

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Package: SD-305: Monitoring and Evaluation Services for SICIP

1. Introduction

Finance Division, Ministry of Finance has been implementing a skills development program titled “Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP)” since October 2023. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is financing this results-based lending (RBL) program to support the Government of Bangladesh’s Skills Development Framework for Economic Competitiveness 2023 (SDFEC), reflected in the growth aspiration of the country. The program aims to (i) increase the technology-oriented skilled workforce across emerging and priority sectors, (ii) promote inclusive skilling and upskilling opportunities for women and socially disadvantaged groups, (iii) incentivize industry–university partnerships to nurture innovation capacity and improve industry competitiveness, and (iv) foster skills for climate-resilient manufacturing processes and green technologies.

Bangladesh’s aspiration to reach a high-income status by the next fifteen to twenty years is highly dependent on its capability to leverage technological advances, adapt to an evolving global economic landscape, and foster industry competitiveness and diversification. This aspiration demands deeper and wider measures to improve the country’s human capital, especially the skill levels of the existing and future workforce, by addressing skills challenges across industries and across disadvantaged sections of the population. To this end, the MoF has prepared the Skills Development Framework for Economic Competitiveness (SDFEC) 2023.

The SDFEC consolidates various skilling efforts across several ministries, which are ongoing or planned, into a single framework to prioritize their alignment with the strategic roadmap for economic competitiveness and inclusive growth. The government framework entails four pillars mentioned above and emphasizes developing technology-oriented skills, information and communication technology (ICT)-based technical skills, and research and development (R&D)-based innovations, given that technology advances are transforming the nature of jobs and human resource needs across industries. The RBL program supports the government framework by financing its selective interventions in building a technology-oriented workforce across skill levels (i.e., advanced technical skills, managerial capabilities, entry to mid-level skills) for priority and emerging industries, which would foster economic diversification and improve competitiveness.

The RBL program supports sector-focused skills initiatives in the public and private sectors by harnessing training partnerships with industries. In addition to the nine priority sectors covered under the previous Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP) which was implemented from 2014 to 2024, the RBL program will incorporate skills for emerging sectors such as automotive, electronics, and pharmaceuticals. The program also promotes socially inclusive training and employment opportunities for women and socially disadvantaged groups (e.g., people with disabilities, third-gender people, people in small ethnic communities). The interventions focus on incentivizing private industries and universities to collaborate for industry-required human resources and industry-oriented R&D activities.



2. **Outcome of SICIP:** An increased technology-oriented skilled workforce for priority and emerging industries across skill levels.
3. **Four Outputs of SICIP:** (i) (i) output 1- training for advanced technical skills in priority and emerging sectors improved, (ii) output 2 - managerial capabilities and green innovation capacity strengthened, (iii) output 3 - socially inclusive skilling and upskilling expanded, and (iv) output 4 - institutional capacity for skills monitoring and management enhanced.
4. **Monitoring Arrangement of SICIP:** Monitoring is one of the most important instruments of SICIP's program management used to ensure timely achievement of the set targets with desired quality standard fixed for each target activity or output. As the SICIP program has multi-dimensional activities and targets to be accomplished and achieved by different partners through different modalities, the development of a robust and synchronized monitoring system is of paramount importance. The SICIP Program is going to introduce a five-layer robust monitoring system with the following arrangement:
 - i) Monitoring by the SDCMU Executives, Officials and Consultants
 - ii) Monitoring by the Members of the SDCMU Fund Management Team
 - iii) Monitoring by the SDCMU Program Officers (Quality Assurance)
 - iv) Monitoring by an Independent Third-party Monitoring Firm
 - v) Monitoring by the Program Implementation Unit (PIU)'s staff.

Among all the above-mentioned monitoring arrangements, monitoring by an independent third-party monitoring firm is of critical importance because of their independence, objectivity and impartiality. This ToR outlines, in detail, the purpose and scope of the monitoring firm's assignment and deliverables.

5. **Purpose of the Assignment:** The main purpose of this assignment is to ensure training and post-training activities are implemented as per the objectives of the overall program and according to the requirements, targets and standards set by SICIP with each training partner. The activities are also expected to inform whether trainees receive gainful employment and if the trained graduates perform well post-training. This will require the firm to carry out activities related to the following: (i) undertake independent, regular and comprehensive monitoring of training and post-training activities by all training partners; and (ii) to conduct qualitative evaluations of training programs including on job-placement and post-job placement outcomes (e.g., employee performance).
6. **Duration and Location of the Services:** 36 months from the date of kick off meeting. Location of the service is all over Bangladesh with an office located in Dhaka City.
7. **Scope of Services:** This assignment will cover five broad areas. These are as follows.
 - (i) Monitoring ongoing training activities by each training provider; this should cover, at a minimum, the following checks;
 - a. validate trainee enrollment (disaggregated by gender and other social characteristics), dropout, completion and certification against records in SICIP's training management system (TMS) and other records maintained at PIUs;
 - b. validate trainers, assessors, job placement officer and other personnel information as per TMS records and as per the requirements outlined in the specific business plan for each training partner;
 - c. check for discrepancies between TMS data and real field information through physical verification/phone calls;

- d. conduct physical verification (or phone calls) to check the accuracy of information related to enrollment, trainee attendance, completion etc.;
- e. check for any duplication of trainee information (across batches or across training providers);
- f. check for fake or fraudulent enrollments;
- g. check for provision of stipends and allowances to trainees as outlined in the business plan for each training partner;
- (ii) Verification of job placement of graduates;
- (iii) Identify poor performing training providers with reasons why they are deemed to be low performing;
- (iv) Evaluation of ongoing training and post-training outcomes for each type and level of training (i.e., entry, mid-level and advanced skills training, international certification, specialized training, advanced technical and mid-level managerial training, etc.). This may be undertaken via the following types of activities:
 - a. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with current trainers and trainees to gauge satisfaction with various aspects of the training program;
 - b. FGDs with graduates (both who are placed in jobs and who are still looking for a job) to assess satisfaction with training, post-training outcomes and adequacy of job placement mechanisms. It has to be sectoral representative and socially inclusive.
 - c. FGDs with employers in each sector/partner to assess the quality of training.
- (v) Develop reports based on monitoring and evaluation activities. These include
 - a. high-quality case studies on graduates who have found employment or self-employment;
 - b. separate field monitoring reports for each training partner - the reports should be comprehensive and substantive in summarizing the findings;
 - c. short reports summarizing findings from FGDs;
 - d. quarterly & annual progress reports; and
 - e. other ad hoc monitoring report that may be requested by SDCMU.

The firm will submit the detailed monitoring visit plan for the whole contract period to the concerned DEPD, AEPD and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Specialist of the SDCMU to ensure the maximum coverage of the training centers and avoid duplication.

8. Expected Tasks

The detailed expected tasks of the firm are as follows:

- a) The monitoring firm (consultants) will have to visit all the partner training institutions by rotation or as required by the SDCMU – each training institute shall be visited at least 2 times in a year.
- b) The firm will prepare monthly and quarterly visit plans, and send them to the SDCMU for approval.
- c) The consultant team will conduct site visits to the training institutions for checking the accuracy of their reports and information entered into the Training Management system (TMS) maintained by the SDCMU. They will check accuracy of enrolment figures, attendance rate of trainees and trainers, assessment of trainees' performance by industry assessors and job placement etc. reported by the training partners;
- d) The consultant team will also observe overall environment of the training centers and identify problem areas which should be clearly reflected in their reports.

- e) They will make surprise visits to the training centers (at least 30% of the total monthly visits) to know the real position of the training activities.
- f) The firm will ensure that the training action plan of each training provider is available and implemented as agreed in the business plan signed with SDCMU;
- g) They will check that the teaching and learning materials are provided to the trainees according to budget provisions and at timely and regular intervals;
- h) They will verify on ground sample job placement of SICIP trained graduates; job placement verification should include visit to/ interview with the employer;
- i) They will check the compliance with the findings of the previous visits made by different levels of executives/officials involved in project implementation;
- j) They will examine different training related records and registers maintained by the training institutes.
- k) They will verify that TMS data entry after enrollment, certification, job placement etc. are made within set timelines.
- l) They will check for all other items outlined in para 7 (i) – scope of services.
- m) They will hold FGDs as outlined in para 7 (iv) under scope of services – at least one FGD should be carried out for each sectoral training partner(s) during the contract period;
- n) They will prepare periodic reports based on findings from FGDs (using qualitative analysis software like NVivo or similar systematic tools);
- o) They will prepare high-quality case studies of graduates who have been placed in jobs or self-employment with the following requirements:
 - I. at least one case study for each of the types of training should be conducted in a year (i.e., entry, mid-level and advanced skills training, international certification, specialized training, advanced technical and mid-level managerial training, specialized training for women and specialized training for socially disadvantaged, etc.).
 - II. case studies should be based on interviews with graduates as well as employers (assessors, trainers and other key people may also be interviewed)
 - III. case studies should identify the strengths as well as areas for improvement of the relevant training program
 - IV. case studies should be prepared in consultation with SDCMU
 - V. For the preparation of written reports, the Team Leader will develop an implementation/report preparation plan and assign specific roles and responsibilities to his/her team members for ensuring the quality of the reports.
 - VI. In the 3rd week of every month, the consultant team will prepare monitoring visit plans in consultation with the PIUs for SDCMU's approval.
 - VII. At the end of every month and quarter, the consultants will submit to the SDCMU a consolidated report on the monitoring activities and findings including summary recommendations for follow-up actions by SDCMU. Separate monitoring reports should be prepared for each training partner/industry association – a useful summary of training performance by training partner/industry association should also be included at the beginning of the report.
 - VIII. While visiting the training centers, if any urgent issues are identified, the consultants will immediately inform the SDCMU for necessary action or for seeking suggestions.

- IX. They will perform other functions related to the scope of the assignment as required by SDCMU.

9. Detailed Outputs and deliverables of the Assignment

9.1 Outputs

The SICIP training programs will be implemented in around 350+ active public, private and NGO training institutes in 64 districts. Approximately 130 courses will run at the training centers and institutes. SICIP Program has a target of providing skills training to around 2,70,000 + trainees until December 2028. In order to ensure intensive and timely monitoring of the training activities and job placement checking, the SICIP program has decided to engage an independent monitoring firm which will produce the following outputs:

- a) Monitoring of all the training centers/institutes is done sequentially by rotation (720 to 750 visits every year) unless it is otherwise advised by the SDCMU and monitoring reports are produced thereon in time. All the monitoring visits also need to be reported in real time through SICIP's monitoring App;
- b) At least **60 monitoring visits** must be made in a month (6 by each Monitoring Officer) and reports are produced and submitted with monthly consolidated report. There will, of course, be some **follow-up visits** to be made by them to know the status of compliance with their previous visit findings. The SDCMU executives and officials will also **make follow-up visits** to check the genuineness of the monitoring visits produced by the firm officials and to know the progress of compliance with the previous visit findings.
- c) At least **600 (10X60) job placement verifications** are done in a month i.e. at least 7,200 per year. 40% of the verifications must be done by physical visits to them/their employers and 60% by phone calls, and reports are produced on individual job holders;
- d) At least **12 case studies representing with sectoral and socially inclusiveness** on the current positions of the employed SICIP graduates;
- e) At least **06 FGDs** are arranged in a year and reports are produced and sent to the SDCMU within a month;

10. Team Composition, Required Qualifications of the Team Members and Their Key Tasks

Key Experts	Total person-months (national)	Key Qualification & Tasks
Team Leader	1x36	<p>The Team Leader should preferably have a master's degree in business studies/social science/science/engineering or related discipline with at least 10 years' experience in monitoring and evaluation including at least 3 assignments in team leader position. S/he should be proficient in the use of computers and should have excellent analytical and communication skills in English.</p> <p>S/he will in close consultation with the SDCMU (i) develop a plan to support the four major output areas mentioned above; ii) develop formats and guidelines for monthly independent monitoring and reporting in line with the</p>

Key Experts	Total person-months (national)	Key Qualification & Tasks
		<p>requirements with the inputs from other members of the team; (iii) organize focus group discussions and workshops to gather information and to identify mechanisms to improve monitoring and reporting mechanisms; (iv) conduct training on monitoring and reporting for their own persons engaged in these activities; (v) assist others including SDCMU for preparing of the monthly monitoring and quarterly/annual progress reports and (vi) assist the SDCMU with any other related tasks as and when required.</p>
M&E Specialist	1x36	<p>The M&E specialist should preferably have a master's degree in business studies/social science/science/engineering or related discipline with at least 10 years' experience in monitoring and evaluation. S/he should be proficient in the use of computers and should have excellent analytical and communication skills. S/he will assist the team leader in (i) analyzing data from the Training Management System for targeting and planning of monitoring site visits; (ii) collecting relevant information on the SICIP key performance indicators as well as other monitoring needs, e.g., gender, poverty, etc.; (iii) conducting independent monitoring/random site visits to the training providers to ensure the training quality as well as trainer qualifications; (iv) preparing consolidated reports on progress made against targets by training institutions engaged by the SDCMU; (v) conducting training programs for monitoring staff; (vi) ensuring quality of the monthly monitoring and quarterly/annual reports, case study reports, FGD reports etc. and (vii) assisting the SDCMU with any other related tasks as and when required.</p>
Monitoring Officers	10x36	<p>Monitoring Officers should preferably have a bachelor's or master's degree in business studies/social science/science/engineering or related discipline with at least 3 years' experience in monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance. They should be proficient in the use of computers and should have excellent analytical and communication skills. Fieldwork experience and interpersonal skills would be valuable.</p> <p>They will assist the Team Leader in collecting and analyzing relevant data and information on the training providers and training courses. Every Monitoring Officer will i) make at least field 06 visits every month and produce the visit reports by seven days; (ii) verify at least 60 job placed graduates every month of which 60% will be done by phone calls and 40 % by physical visits and produce reports in the agreed</p>

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Key Experts	Total person-months (national)	Key Qualification & Tasks
		<p>template; iii) each Monitoring Officer will conduct at least one case study every month and produce the case study report which will come to SDCMU with the monthly report; (vi) assist the consultant team to prepare monthly, quarterly/annual reports and (vii) assist the SDCMU with any other related tasks as and when required.</p>
Non Key Staff (one Data Entry Operator)	1x36	<p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Diploma or Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Information Technology, or a related field. • At least 2 years of experience in data entry or database management. • Proficiency in MS Office Suite and data management systems (e.g., TMS). • Attention to detail and accuracy in data handling. <p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the Training Management System (TMS). • Ensure timely and accurate input of enrollment, certification, and job placement records. • Maintain digital records and assist in generating monthly, quarterly, and annual reports. • Support the consultant team in data validation and formatting.
Non Key Staff (one Administrative Officer)	1x36	<p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Public Administration, or a related field. • Minimum 3 years of experience in administrative support roles, preferably in development projects. • Strong organizational and communication skills. • Familiarity with project documentation and logistics coordination. <p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate logistics for monitoring visits, workshops, and FGDs. • Maintain schedules, documentation, and communication with SDCMU and training centers. • Assist in compiling and organizing reports and deliverables. • Support on documentation as required by the team leader.

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Key Experts	Total person-months (national)	Key Qualification & Tasks
Non Key Staff (one Office Attendant)	1x36	<p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Secondary School Certificate (SSC) or equivalent. • Prior experience in office support roles preferred. • Basic understanding of office protocols and communication. <p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide general office support including document handling, photocopying, and filing. • Assist in setting up meetings, workshops, and field visit preparations. • Support the team with errands and logistical tasks. • Any other tasks provided by the Team Leader.

11. Reporting Requirements and Time Schedule for Deliverables

The following reports and deliverables are to be submitted to SDCMU by the timelines set in the following table:

i) Inception Report with overall training plan for the whole contract duration (Methodology of work including draft Monitoring, Job placement verification, Monthly, Quarterly and Annual Reporting Templates etc.)	Within 30 days from the kick off meeting
ii) Monthly Visit Plan	Within the 15 th day of the previous month
iii) Monthly Monitoring Reports including the Summary Findings of each visit, job placement verification reports and case studies	Within the 2 nd week of the next month
iv) Quarterly Report (A compilation of 03 monthly reports)	Within the 2 nd week of the next month after the reporting quarter
v) Case Studies (Quarterly)	Within the 2 nd week of the next month after each quarter
vi) Semi Annual Report (A compilation of 06 monthly reports)	Within the 2 nd week of the next month after the reporting timeline.
vii) Annual Report	Within the 2 nd week of the next month after the reporting timeline.
viii) Completion Report	Within 1 month of the completion of the contract
ix) Workshops	At every 02 months, a workshop will be arranged by the firm at SDCMU. The

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	consultant team will join the workshop and make presentation on their findings.
x) Focus Group Discussion Report	At least six report annually. The FGDs should be held close to the trainees/graduates' location. If it is held elsewhere, adequate travel allowance should be given (documented and submitted as part of financial reporting to SDCMU). Report to be sent to SDCMU within a month after the FGD.

12. Training and Orientation Requirement: The firm will ensure proper **orientation** on the program and tasks for each of its staff who will be engaged for this assignment. This is to enable them to perform the monitoring, job placement verification and other tasks appropriately through necessary training and orientations.

13. Client's Input and Counterpart Personnel: The client will provide financial support for the assignment and will invite the consultant team for regular update and participation in meetings/workshops with the key implementing/contracted agencies providing training. The client will also facilitate meetings with key stakeholders and liaison with other consultant teams as appropriate. The client will give the firm access to the TMS and other information to the extent required for the assignment. Concerned DEPD, AEPD and M&E Specialist at the SDCMU of SICIP will coordinate and facilitate this assignment on behalf of the EPD.

14. Counterpart Personnel: DEPD, Program Management-1 of the SDCMU will work as Counterpart Personnel. SDCMU will provide all the inputs and supports to the firm as mentioned in Para 7 to facilitate successful accomplishment of the assignment.

15. Shortlisting Criteria for Firm:

- **General Experience:** Minimum of 10 years of experience in providing consultancy services, with an established track record in the consulting industry.
- **Relevant Project Experience:** Demonstrated experience in monitoring and evaluation assignments of similar technical scope.
- **Experience with Development Partners:** Prior experience in assignments financed by development partners or international donor agencies will be considered an added advantage.
- **Financial Capacity:** Proven financial stability and capacity to successfully undertake and complete the assignment.
- **Human Resources:** Availability of qualified, full-time professional staff with relevant expertise on the firm's payroll (CVs not required at the EOI stage).

16. Payment Modality: Payment shall be made on a monthly basis, subject to fulfillment of the conditions outlined below.

- **Reports Submission and Acceptance:** Timely submission of the monthly report and any other reports as required under the Contract, subject to review and formal acceptance by SDCMU.

- Invoice and Supporting Documentation: Submission of an invoice detailing the time inputs for the reporting period, accompanied by original vouchers/receipts for reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses, and supporting documentation for any expenses claimed under the provisional sum, as per the terms of the Contract.

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