicate. Map information flows between CPs, patients, caregivers, diagnostic providers, pharmacies, physicians, and public and private referral facilities.
- **Assess current practices and pain points:** Examine how CPs manage patient registration, history-taking, assessment, treatment and documentation, referrals, follow-up, community engagement and reporting. Identify gaps, duplication, information loss and other constraints affecting continuity of care.
- **Assess digital readiness:** Assess CPs' use of smartphones, messaging, digital records and other digital tools, including their digital capabilities, user behaviour, connectivity and device constraints. Examine the readiness of other actors to exchange information digitally.
- **Explore AI- and voice-enabled applications:** Assess where AI could support CPs and patients, including voice-based information capture and retrieval, clinical workflows, patient communication, health education, referrals and follow-up. Explore the potential of Bangla/local-language voice interaction to address literacy and usability barriers.
- **Define requirements for an end-to-end platform:** Identify priority users, use cases, workflows, data requirements, interoperability needs and linkages with existing public and private digital health systems, while considering privacy, consent, data security, clinical safety and appropriate human oversight.

5 Expected outcomes

The study is expected to produce the following key outputs:

- A current-state map of CP information flows, key actors and care pathways.
- An assessment of information gaps, user needs, digital readiness and barriers.
- A prioritised set of digital, AI- and voice-enabled use cases.
- Functional and non-functional requirements for a potential digital platform.
- A proposed high-level architecture, user journey and phased roadmap for prototyping, testing and eventual implementation.

The final recommendations should clearly distinguish between immediate opportunities for digitisation, AI-enabled innovations requiring further testing, and longer-term opportunities for system integration. The recommendations should provide a practical foundation for the development of a prototype or Minimum Viable Product (MVP).

6 Geographical location

The study will be conducted across the **12 districts** where the ASTHA project is implemented, covering the following regions:

- **Northern region:** Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Gaibandha and Bogura
- **North-eastern region:** Sunamganj, Sylhet and Moulvibazar
- **Southern region:** Patuakhali, Barguna and Barishal

7 Duration of the assignment

The total duration of the assignment will be **30 days** from the date of issuance of the work order, with the possibility of extension based on mutual discussion and agreement.

8 Roles and responsibilities

8.1 Research firm/ consultant:

The selected research firm/ consultant will be responsible for the following:

- Prepare an inception report outlining the detailed methodology, study approach and work plan.
- Develop appropriate data collection tools in consultation with Swisscontact and finalise them prior to fieldwork.
- Conduct data collection, cleaning and analysis in line with the agreed methodology and study objectives.
- Prepare a comprehensive study report presenting key findings, analysis and recommendations based on the evidence collected.
- Maintain regular communication with the Swisscontact team and participate in discussions and meetings as required throughout the assignment.
- Ensure the quality and timely submission of all agreed deliverables in accordance with the assignment requirements.

8.2 Swisscontact

Swisscontact, through the ASTHA project team, will support the implementation of the study by undertaking the following responsibilities:

- Support the planning and coordination of study activities and provide technical inputs as required.
- Provide a comprehensive list of Community Paramedics from the selected geographical locations to facilitate study planning and data collection.
- Provide technical support for the training of enumerators and field supervisors as required.
- Cover the costs associated with the study in accordance with the approved budget and contractual terms.
- Provide overall strategic and technical guidance throughout the assignment and participate in relevant review and validation meetings.

9 Deliverables

The key deliverables of the assignment will include:

a. Inception Report: A detailed report outlining the study methodology, sampling strategy, work plan, data collection tools and ethical protocols.

b. Final Report: A comprehensive report incorporating feedback from Swisscontact and presenting an executive summary, key findings and evidence aligned with the study objectives, along with clear and actionable recommendations.

10 Reporting

The research firm/ consultant will work closely with and report to the **Coordinator- KCM & MRM, ASTHA**, throughout the assignment.

11 Technical and financial proposal parameters

The selection criteria are divided into two parts:

- **Technical Proposal:** 80% of the total possible score. The research firm / consultant will develop a technical proposal assignment-wise, as per the overall tasks of this assignment.
- **Financial Proposal:** 20% of the total possible score. The financial proposal should provide a detailed cost breakdown corresponding to the tasks and deliverables of the assignment.

The bidder is required to submit a technical proposal. It should include the following:

A brief proposal (no more than 8 pages) should outline the following:

- Understanding of the ToR.
- A brief outline of how the research firm/ consultant will accomplish each assignment mentioned in the scope of the work of the ToR.
- Resumés/CVs of the experts/coordinators and field officers.
- Summaries of the research firm's or consultant's previous experiences that would be useful for this assignment.

The financial proposal will be opened only for organisations scoring 70% and above in the technical proposal.

12 Scoring criteria

The scoring criteria will be as follows:

Criteria	Weight
Understanding of the assignment	20
Proposed methodology and implementation plan • Details and quality (adequacy) of the methodology proposed for the assignment • Sample research questions and data collection method • Detailed data collection plan and implementation plan (indicating time frame)	30
Background of the research firm or consultant and proposed team • Experience in similar assignments/projects (including assignment/project name, brief details, and clients) and/or in the sector • Detailed CVs of the proposed Team Leader and other key team members, and their relevant experience and skills (each CV should not exceed five pages)	20
Presentation on proposed methodology and work plan (organisations scoring 70% and above in the technical proposal)	10
Financial Proposal (organisations scoring 70% and above in the technical proposal and presentation)	20
Total	100

N.B.: Bidders who obtain at least 70% marks in the technical evaluation will be invited to deliver a short presentation. Financial proposals will be opened only for those who achieve a minimum of 70% marks based on the combined score of the technical evaluation and the presentation.

The following method will be applicable for the evaluation of the potential research firm or consultant:

- A Quality and Cost (Q&C)-based evaluation will be conducted by an evaluation team.
- The bidder achieving the highest score out of 100 will be awarded the contract, provided both parties reach an agreement on the final budget. If there is no agreement on the final budget, then the bidder with the second-highest score will be considered.

13 Required qualifications and documentation

13.1 Required qualifications

- Minimum five (05) years of proven experience in conducting research, operational studies, assessments or similar assignments.
- Strong understanding of Bangladesh's healthcare system, particularly community-level service delivery and linkages with public and private healthcare providers.
- Proven experience in qualitative and quantitative research, including stakeholder consultations, interviews, focus group discussions and field observations.
- Demonstrated ability to assess service delivery processes, information flows, user needs and stakeholder interactions, and translate findings into practical and actionable recommendations.
- Experience in digital readiness assessments, digital health, AI-enabled or voice-based solutions will be considered an added advantage.
- Demonstrated ability to produce high-quality research, assessment and analytical reports with clear findings and recommendations.
- Prior experience working with international development organisations will be considered an advantage.
- Adequate human and financial resources to undertake the assignment effectively, with the capacity to mobilise additional resources as required.

13.2 Required documentation

All competitive tenders require submission of the following:

- Technical proposal (page limit-8)
- Financial proposal
- Updated trade licence or relevant certificate
- Tax Identification Number (TIN)
- PSR (Proof of Submission of Return).
- Business Identification Number (BIN)
- Proof of a segregated account (providing the name and address of such account)
- A signed statement testifying that all information contained within the proposal is correct and true.

14 Submission details

Technical Proposal:

- Interested research firm/ consultant should submit their technical proposals, both in hard copy and soft copy.
- Please email the soft copies to bd.procurement@swisscontact.org, mentioning "**Assessment of the Community Paramedic Information Ecosystem and Digital Readiness**" in the subject line.

Financial Proposal:

Interested research firm/ consultants are required to submit a sealed envelope containing a hard copy of the financial proposal. Research agencies/ consultants **are requested not to submit any soft copy of the financial proposal through email or digital means.**

- Hard copies should be submitted to the address below:
- **Coordinator - Procurement & Government Relations**
Swisscontact Bangladesh
House 28, Road 43, Gulshan 2, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh

The subject line: "**Assessment of the Community Paramedic Information Ecosystem and Digital Readiness**" must be mentioned on the envelope.

The deadline for submission is **14 October 2026** before **5:00 PM**. If anyone has any queries, please contact bd.procurement@swisscontact.org by **08 October 2026** with all the questions. Swisscontact will clarify the queries through an email by **11 October 2026**.

Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered. Only shortlisted research agencies/ consultants 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.