



Terms of Reference

Selection of a consultant/vendor for the “Shifting the power to grassroots communities through strengthening farmer-led CSOs and improving their engagement in the sustainable development process (SWABOL)” project of Traidcraft Exchange for the following assignment.

“Document and promote locally led Climate adaptation measures.”

1. Introduction:

Project Name	Shifting the power to grassroots communities through strengthening farmer-led CSOs and improving their engagement in the Sustainable Development Process (SWABOL) project
Project Location	Bangladesh – Chapai Nawabganj, Faridpur, Gaibandha, Jashore, Khulna, Kurigram, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Panchagarh, Rajshahi, Satkhira, Sherpur, & Thakurgaon Districts
Project duration	42 months from 1 st April 2023
Co-Donor	European Union
Implementing agency and partners	The project is led by Traidcraft Exchange and co-implemented by ASSEDO, BB, BEDS, GUK, RDS, and USS

“Shifting the power to grassroots communities through strengthening farmer-led CSOs and improving their engagement in the sustainable development process (SWABOL) project” is a consortium initiative of Traidcraft Exchange, implemented through six local partners- Agriculture Sustainable & Socio-Economic Development Organization (ASSEDO), Bikash Bangladesh (BB), Bangladesh Environment and Development Society (BEDS), Gana Unnayan Kendro (GUK), Rural Development Sangstha (RDS), and Ulashi Sreejony Shangha (USS). The project is underway in 33 Upazilas under Chapai Nawabganj, Faridpur, Gaibandha, Jashore, Khulna, Kurigram, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Panchagarh, Rajshahi, Satkhira, Sherpur and Thakurgaon Districts. The European Union is providing financial support with an aim **to enhance social capital and capacities of Federated Smallholder Farmer-Led Civil Society Organisations (FSFCSOs) to become active actors of good governance and promote inclusive sustainable development.**

The project targets 46 FSFCSOs and their 1,580 LFOs in 33 Upazilas across 13 districts. The final direct participants of the project are 47,400 small and marginal farming households (farmers with landholdings less than 1 hectare), of which 50% are women, 7% are from ethnic minorities and 5% are persons with disabilities.

Specific Objective of the project: To strengthen the legal identity and operational capacity of FSFCSOs and build their civic space to influence effective delivery of services in line with national policies and regulations.

Outputs:

Output 1: 46 FSFCSOs are legally registered with state authorities and sustainably supporting their members, LFOs, to lead their own development and advocacy.

Output 2: FSFCSOs engage with duty bearers to facilitate representation in local governance and effective implementation of policies, contributing to an enabling environment for civil society.

Output 3: FSFCSOs work in alliance with their networks to promote inclusion of marginalized groups' priorities at the family, society, and national levels.

Output 4: FSFCSOs actively promote and practice locally led climate adaptation to protect their agricultural ecosystem and ensure greater resilience to climate shocks.

2. Organizational overview:

Traidcraft Exchange (TX):

For more than 30 years, TX has been fighting poverty through trade, believing in the positive and transformational potential of trade to bring hope to millions trapped in poverty. It's our mission to use the power of trade to create lasting solutions to poverty. We believe that trade affects the life of every person and can provide the most sustainable way of overcoming poverty. Yet markets do not always work in favor of the poor, and often work against them. This is a major factor contributing to their poverty. Traidcraft Exchange exists to do two things:

- To support people to harness the benefits of trade.
- To fight against injustice in global trade
- To ensure that there is a shift of power to the vulnerable people in the value chain.

In all our areas of work, TX plays a key role as catalyst and convenor, encouraging different actors to work together to develop approaches that lead to inclusive economic growth. We have a particularly strong track record of constructive engagement with the private sector as both trading and development partners. Over the last 20 years, Traidcraft has worked directly with over half a million vulnerable and socially excluded members developing democratically run village-based groups and associations and nurturing their links to duty-bearers and private sector players. This has resulted in significant up-skilling of marginalized producers: increasing confidence and productivity, reducing costs, improving market access, diversifying incomes, and reducing environmental impact.

TX is implementing the SWABOL project as the lead organization with direct support from 6 local partner NGOs - ASSEDO, BB, BEDS, GUK, RDS, and USS located in the 6 working zones. They are highly competent local organizations as they have strong and established presences in the target districts and strong competencies in necessary areas, including grassroots mobilization, gender-based projects, and income-generating activities. They have strong connections with and expertise in working with Elected Local Authorities and Public Extension Officials, and are essential in establishing connections to LAs and other relevant stakeholders in their respective zones. All will work side by side with FSFCSOs and will guide them throughout the project, facilitating their engagement in project activities and managing the disbursement of financial support.

3. Background of the study:

Shifting the power to the grassroots is a critical issue in empowering the community people to identify their own problems and contextual solution measures. Community-based organization and social



solidarity are the strongest vehicles in this regard to reach the goal. As per the specific Objective of the project, ***to strengthen the legal identity and operational capacity of FSFCSOs and build their civic space to influence effective delivery of services in line with national policies and regulations***, the project has strong role in strengthening the operational capacity of FSFCSOs along with legal identity and civic space that will make FSFCSOs better capacitated in designing and implementing a social movement as per their plan and objective.

The action will build FSFCSOs capacity to analyse relevant climate change issues, document existing locally led climate adaptation practices, and promote techniques that build resilience to climate shocks, to ultimately catalyse their thought leadership around agricultural climate adaptation. FSFCSOs will have considerable experience and expertise in how climate change is affecting the agricultural sector and be well-placed to engage in dialogue around how to best support smallholder farmers to adapt and to lead interventions to support them to do so. The action will assist FSFCSOs to build evidence around climate adaptation best practices and document them. These best practices will champion safeguarding of the agricultural ecosystem and improving resilience, unleashing the potential and creativity of communities to develop and implement solutions. FSFCSOs, as actors of good governance for smallholder farmers in Bangladesh, will ultimately represent the lived realities and solutions of their members at local and national level. Since there are existing provisions from public and private service providers to support climate-vulnerable communities to adapt, FSFCSOs will engage them to support the smallholder farmers they serve, building working relationships with local authorities responsible for climate adaptation in the process. FSFCSOs will be supported to lead campaigns around the documented best practices, as well as specifically on afforestation and reforestation – a pre-identified priority of FSFCSOs since it is a feasible climate mitigation tool that is well-received by communities and can be used to build understanding about and support for tackling climate change.

4. Purpose and objectives of the Study:

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to document locally-led climate adaptation practices and generate evidence of best practices that empower FSFCSOs and LFO members, especially smallholder farmers, to lead community-based climate resilience initiatives. The research will directly support the development of actionable implementation strategies and community-owned adaptation plans.

The study aims to strengthen grassroots ownership of climate action by capturing indigenous knowledge, community innovations, and practical adaptation strategies that are already being implemented at the local level. By doing so, it will contribute to bridging the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that locally relevant solutions are recognized, validated, and scaled. Furthermore, the research will directly inform the development of actionable implementation strategies and community-owned adaptation plans.

Objectives:

- I. Assess the legal identity, governance, and operational capacity of FSFCSOs.
- II. Identify and document accessible, community-driven climate adaptation practices, particularly in the agriculture sector.
- III. Strengthen FSFCSOs' capacity to lead campaigns on adaptation measures such as afforestation and reforestation.
- IV. Explore existing collaboration between FSFCSOs and public/private stakeholders to scale adaptation support.
- V. Capture community-specific insights that reflect the lived experiences of smallholder farmers.
- VI. Provide practical, evidence-based recommendations to enhance FSFCSOs' leadership in local climate governance.
- VII. To conduct/ prepare a policy brief following one or two major findings of the research



VIII. Organize a roundtable discussion with key stakeholders at the national level to present findings, validate recommendations, and foster dialogue for policy uptake. The associated costs for this national-level roundtable will be borne by TXBD.

The research will adopt a participatory and interactive approach to capture community-specific insights and ensure grassroots ownership.

The consultant shall be fully responsible for the planning, facilitation, logistics, and all associated costs of these workshops under this assignment. Each workshop will be co-facilitated by a locally or nationally recruited external researcher with expertise in climate, community development, and participatory research methodologies. The process will be supervised and quality-controlled by FSFCSO leadership, with strategic support and guidance from local partner field staff and TXBD.

Based on the analysis, the consultant will prepare a policy brief (covering one or two priority policy issues). A national-level roundtable in Dhaka will be organized to present and validate the findings and policy directions. TXBD will cover only the costs of this national event, while the consultant will be responsible for content development, presentation, and facilitation.

Segment 01: To ensure participatory and interactive research findings, a total of **six zonal participatory workshops** will be held. The exact location will be finalized with the consultation of TXBD later at the inception meeting.

The 6 working zones are-

1. Mymensingh-Sherpur-Netrokona; .
2. Gaibandha-Kurigram;
3. Jashore-Faridpur- Khulna
4. Rajshahi-Chapai Nawabganj;
5. Satkhira and
6. Panchgarh-Thakurgaon.)

Segment 02: One national-level policy briefing workshop will be organized and facilitated by the consultant. The workshop cost will be borne by TXBD.

Each workshop will be co-facilitated by a locally or nationally recruited external researcher with expertise in climate, community development, and participatory research methodologies. The process will be supervised and quality-controlled by FSFCSO leadership, with strategic & logistical support from local partner field staff and TXBD.

The researcher is expected to:

- Propose a clear, GESI-focused methodology
- Facilitate inclusive and participatory dialogue with a diverse set of stakeholders (including women farmers, youth, LFO members, local FSFCSO representatives, and field staff)
- Document and analyze key themes emerging from the consultations
- Conduct a policy brief following one or two major findings and reporting
- The consultant will submit a proposed methodology and workshop facilitation plan for review and approval before implementation. Special emphasis will be placed on the inclusion of women's voices and lived experiences, ensuring the framework is rooted in practical realities.
- Use of AI tools, if any, must strictly adhere to ethical standards, ensuring data integrity and confidentiality, and is generally discouraged under this assignment.

5. Audience for the Study:

- Project staff and leadership of the Traidcraft Exchange



- Executive Directors and staff of partner organizations: ASSEDO, BB, BEDS, GUK, RDS, and USS
- FSFCSO leaders and their LFO members
- Project funders and development partners
- Local academic collaborators and thematic experts
- Relevant actors in the civic space and public service delivery sectors

6. Process and Methodology:

The study will be conducted in a participatory manner to bring the multiple perspectives from key stakeholders in assessing the current situation of the target project participants, project staff and Executive Director of Partner organization. Project field staff will be there to both inform and support the consultant in the study processes.

The consultant is requested to suggest a detailed methodology and plan for the research, including desk research, data collection & analysis, and reporting formats. Also, a detailed plan for the policy brief.

7. Outputs and Deliverables:

The consultant will be responsible for producing the following high-quality and timely deliverables as follows:

i) Inception Report

- Includes proposed methodology, tools, execution plan, and timeline
- To be submitted and approved by Traidcraft Exchange Bangladesh (TXBD) before contract finalization

ii) Zonal participatory workshop, policy briefing, round table discussion, Plan and Timeline

- Detailed session outlines, stakeholder mapping, and logistical framework for all ten workshops
- To be approved by TX BD before commencement

iii) Preparation of Policy Brief(s):

Develop one evidence-based policy brief derived from one or two key findings of the study. The briefs should be action-oriented, clearly outlining priority issues, practical recommendations, and strategic pathways to influence policy and practice at both local and national levels.

iv) Draft Report

- Integrating findings from all zonal workshops (Zonal and national workshop reports)
- To include raw data and thematic analysis as annexes
- Submitted as per the agreed timeline

v) PowerPoint & Infographic Presentation

- Two-page summary version designed for printing
- To be submitted in soft copy (pen drive or USB)



vi) Final Narrative Report

- Comprehensive and edited final document
- To be submitted within **five (5) working days** of receiving consolidated feedback from TX BD

Note: All outputs, materials, and data produced during this assignment will be considered the sole property of Traidcraft Exchange and its partners. The consultant will be required to submit all original data and documentation to the contracting authority, and these may not be disclosed publicly without written permission.

8. Roles and Responsibilities:

Consultant's Responsibility

- Undertake assignment as outlined in the Tor.
- Complete the tasks in the allocated time.
- Update Traidcraft regularly concerning progress.

9. Provision of support

FTL will provide the necessary support to the consultant.

10. Timeframe:

Activity	Deadlines
Closing date for proposals submission	02 June 2026
Interviews for selection	11 June 2026
Meeting to discuss the detailed terms of reference and contract	15 June 2026
First draft report to Traidcraft	20 August 2026 or as agreed and documented in the minutes of the inception meeting
Final report to Traidcraft incorporating all feedback	15 September 2026 or as agreed and documented in the minutes of the inception meeting

11. Budget and Mode of payment:

The maximum budget for this assignment is BDT 8,00,000 (inclusive of VAT and Tax). The consultant must allocate at least BDT 35,000 per zonal workshop within the proposed budget.

This budget is intended to cover all costs related to the assignment, including research design, data collection, participatory workshops, analysis, reporting, and all other associated expenses, in line with the scope and requirements outlined in this ToR.

The evaluator should develop a budget to complete the evaluation as outlined in this ToR, clearly allocating expenses and the daily rate. The disbursement will be made as per the



following schedule:

- 30% of the total fee will be paid on signing the contract (Completion of Deliverable 1)
- 30% of the amount will be paid after the submission of the draft report (Completion of Deliverables 2, 3 &4)
- The remaining amount (40%) will be paid upon acceptance of the final report (Completion of Deliverables 5 &6)
- The payment would be made in a crossed cheque in the name of the consultant.

The vendor/consultant must have VAT & Tax registration and a valid Trade license. Photocopies of these documents must be submitted along with the EOI/proposal.

12. Application Process:

Interested organizations or individuals are requested to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) electronically to the following address on or before

Please email to: TX_Bangladesh@traidcraft.org.

The EOI should include:

- Contact details and up-to-date and detailed CV of the consultant(s) with brief descriptions of similar assignments.
 - A clear and detailed overview of how this piece of work will be approached, the methodology proposed, and the outputs generated, with a clear timeline for the specified activity and a budget apportioned for the assignment.
 - Two references
- The EOI, excluding the consultant CVs, should not be more than 10 pages long, should have single spacing, and use Arial typeface with a minimum font size of 10.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview.

13. Selection Criteria

On receive of the EOI, the designated project management team will study the proposals, including an interview, and make a decision about the consultant/s/ agency for the study. Selection of the consultant/s/ agency will be based on:

Selection Criteria	Scores
Technical Proposal - level of understanding of TOR (20 points)	20
Methodology (20 points)	20
Relevant Experience (20 points)	20
Knowledge and skills of conducting assignment (20 points)	20
Competency of Team Leader and Team Composition (20 points)	20
Total as per Percentage (Total x 0.7)	0.7
Budget (20 points)	20
Total as per Percentage (Total x 0.3)	0.3
Grand total:	100%



14. General terms and conditions:

- Traidcraft Exchange reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal without giving any verbal and/or written rationale.
- Any report and document prepared during the assignment will be treated as the property of Traidcraft Exchange
- The report/document or any part, therefore, cannot be sold, used and reproduced in any manner without prior written approval of Traidcraft Exchange
- Traidcraft Exchange reserves the right to monitor the quality and progress of the work during the assignment. adaptation .



