

Terms of Reference (TOR)

Rapid assessment and integrated approach for promotion of climate-resilient production practices for HICRA.
USAID funded Host and Impacted Community Resilience Activity (HICRA).
Helen Keller Intl

1. Background and Introduction:

Cox's Bazar and the Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) districts are among the lowest ranked in Bangladesh for education and skills training, food security, wealth status, and agricultural productivity, all of which have worsened with the Rohingya refugee influx ongoing since 2017. In Cox's Bazar and Bandarban, 37.2 percent and 40.1 percent of residents live below the poverty line (national average 31.5 percent); stunting rates are 46.6 percent and 47.7 percent (national average 41.2 percent); and literacy rates are 38.2 percent and 32.8 percent (national average 50.5 percent). The refugee crisis has put enormous pressure on local economies, resulting in lost livelihoods, depressed local wages, increased food insecurity, and distorted local market systems in host and impacted communities. There is job growth in tourism, government, and non-governmental projects and services, but local populations do not generally have the skills to qualify for these opportunities.

Food insecurity/vulnerability levels among the host community rose modestly from 51 percent of the population in 2020 to 52 percent in 2021 (WFP, March 2022). The proportion of host community households facing poor or borderline food consumption rose from 33 percent in 2020 to 38 percent in 2021.¹

Agriculture is the primary livelihood for more than 50 percent of Cox's Bazar residents;² the rate is even higher in the CHT. Limited access to irrigation, quality inputs, and financial services are challenges. Weak transportation networks and lack of storage facilities, especially in the CHT, hinder farmers' access to markets and force farmers and traders to sell at cheaper prices. Gender norms in the CHT, and especially in Cox's Bazar, limit women's agency and their freedom to choose a livelihood and make household expenditure and resource allocation decisions.³

These HICRA areas are topographically and geographically more vulnerable to natural disasters. The CHT region is prone to heavy rain and flash floods, landslides, and extreme heat. Cox's Bazar is experiencing these, as well as soil and water salinity, coastal flooding, rising sea levels, tropical cyclones, and fire outbreaks in the camps and adjacent host areas, all of which have been aggravated by deforestation and hill cutting.

¹ <https://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/MAP%203.6%20BANGLADESH.pdf>

² [USAID's Assessment of District Development in Host and Impacted Communities, May 2022.](#)

³ SAPLING Qualitative Formative Research Report, Helen Keller International

Friends in Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB) has assembled a consortium of local (ANANDO, ASHIKA Development Associates, Bolipara Nari Kaylan Somity (BNKS), Nature Conservation Management (NACOM)) and international partners (DevWorks International, Helen Keller Intl, Christian Aid, International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)). Additional local implementing partners for the CHT will be added as needed given the unique nature of development work in that region. Local partners will implement each project result area, supported by the international technical partners to promote locally-led development and deliver high-impact, cost-effective solutions.

By the end of the five-year program, 24,000 targeted households will graduate from extreme poverty and opportunities for increased income for 114,000 households will be created through training, market linkages, and UPG interventions to support diversified livelihood initiatives. In addition, 80% of targeted communities will have access to improved WASH facilities, and 35,800 ha of land will be under improved, climate-resilient management practices.

The impact of climate change on agriculture is becoming increasingly apparent, especially in vulnerable regions where poor and smallholder farmers are more affected in their agricultural production. Rising temperatures, unpredictable rainfall patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events, such as droughts and cold spells, disrupt farming cycles, lower crop yields, and threaten livestock health. Addressing these issues requires urgent attention and the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices to ensure sustainable livelihoods for these vulnerable communities.

2. Rationale for this consultancy

The HICRA model promotes climate-resilient, nutrition-sensitive production practices while enhancing household capacity to mitigate climate-related risks. Resilience is a fundamental element of the HICRA approach, designed to sustain intervention outcomes and ensure climate-smart agriculture livelihood support. An assessment will be conducted to identify risks and climate hazards affecting the production of Enhanced Homestead Food Production (EHFP), High-Value Commodities (HVC), and Agriculture related Income-Generating Activities (IGA). The findings will help refine and strengthen climate-resilient activities in horticulture, poultry, small livestock, and IGAs, ensuring sustainable income for ultra-poor, poor, and non-poor participants, even in challenging conditions.

Building on Helen Keller's experience from SAPLING, BANI, and Suchana, a focused assessment will inform the design of a strategy and implementation plan for climate change adaptation (CCA) and climate-resilient agricultural practices. The integrated approach and plan will provide guidance and detailed descriptions of climate-resilient agricultural practices for household as a result household have resilience against potential disaster risks and climate hazards. To support sustainable livelihoods and enhance incomes, it is crucial to identify, assess, and promote climate-smart agricultural practices in HICRA project areas.

3. **Scope of work:** Helen Keller Intl will appoint a consultant to design and conduct an assessment to provide tailored guidance on appropriate climate-smart agricultural practices for the diverse implementation areas. The objective of this assessment is to deliver valuable insights and recommendations to support and develop a coherent, integrated approach to promoting climate-resilient production practices within the CHT and Cox's Bazar districts and, simultaneously, update the existing guidelines and training materials. The study will be conducted during December 2024 to 15 Jan 2025. Helen Keller Intl will incorporate the assessment's recommendations into the training manual and guidelines.
- **Identify impacts of climate change and disaster-related shocks** on HICRA agriculture-related program outcomes and recommend climate resilient production practices and climate change adaptation (CCA) actions for agriculture-related livelihood interventions. These practices and actions may differ according to context of the different districts in CHT and Cox's Bazar.
- Develop a coherent, **integrated approach to promoting climate-resilient production practices within the CHT and Cox's Bazar districts** based on existing materials and a field assessment.
- **Update existing guidelines and training materials** to integrate climate-resilient production practices and change into agriculture and agriculture-related livelihood strategies. This includes updating the resilience approach within the livelihood strategy and action plan and advising on how to protect high value crops, enhanced homestead food production (EHFP), and other program activities from climate-related shocks.

4. **Tasks and Methodology:**

Tasks and proposed details for the methodology are described below:

1. **Document review/desk Research. (Up to 2 days)**

- Review of Project documents (technical proposal and reports) and current documents from SAPLING, BANI and Suchana projects.
- Reviews of secondary information, previous research, and reports of assessments that are already available like FAO relevant reports. Also a review of climate change impact (vulnerabilities) and adaptation of other reports about Bangladesh.
- Review the report of "National Adaptation Plan Of Bangladesh (2023-2050)", Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

2. **Develop inception report: after the desk review, a brief inception report will be submitted by the consultant including work plan. (Up to 2 Days)**

3. **Consultation and Field Work. (Up to 6 Days)**

- Field observations to see the HICRA project areas in-depth discussion with community people.
- Meet and discuss with the relevant Government officials to have a better understanding. The stakeholders include local BARI/BRRI sub-station, Soil Resource Development Institute-SRDI, Department of Fisheries, Department of Agriculture Extension, Department of Livestock Services, Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation, MUCH/FAO, BINA, farmers, inputs retailers in Cox's Bazar and CHT.

4. A draft report that includes the approaches, production practices and implementation plan. (Up to 4 days)

- Develop a report on how climate and disaster-related shocks will affect at HICRA program's outcomes and recommend CCA mitigation actions for agricultural livelihood interventions.
- Develop an updated resilience approach and action plan, list of climate resilience agricultural activities (e.g. informing how alternative CSA adopt into EHFP, agriculture related IGAs and activities from climatic hazard, etc.). The purpose of the assessment is to increase the level of ambition on resilience and build the capacity of HICRA program participants and to adopt climate resilient production technologies focusing on small livestock, horticulture and HVC.
- Suggest a list of training activity to build the capacity of HICRA program participants and support to adopt climate resilient production technologies focusing on poultry, horticulture and HVC.

5. A finalized report, including plan and approaches and list of training curriculum based on the feedback from HICRA senior team. (Total 2 Days)

5. Deliverables of Consultancy

The consultant will deliver the following:

- I. **Inception Report and Detailed Plan:** A comprehensive initial report outlining the methodology, plan, and timeline for the study.
- II. **Final Report:** A detailed report presenting the findings of the study, including an assessment of climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices, a gap analysis, and recommendations for scaling up CSA in Cox's Bazar and CHT.
- III. **Implementation Plan:** A detailed plan for integrating climate change and disaster risk reduction measures. This will include an updated resilience approach and action plan, with guidance on alternative practices for income-generating activities (IGAs), homestead food production (HFP), and high-value crops (HVC). The goal is to strengthen resilience and build the capacity of HICRA participants to adopt climate-smart production technologies focused on poultry, horticulture, and HVC.
- IV. **Training Recommendations:** A suggested list of training topics designed to build the capacity of household participants to adopt climate-smart and climate change adaptation (CCA) agricultural practices, with a focus on poultry, horticulture, and HVC. These recommendations will come as per HICRA geographical location.
- V. **Gender-Responsive** Ensure that the approaches, guidelines, and training topics are gender-responsive, addressing the unique needs and roles of both men and women in climate adaptation and agricultural production.

Note: Draft documents will be shared with the HICRA team (soft and hard copies and presentations) and based on the feedback on the draft all the above documents will be finalized.

6. Timeframe:

A Total of **16 work days** between 15 February 2025 to 15 March 2025.

1. Primary Contact Point:

Technical Lead-Livelihood and Market Development, HICRA project, and Head of Food Security and Livelihood Hellen Keller Intl.

7. Required Qualification and Experience

- The consultant should have a minimum Masters Degree in Agriculture/Social Science/ Environmental Science, etc. combining with hands-on training on Climate Change and Adaptation, Resilience Building, Vulnerability Assessment, Livelihood Assessment, DRR, etc.
- Should have at least 10-15 years of consulting experience of program strategy design focusing on areas such as climate-smart agriculture, agriculture technology promotion and innovation, livelihood resilience and nutrition-sensitive agriculture and finally, income.
- Should have working experience in gender and disaster risk reduction, gender and vulnerability.
- Should have solid experience in training module design and workshop facilitation.
- Should be able to share prior works in professional quality reports/program strategy/training modules. Identify locally relevant CSA practices.
- Provide recommendations for integrating CSA into current agricultural systems to build climate resilience among poor and very poor smallholder farmers.