

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR THE ENDLINE EVALUATION OF PROGRESS (PROMOTING GREEN GROWTH IN THE RMG SECTOR THROUGH SKILLS) PROJECT

1. Introduction

The Promoting Green Growth in the Ready-Made Garments Sector through Skills (PROGRESS) project is 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 the green transition by building their resilience and competitiveness, and drives sustainable growth in the sector through a market-driven approach.

The project has three main areas of work. **Component 1: Skills and Productivity** improves the technical skills and productivity of RMG workers. With support from the project, Consultancy Service Providers (CSPs)¹ develop the skills of workers in areas such as low-performance improvement, zero-defect operation and women's leadership, making them more competent and productive. The project also supports factories developing an in-house training system to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives. To date, 17,922 workers including 12,615 women have received productivity-related training, alongside 2,129 management staff trained under the IBT model. **Component 2: Environmental and Social Compliance** supports factories in their decarbonisation journey. CSPs assess factories' carbon emissions at baseline and help them develop tailored pathways towards net-zero emissions, while promoting sustainability reporting, resource efficiency, water and chemical management, and improved social compliance and workplace safety. 1,347 management staff have been trained on ESG practices. **Component 3: Local Capacity Development** strengthens the local advisory service market by building the capacity of Local Technical Consultancy Providers (LTCPs) and by supporting academic institutions to develop a pipeline of sustainability professionals for the sector. To date, 108 local consultants have been trained, of whom 41 are now providing consultancy services to RMG factories.

PROGRESS facilitates partnerships between service providers and RMG factories to deliver commercially viable solutions. It strengthens the local service market so that factories can access affordable support. Collaboration with international brands keeps solutions aligned with industry demand. The project also participates in sector-level collective initiatives, including the CALL consortium and the Oporajita Collective Impact initiative. The ultimate objective is to improve the job security and income of workers, including 60% women, while fostering improved productivity and environmental and social compliance at factory level.

As the PROGRESS project approaches the end of its current phase in June 2027, Swisscontact intends to commission an endline evaluation to assess final performance against the log frame, evaluate the project against evaluation criteria (OECD-DAC), and capture learning to inform future programming. This Terms of Reference sets out the scope, objectives and tasks required for the evaluation.

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 the project, they are expected to provide similar services to the factories in exchange for service fees.

2. The Objective of the Endline Evaluation

2.1 Objectives of the endline evaluation

1. **Assess project results and depth of changes:** Assess the extent to which PROGRESS has achieved its intended results against the log frame target and contributed to meaningful changes across skills and productivity, environmental and social compliance, and local capacity development, while examining GESI as a cross-cutting dimension, with appropriate disaggregation by sex, factory tier, category and geography. Distinguish between training and awareness, adoption of practices, actual behaviour change, measurable factory-level improvements and longer-term development results; identify what changed between midline and endline and why; and explain which interventions, approaches and partnerships worked, which did not, and the reasons behind both.
2. **Assess project contribution, systemic change, unintended results:** Assess the project's contribution to observed changes, distinguishing project effects from wider sectoral trends, and distinguishing direct results among project-supported workers and factories from wider or indirect effects on other factories, workers, service providers and the RMG sector, and examine the depth, durability and systemic nature of changes in workers, factories and the broader RMG ecosystem, including unintended results. Cover both positive and negative unintended results.
3. **Assess sustainability, scalability and overall performance:** Assess which results are likely to continue beyond project support and which are at risk, and whether continuation rests on commercial incentives and factory ownership or still on donor funding. Identify which interventions can be scaled, under what conditions, and which results or groups still need support and why. Evaluate overall performance against the OECD-DAC criteria.
4. **Assess economic benefits and private-sector investment.** Measure the economic and financial benefits for factories (cost savings, productivity, waste, energy and water use, defects) and for workers (wages, promotion, retention, job security, income). Quantify private-sector financial contributions from factories, brands, banks and financial institutions, service providers and other partners, during and after project support, and assess what the investment was used for and the private investment leveraged per SEK of donor/project funding, where reliable data are available.
5. **Assess GESI and Institutional Change:** Examine the project's contribution to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), including women's participation, access to wage increments, career progression and leadership opportunities, alongside changes in workplace practices, management behaviour and institutional systems that support more inclusive and equitable workplaces.
6. **Generate learning and inform the way forward:** Synthesise evidence, lessons and good practices, identify remaining gaps and emerging opportunities, and provide actionable recommendations and a forward-looking pathway to inform future programming, clearly distinguishing what should be continued, what should be changed, what should be scaled and what should be discontinued.

2.2 Thematic scope

2.2.1 Skills and Productivity

- **Skills development and application:** Changes in workers' and managers' knowledge/skills, and how effectively these are applied to the job.
- **Depth of results:** The progression from training and awareness, to adoption of practices, to actual behaviour change, to measurable factory-level improvement and longer-term results.

- **Productivity and quality improvement:** Changes in productivity, efficiency, quality, defect/rework reduction and bottleneck management at worker and factory level.
- **Factory financial benefits:** Measurable cost savings, productivity gains, and reductions in defects, rework and waste attributable to the interventions.
- **Worker economic and employment outcomes:** Verified changes in wage and income progression, promotion, retention, job security and career development, with gender-differentiated analysis, These should be established from factory payroll and HR records where available rather than relying mainly on self-reported perceptions.
- **Management capacity and factory ownership:** Improvements in management/supervisory capacity and factory ownership of productivity efforts, including core team effectiveness.
- **Institutionalisation of training and productivity practices:** Extent to which IBT and productivity practices are embedded into routine factory systems and management.
- **Gender-responsive and inclusive outcomes:** Equitable access to skills training and career advancement for women and other groups, including uptake of skilled roles.
- **Sustainability, Scalability and Contribution:** Sustainability/scalability of interventions and the project's contribution to change amid wider sectoral trends.

2.2.2 Environmental and Social Compliance

- **ESG capacity and awareness:** Changes in management/worker knowledge, capacity and practices on environmental and social compliance.
- **Depth of results:** The progression from awareness and training, to adoption of ESG practices, to actual behaviour change, to measurable factory-level improvement and longer-term results.
- **Adoption of ESG practices:** Extent to which factories have adopted and institutionalised ESG initiatives (resource efficiency, energy, water management).
- **Environmental performance and outcomes:** Measurable environmental improvements - energy/resource efficiency, emissions reduction, water, chemical and waste management and related outcomes.
- **Factory financial benefits:** Measurable cost savings from reduced energy, water, chemical and material use, and other financial returns attributable to ESG interventions.
- **Social compliance and workplace practices:** Improvements in workplace conditions, worker well-being, gender responsiveness and responsible practices.
- **Factory ownership and investment:** Extent of management commitment, internal capacity and financial investment in sustaining ESG practices post-project. This includes the type of investment (for example energy efficiency, renewable energy, ESG systems, equipment, technology, consultancy or training) and whether spending continued or increased after project support.
- **Access to finance:** Whether the project has helped factories become more able or willing to access commercial finance for ESG improvements, and whether banks or financial institutions have financed project-linked improvements.
- **Role of brands:** Whether international brands contributed financially, technically or through supply-chain requirements and relationships to factories' ESG improvements, and whether this support is likely to continue.

- **Sustainability and replication:** Sustainability of adopted practices and potential for replication/scaling across factories and the wider RMG sector including the conditions required (for example factory demand, provider capacity, finance, brand engagement or policy support).
- **Contribution and systemic change:** Project's contribution to observed changes, considering wider regulatory, market and sectoral developments including any influence on factories or sector actors that did not receive direct project support.

2.2.3 Local Capacity Development

- **Capacity of Local Service Providers:** Changes in LTCPs' knowledge, skills, quality and readiness to serve RMG factories.
- **Quality and relevance of local services:** Relevance, quality, effectiveness and responsiveness of local advisory/technical services to factory needs.
- **Market development and private sector uptake:** Changes in factory awareness, demand and willingness to independently procure local services, including whether factories return to providers and pay for repeat services without project support.
- **Sustainability of local service provision:** Extent to which providers have built viable business models and client networks to operate without project support, evidenced by paying clients, revenue, repeat engagements and services delivered without project subsidy.
- **Academia and sustainability professionals:** Contribution of academic partnerships to relevant curricula and a pipeline of sustainability professionals.
- **Institutionalisation and ecosystem development:** Extent to which stronger linkages among factories, providers and academia have built a sustainable local ecosystem.
- **Contribution, sustainability and scalability:** The project's contribution to local capacity strengthening and the potential for replication and scaling of successful approaches, including which approaches are ready to scale commercially, which need modest additional support, and which are unlikely to scale. This should identify the conditions required (for example factory demand, provider capacity, finance, brand engagement or policy support) and where continued support is still needed and why market mechanisms have not yet been sufficient.
- **Effects beyond supported actors:** Whether the project has influenced factories or service providers that did not directly receive project support, and what evidence exists for this.

2.2.4 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

- **Achievements:** Key achievements of gender/leadership interventions, including changes in women's skills, confidence and career progression.
- **Women's leadership and decision-making:** Changes in women's representation and influence in supervisory, management and leadership roles.
- **Workplace enabling environment:** Changes in gender-responsive policies, practices, culture and grievance mechanisms enabling women's advancement.
- **Remaining gaps and challenges:** Persistent structural, organisational and workplace barriers to women's participation, retention and leadership.
- **Sustainability and scaling:** Actions needed to sustain and scale effective gender practices, including institutionalisation within factory systems.
- **Broader gender and inclusion outcomes:** Project's contribution to inclusive outcomes for women and other disadvantaged groups, including intersectional barriers.

2.2.5 Private Sector Investment and Financial Returns

- **Scale and sources of private investment:** Financial contributions mobilised from factories, international brands, financial institutions and service providers, quantified separately where possible.
- **Use of investment:** What private investment was directed towards, for example training, energy efficiency, renewable energy, ESG systems, consultancy, technology or equipment.
- **Leverage of donor funding:** Private sector investment generated per unit of donor funding, where reliable data allow.
- **Brand engagement:** Whether international brands contributed financially, technically or through supply-chain relationships, and whether such support is likely to continue.
- **Access to commercial finance:** Whether factories have become more able or willing to access commercial finance, and whether financial institutions have provided financing linked to project-supported improvements.
- **Investment beyond project support:** Whether private sector partners continued or increased investment after project support ended.
- **Financial returns at factory level:** Measurable cost savings, productivity gains, and reductions in waste, energy and water use and defect rates attributable to the interventions.

3. Evaluation methodology

3.1 Evaluation Framework

The evaluation will be carried out in alignment with OECD DAC evaluation principles, using six criteria to analyse the project and its results. Indicative questions for each criterion are set out below and will be jointly revisited and finalised with the selected firm during the inception and questionnaire development stage.

Relevance

- To what extent did the interventions respond to the actual needs of workers and factories, and did they remain relevant as the sector context changed?
- Were the needs of Tier-3 factories adequately understood and addressed?

Coherence

- How well were the three components connected, and did they reinforce one another at factory level, and did combining them produce additional benefit compared with implementing them separately?
- How did the project align with national policy and with international standards and buyer requirements?
- How did the project relate to other development efforts in the sector, including through participation in sector consortia and collective initiatives?
- What concrete changes in sector practice, standards, buyer requirements or policy resulted?

Effectiveness

- To what extent were intended outputs and outcomes achieved against log frame targets? What changed between midline and endline, and what caused it?
- Where targets were substantially exceeded or under-achieved, what explains the variance, and what does it indicate about the original design?

- Which interventions, approaches or partnerships worked best, and why, supported by evidence?
- Which interventions underperformed, were not sustained or did not work as expected, and what explains this?
- To what extent were results shaped by factory management commitment, worker engagement, market demand, buyer requirements, service provider capacity, cost, regulation or wider economic conditions?

Efficiency

- Were financial, human and technical resources used economically?
- Was the allocation of resources across components, factory tiers and intervention types the most productive available? Where targets were substantially exceeded, assess whether the resources spent on additional reach produced more value than deepening results with fewer participants would have.
- What was the cost of key results achieved, where data allow, for example cost per worker trained, cost per factory supported and cost per practice sustained?
- Did some delivery models, components, factory categories or types of support produce better results for comparable levels of investment?
- What has the project mobilised in private and factory co-investment relative to donor funds, and what does this indicate about value for money?
- Were timelines respected, and what were the consequences of delay?

Impact

- What significant changes, intended and unintended, positive and negative can credibly be attributed to the project at worker, factory, service-market and sector levels?
- At what depth have results been achieved, distinguishing training and awareness, adoption of practices, sustained behaviour change, measurable factory-level improvement and longer-term development outcomes?
- How have these changes affected women workers specifically? Which results are direct (supported workers/factories) and which are indirect or wider?
- How have they affected the living conditions of the workers concerned?
- To what extent has the project contributed to change beyond the factories it directly supported, and what evidence exists of influence on factories, service providers or sector actors that did not receive direct project support?
- What concrete evidence is there of contribution to sector practices, market behaviour, industry standards, buyer requirements or policy dialogue, beyond participation in sector initiatives?
- Did brands contribute financially, technically or through supply-chain relationships, and will they continue? Has PROGRESS helped factories access commercial finance, and have banks financed linked improvements?
- Has PROGRESS influenced factories, service providers or sector actors that received no direct support, and what evidence exists?

Sustainability

- Which benefits are likely to continue after project support ends, and which are at risk?

- What is the evidence that factories, service providers and academic institutions have both the capability and the commercial incentive to continue?
- For each major intervention, what happened after project support ended, including whether factories continued paying for services, maintaining systems and investing their own resources?
- Which interventions are ready to be scaled commercially or through the sector, which could be scaled with modest further support, and which are unlikely to be scalable under current conditions? What conditions would scaling require?
- Where results still depend on donor or project support, why have market mechanisms not been sufficient, and what form of further assistance would be needed?

3.2 Evaluation approach and analytical rigour

The evaluation will use a mixed-methods approach, triangulating quantitative and qualitative evidence from surveys, interviews, FGDs, project/factory records and relevant studies, with findings disaggregated as appropriate.

The evaluation will apply a rigorous approach to assessing the project's contribution to observed changes, ensuring comparability with midline findings, including identification of the changes that occurred between midline and endline and their likely causes, and accounting for external factors. Worker-level outcomes should draw on comparison/counterfactual analysis through a tracer and panel approach, re-interviewing workers from the midline tracer cohort alongside a comparison group of workers, while factory-level and systemic changes will be assessed through contribution analysis. Key biases, limitations and uncertainties must be clearly documented throughout.

Findings must be triangulated across workers, factory management, service providers, brands, financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders rather than relying primarily on project records. For major findings, the evaluation must state what evidence supports the claim, what could not be established, and where the evidence is weak or inconclusive.

3.3 Sampling strategy

The bidding firm will propose and justify a sampling strategy that ensures statistical significance, rigour and adequate representation across key groups trained and comparison workers, Tier-2 and Tier-3 factories, factory categories, and sex. The sample should also include control factories and stakeholders, relevant project stakeholders and, where feasible, the midline tracer cohort and workers who have since left supported factories.

The firm must justify its proposed sample size, sampling approach, comparison group selection, panel/tracing method, and non-response procedures. The final sampling strategy will be reviewed and agreed during inception, based on updated population figures and field feasibility.

3.4 Ethics, safeguarding and data protection

Participation in the evaluation must be voluntary and based on informed consent, with confidentiality, secure data handling and anonymisation maintained throughout the process. Data collection must follow a do-no-harm approach, ensuring private and safe interview settings, appropriately trained female enumerators, and full compliance with safeguarding and PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) requirements. The firm must also declare any actual or potential conflict of interest relating to project-supported stakeholders.

4. Geographic Location

Fieldwork will primarily cover project-supported factories and stakeholders in Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chattogram. The final list of locations and factories will be confirmed at inception. Key stakeholder interviews may be conducted in Dhaka or remotely, as appropriate.

5. Duration, Timeline and Reporting

5.1 Duration

The assignment is expected to run for approximately four months, tentatively commencing in early October 2026 and concluding by February 2027. Bidders are requested to propose an indicative timeline in their technical proposal, outlining key phases and deliverables within this overall timeframe.

5.2 Reporting and coordination

The selected firm will report to the PROGRESS Team Leader and work in close coordination with the PROGRESS MRM team, providing weekly progress updates during fieldwork and immediate notification of any issue affecting sample achievement, data quality or timeline.

6. Deliverables

1. Inception report, including detailed methodology, attribution strategy, sampling frame, and work plan
2. Final data collection tools, in English and Bangla
3. Enumerator CVs, orientation records and field quality assurance protocol
4. Cleaned and anonymised dataset with codebook, analysis scripts and data quality report
5. Preliminary findings presentation
6. Draft report
7. Final report
8. Two-page summary report
9. Final presentation to Swisscontact and the donors

The main report should be concise, written in English, clearly structured and contain appropriate visuals, with technical detail placed in annexes; a suggested length is around 30-40 pages excluding annexes, supported by a two-page summary and presentation.

7. Required team composition

The bidding firm's technical proposal must present a multidisciplinary team covering, at minimum, a Team Leader, Quantitative/M&E Specialist, Gender and Social Inclusion Expert, Market System Development Expert, RMG/Sector Specialist, environmental and social compliance expert in the RMG sector, Data Analyst/Statistician, Field Coordinator(s)/Enumerator Supervisors, and a mixed-gender team of enumerators.

CVs for the Team Leader, Gender/GESI Expert, Quantitative/M&E Specialist, Market System Development Expert and Data Analyst must accompany the technical proposal, while CVs for field-level personnel may be submitted at inception, subject to Swisscontact's approval.

8. Selection Criteria

Based on the proposals submitted, firms will be evaluated first on their technical proposal. Firms scoring more than 50% in their technical proposal will be shortlisted for presentation and evaluation of financial proposals. The following criteria will be applied in evaluating the proposals:

SL.	Criteria	Score
1.	Technical Proposal	60%
1.1	Understanding of the assignment	10%
1.2	Methodology	20%
1.3	Proposed sampling strategy and workplan	20%
1.4	Resource persons' profile & Experience of similar work/service undertaken	10%
2.	Presentation on the proposals	20%
3.	Financial proposal	20%

9. Required Documents for the CSP

All bidding consultant/ consultancy firms are required to submit the following:

- a. A technical proposal elaborating the understanding of the assignment, proposed methodology, assessment tools, timeline (activity plan), key staff profiles, roles, and individual time to be spent on the assignment
- b. A separate financial proposal setting out a detailed budget for the assignment (in BDT).
- c. A summary of relevant services provided during the last 3 years.
- d. CVs of the key personnel who will be involved in the assignment.
- 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.

10. Submission Details

Interested applicants must submit their proposals via email to bd.progress@swisscontact.org by 27 October 2026. The email subject line must state: **"ENDLINE EVALUATION OF PROGRESS"**. In addition to the email submission, a hard copy of the technical and financial proposal separately should be delivered to the following address by the same deadline:

Swisscontact Bangladesh Office

House 28, Road 43, Gulshan-2, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh

Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered. 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.