

Terms of Reference (ToR)

For

Media Engagement, Policy Advocacy and Budget Dialogue on Civil Society Priorities

Under

SUSHIL: Supporting the Unity and Sustainability of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to Uphold Human Rights, National Integrity and Rule of Law in Bangladesh

Title of Assignment

Assessment and Policy Recommendations on Civil Society Priorities for Integration into the National Budget 2026

01. Background

ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB), an affiliate member of the ActionAid Federation, has been working in Bangladesh for more than four decades to advance human rights, social justice, democratic governance, and the empowerment of marginalized communities. Through its Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA), ActionAid Bangladesh supports citizens, particularly women, youth, and excluded groups, to claim their rights and actively engage in governance processes.

Under the SUSHIL: Supporting the Unity and Sustainability of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to Uphold Human Rights, National Integrity and Rule of Law in Bangladesh Project (2023–2026), ActionAid Bangladesh works with 123 grassroots CSOs across nine districts: Dhaka, Satkhira, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Bagerhat, Chattogram, Bandarban, Naogaon, and Kushtia.

In 2025, ActionAid Bangladesh facilitated a series of district and national dialogues with political parties, policymakers, media representatives, and civil society actors to articulate citizens' expectations for an inclusive, fair, and credible 13th National Parliamentary Election. Through these engagements, political leaders expressed commitments to democratic governance, women's participation, and responsive policymaking.

Following the election and the formation of a new government, the focus has shifted toward ensuring that commitments made through election manifestos are translated into tangible public policies and budgetary allocations. As the national budget is the primary mechanism through which government priorities are implemented, there is a critical need to advocate for the inclusion of district-level civil society priorities in the national budget process. The budget has already been proposed and is currently effective from July 2026. Therefore, the project supporting CSOs will continue to follow up on the implementation of the manifesto commitments, assess whether implementation is on track, and identify key priorities that have not yet been reflected in the current budget. The project will also analyze these unmet needs and

propose recommendations and pathways for incorporating them into the budget revision process scheduled for November.

To support this objective, ActionAid Bangladesh intends to engage an experienced consultant to generate evidence, support in facilitating district-level consultations, conduct media briefings, and convene a national policy dialogue. These efforts will review the extent to which manifesto commitments and citizens' priorities are reflected in the current budget, identify unmet needs and gaps, and develop recommendations to inform and influence the upcoming national budget revision process.

02. Objective

Overall Objective

To reflect on the existing budget and facilitate evidence-based policy advocacy that promotes the integration of district-based civil society priorities into the National Budget revision.

Specific Objectives

- **Assess** the extent to which citizens' priorities and manifesto commitments are reflected in the current national budget, identifying key gaps, unmet needs, and emerging issues at the district level.
- **Generate** evidence-based analysis and practical recommendations for budget revisions to better address the priorities of citizens, civil society organizations (CSOs), women, youth, and marginalized communities that remain inadequately reflected in the budget.
- **Facilitate** inclusive dialogue and engagement among CSOs, policymakers, Members of Parliament, local government representatives, political leaders, media, and other stakeholders to review budget implementation, discuss required revisions, and advocate for the integration of citizen and district-level priorities into the national budget process.

03. Geographic Coverage

Project Districts: Kurigram, Gaibandha, Naogaon, Kushtia, Shatkira, Bagerhat, Chattogram, Bandarban, and Dhaka.

04. Methodology

The consultant will adopt a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. The study will include a desk review of election manifestos, national budgets, MTBFs, ADPs, Five-Year Plans, and relevant policies, alongside secondary analysis of budget allocations and budget gap assessments. Primary data will be collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), district-level consultations, and

stakeholder mapping exercises. Findings will be synthesized through thematic analysis and triangulation of multiple data sources. A purposive sampling strategy will be applied to ensure representation of government, local government, CSOs, women and youth groups, media, academia, and other relevant stakeholders. The detailed sampling framework and sample size will be proposed in the Inception Report and approved by ActionAid Bangladesh.

05. Scope of Work for

The consultant will lead the assessment, analysis, and knowledge generation components of the assignment, working closely with the selected media partner to ensure alignment between research outputs, advocacy messages, consultation processes, and public dissemination activities. The consultant will assess the extent to which citizens' priorities and manifesto commitments are reflected in the current national budget, identify key gaps, unmet needs, and emerging district-level issues, and develop evidence-based findings, policy recommendations, reports, and advocacy briefs.

Throughout the assignment, the consultant will maintain regular coordination with a media partner to ensure that all research findings, key messages, policy briefs, and recommendations are accurately reflected in district and national consultation processes, media products, and advocacy materials. The consultant will provide technical input and presentations for the nine district-level consultations and the national policy consultation, where findings and recommendations will be shared and validated through stakeholder dialogue.

The consultant will also support the interpretation of consultation outcomes, integrate stakeholder feedback into final outputs, and contribute to policy discussions during consultation events. Working collaboratively with the media partner, the consultant will ensure that evidence generated through the assessment effectively informs advocacy efforts aimed at influencing national budget revision processes and advancing the priorities of citizens, civil society organizations, women, youth, and marginalized communities.

Key Responsibilities

A. Assessment, Analysis and Evidence Generation

The consultant shall:

- Develop and implement a robust assessment methodology to examine the extent to which citizens' priorities and manifesto commitments are reflected in the current national budget.
- Review relevant government policies, election manifestos, planning documents, budget allocations, and development priorities.



- Conduct consultations and stakeholder engagement with CSOs, women-led organizations, youth groups, marginalized communities, and other relevant actors across the nine project districts ensuring field level engagement.
- Identify district-specific priorities, emerging issues, unmet needs, and gaps in budget allocation and implementation.
- Analyze budgetary trends, resource allocation patterns, and financing gaps related to citizens' and CSOs' priorities.
- Generate evidence-based findings, policy analysis, and practical recommendations for budget revisions and improved resource allocation.
- Prepare assessment reports, policy briefs, presentations, and other knowledge products to support advocacy and policy engagement processes.

B. Coordination and Technical Support for District-Level Consultations

The consultant shall:

- Work closely with the selected media partner to ensure alignment between research findings, consultation agendas, advocacy messages, communication materials, and dissemination products.
- Prepare district-specific findings, briefing notes, presentations, and technical inputs for the nine district-level consultation and media briefing events.
- Provide technical guidance to the media partner in the presentation and interpretation of assessment findings and recommendations.
- Participate in district consultations and contribute to discussions on budget priorities, gaps, and proposed revisions through field level engagement.
- Support facilitation of technical sessions and stakeholder dialogues where required.
- Review and validate consultation outcomes and ensure stakeholder feedback is captured and integrated into subsequent analysis and recommendations.
- Collaborate with the media partner to ensure accurate representation of findings in media outputs, public communications, and advocacy materials.

C. Technical Support for National Policy Consultation and Advocacy

The consultant shall:

- Consolidate district-level findings, recommendations, and stakeholder inputs into a comprehensive national analysis.
- Prepare a national policy brief and advocacy recommendations highlighting key priorities for budget revision.
- Work in coordination with the media partner to ensure that evidence, key messages, and policy recommendations are effectively communicated during the national consultation and related media dissemination activities.

- Present and discuss consolidated findings and recommendations during the national-level policy consultation.
- Facilitate policy dialogue and engagement among policymakers, Members of Parliament, government representatives, CSOs, development partners, media, and other stakeholders.
- Incorporate consultation outcomes into final reports and policy recommendations.
- Support advocacy efforts aimed at influencing the national budget revision process and promoting the integration of district-level, and marginalized community priorities into budget and policy decisions.

06. Consultant Deliverables

Deliverable Category	Deliverables
1. Inception Report	• Detailed methodology and • Workplan, timeline, and stakeholder engagement plan • Data collection tools and analytical approach • Coordination and collaboration plan with the media partner for consultations, advocacy, and dissemination activities
2. District Assessment Briefs and Consultation Inputs	• 9 district-specific assessment briefs highlighting: – Citizens' and CSO priorities – Manifesto and budget alignment analysis – Key gaps, unmet needs, and emerging issues – Budget implications and resource requirements – Evidence-based recommendations for budget revisions • District consultation presentations, briefing notes, and technical materials for use during consultation and media briefing sessions
3. Consolidated National Assessment Report	• Comprehensive assessment report including: – Methodology and analytical framework – Findings on the alignment of citizens' priorities and manifesto commitments with the current budget – Comparative analysis across the 9 districts – Budget gap and resource allocation analysis – National and district-level priorities – Recommendations for budget revisions and policy actions

Deliverable Category	Deliverables
	– Gender-responsive, inclusive, and equity-focused budgeting recommendations
4. National Policy and Advocacy Brief	• Concise policy brief for policymakers, Members of Parliament, government ministries, local government representatives, CSOs, development partners, and media containing: – Key assessment findings – Priority citizen and CSO demands – Major budget gaps and unmet needs – Recommended budget revisions and policy actions – Advocacy messages to support national budget engagement
5. Technical Support to Consultations	• Technical guidance and inputs provided to the media partner for 9 district consultations and 1 national policy consultation • Presentations and participation in consultation sessions • Documentation of technical feedback received from stakeholders • Validation and refinement of findings and recommendations based on consultation outcomes
6. Final Consultancy Report and Knowledge Package	• Final revised assessment report incorporating feedback from district and national consultations • Refined policy and budget recommendations for integration into the national budget revision process • Summary of stakeholder feedback, observations, and commitments emerging from consultations • Final presentations, policy briefs, and supporting analytical materials • Annexes, datasets, consultation summaries, and other supporting documentation

07. Qualifications

The consultant should have:

- Advanced degrees in Economics, Public Policy, Development Studies, Political Science, Governance, or related fields.



- Minimum 8 years of demonstrative experience in requiring demonstrated expertise in public finance, budget analysis, policy advocacy and gender-responsive budgeting.
- Proven experience in conducting policy research and stakeholder consultations.
- Strong understanding of Bangladesh's national budget process and governance systems.
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills.
- Proven experience in undertaking multi-district fieldwork within tight timelines, with strong skills in planning, coordination, and stakeholder consultation.

08. Timeframe

Assessment, Analysis and Evidence Generation: August 2026

Coordination and Technical Support for District and National Level Consultations: September-October 2026

09. Budget

Component	Amount (BDT)
Consultant Deliverables	700,000
Total Budget Including vat and Tax	700,000

10. Management and Reporting

Both the media partner and consultant will report directly to the **Project Manager, SUSHIL Project, ActionAid Bangladesh** and will work in close coordination with the project team throughout the assignment. The consultant must Maintain confidentiality, obtain informed consent, protect identities, comply with ActionAid safeguarding and ethical communication standards.

ActionAid Bangladesh will provide strategic guidance, relevant project documents, stakeholder coordination support and timely feedback on deliverables

11. Expression of Interest (EOI)

Interested media organizations and consultants are requested to submit:

Technical Proposal

- Understanding of the assignment
- Proposed methodology
- Workplan and timeline



- Team composition and roles

Financial Proposal

- Detailed budget breakdown

Supporting Documents

- Organizational/consultant profile
- CVs of key personnel
- Samples of similar assignments completed
- Trade license, TIN, VAT registration (for organizations)

Applications should be submitted to the designated ActionAid Bangladesh email address by the deadline specified in the EOI announcement.

Deadline for Proposal Submission: 20 August 2026

- Please click below the link to submit your proposals

Link: <https://consultancy.actionaidbd.org/>

Disclaimer: ActionAid Bangladesh reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications without assigning any reason thereof