



## MICROCREDIT REGULATORY AUTHORITY (MRA)

MRA Bhaban, Plot # F-14(D/1), Agargaon,  
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI)			
1	<b>Ministry/Division</b>	Financial Institution Division, Ministry of Finance.	
2	<b>Agency</b>	Not Applicable	
3	<b>Procuring Entity Name</b>	Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA)	
4	<b>Title of Service</b>	"LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT ON GENDER-INCLUSIVE MICROFINANCE PRODUCTS IN BANGLADESH".	
5	<b>Procuring Entity District</b>	Dhaka	
6	<b>EOI for Selection of</b>	Research institution/ consulting firm (national) for conducting the study.	
7	<b>EOI Ref. No</b>	53.04.0000.000.002.07.0011.26.136	
8	<b>Date</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> of January 2026	
KEY INFORMATION			
9	<b>Procurement Sub-Method</b>	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)	
FUNDING INFORMATION			
10	<b>Budget and Source of Funds</b>	Project Grant by Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI)	
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
11	<b>EOI Closing Date and Time</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> of February 2026	
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT			
12	<b>Brief Description of Assignment</b>	Please go through Appendix-A	
13	<b>Company details Information for Eligibility</b>	Please go through Appendix-B	
14	<b>Experience, Resources &amp; Delivery Capacity Required</b>	Please go through Appendix-B	
15	<b>Documentation</b>	Please go through Appendix-C	
16	<b>Association with foreign firms and Joint Venture is</b>	Not Encouraged.	
<b>Note:</b> A short list of the qualified Solution providers will be made on the basis of verification of submitted information.			
EOI DETAIL INFORMATION			
Ref No	Phasing of Services	Location	Completion days (approx.)
i)	Signing of Contract	MRA Office, Dhaka	1st day
ii)	Inception Report (Including workplan and methodology)	MRA Office, Dhaka	Within 1st month
iii)	Submission of preliminary findings from secondary data; Stakeholder engagement seminar	Venue Will be informed	Within 3rd months
iv)	Draft Report, gender-disaggregated analytical findings, Executive Summary (policy paper), gender-specific regulatory and product-level policy brief; Dissemination workshop;	Venue Will be informed	Within the 5th month from signing the contract.
v)	Final Report with sex-disaggregated datasets, revised policy documents, and clear, actionable gender-responsive regulatory recommendations.	MRA Office, Dhaka	Within the 6th month from signing the contract.
vi)	Total days of Completion		179 Days



PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
17	<b>Name of Official Inviting EOI</b>	Professor Dr. Mohammed Helal Uddin
18	<b>Designation of Official Inviting EOI</b>	Executive Vice Chairman Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA)
19	<b>Address of Official Inviting EOI</b>	Microcredit Regulatory Authority MRA Bhaban, Plot # F-14(D/1), Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207 Website: www.mra.gov.bd, Hot Line: 16133
20	<b>Contact details of Official Inviting EOI</b>	Tel-No: 88-02-8333245, 8332517, 8332986, 8333196, 8333340 Email: info@mra.gov.bd

*The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all Expression of Interest (EOI)*

Duly Approved by  
Professor Dr. Mohammed Helal Uddin  
Executive Vice Chairman  
Microcredit Regulatory Authority



## Appendix-A

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENT

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is recognized as a global pioneer in microfinance, currently serving more than 40 million clients, over 90 percent of whom are women. Over the past decades, the microfinance sector has made a substantial contribution to poverty reduction, rural development, and financial inclusion by expanding credits, savings, insurance, and other financial services for low-income households.

Despite this outreach, significant gender disparities persist in how women benefit from microfinance services. While women are the primary borrowers, they often do not experience proportional gains in economic empowerment, asset ownership, or financial decision-making. This paradox highlights the need for a deeper examination of whether current microfinance products and delivery systems are genuinely gender-inclusive and gender-responsive.

Against this backdrop, the Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA) plans to undertake a comprehensive Landscape Assessment on Gender-Inclusive Microfinance Products in Bangladesh, to evaluate whether current microfinance products and practices effectively address the distinct needs of women and gender-diverse groups.

#### 2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Although microfinance institutions (MFIs) in Bangladesh predominantly serve women, many existing financial products in Bangladesh are designed using a gender-neutral approach. Such approaches often fail to consider the social, cultural, economic, and mobility-related barriers that women face in accessing and using financial services effectively.

In addition, women, particularly those in rural areas, in informal employment, marginalized ethnic groups, and forcibly displaced communities, often have lower levels of financial literacy, digital access, and mobility. These constraints reduce their ability to effectively use financial services, manage debt, build savings, or scale entrepreneurial activities.

Key structural constraints include:

- Rigid, weekly repayment schedules that are incompatible with irregular or seasonal income flows.
- Low access to tailored services for women entrepreneurs.
- Restricted mobility and limited decision-making power.
- Limited focus on marginalized groups, including ethnic minorities and forcibly displaced persons.
- Insufficient complementary services such as financial literacy, business development, or social protection linkages.

MRA's existing policies, such as MRA Circular No. 06 on women's empowerment have addressed some of these issues. However, these initiatives need to be supported by systematic, evidence-based assessments to determine their effectiveness and identify remaining gaps.

Therefore, a nationwide study is required to map the current gender inclusiveness of microfinance products and delivery mechanisms and to generate recommendations for policy and regulatory reform.

#### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

MRA seeks to engage a competent research institution/consulting firm to conduct the study titled: "Landscape Assessment on Gender-Inclusive Microfinance Products in Bangladesh."

The specific objectives are:

- (i) To assess the extent to which existing microfinance products and services meet the financial needs of women and gender-diverse populations.
- (ii) To identify socio-cultural, economic, institutional, and regulatory barriers limiting women's effective use of microfinance services.



- (iii) To review existing MRA and government policies related to gender, microfinance, and client protection, and assess their efficacy.
- (iv) To map best practices, national and international, on gender-responsive microfinance.
- (v) To propose policy, regulatory, and product-level recommendations to strengthen gender-inclusive microfinance in Bangladesh.

#### 4. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The selected institution/firm shall work in close collaboration with MRA and carry out all required activities to ensure the timely completion of the study.

**Population:** Microfinance service providers (MRA-licensed MFIs, PKSf partners, banks/NBFIs offering microfinance, and relevant agencies ex: BRDB, PDBF, Department of Social Services etc.)

**Duration:** 6 months

**Study Location:** Nationwide (urban and rural regions, including climate-vulnerable and marginalized areas).

#### 5. TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The research institution/consulting firm shall undertake, but not be limited to, the following tasks:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of existing gender-related issues, microfinance policies, and global practices.
2. Compile and analyze secondary data from MRA, PKSf, MFIs, and relevant organizations.
3. Identify product-level features (loan, savings, microinsurance) that hinder or support gender inclusivity.
4. Identify gender related or women-centric products in microfinance.
5. Define statistical population and adopt a gender-responsive and stratified sampling approach, ensuring sex-disaggregated data as a minimum standard and guaranteed representation of marginalized sub-groups, including but not limited to rural women, ethnic minorities, forcibly displaced persons, climate-vulnerable communities, and women in informal employment.
6. Conduct field surveys, FGDs, KIIs, and case studies using explicit gender analysis frameworks (including access, usage, control, and outcomes), and digitize and analyses collected data accordingly.
7. Identify key trends, gaps, and barriers—including socio-cultural, regulatory, and institutional constraints.
8. Prepare a draft report with an executive summary.
9. Provide actionable policy brief, regulatory, and product-level recommendations to strengthen gender-responsive microfinance.
10. Suggest MRA to amend or formulate new guidelines where necessary.



## 6. TEAM COMPOSITION

6.1 The institution should propose a team including, but not limited to:

S/N	Designation	Number of personnel	Remark	Status
01	Principal Researcher (Team Leader)	1	Researcher	Compulsory
02	Co-Researcher-1	1	Gender Specialist	Compulsory
03	Co-Researcher-2	1	Researcher	Compulsory
04	Research Associates	2	Researcher	Compulsory
05	Other Supporting Personnel	Proposed by the consultant	Supporting Personnel	Proposed by the consultant



## Appendix-B

### COMPANY DETAILS INFORMATION FOR ELIGIBILITY & EXPERIENCE, RESOURCES & DELIVERY CAPACITY REQUIRED

#### 7. QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCES OF THE CONSULTING FIRM

The applicant research institution/consulting firm must be locally enlisted as per domestic norms. It should also have a sound track record and institutional recognition to undertake comprehensive technical assistance to carry out the proposed comprehensive study. Besides, the interested firm and the principal researcher should preferably have the following qualifications:

##### 7.1 Minimum Legal Qualification Criteria:

The consulting firm must have the following documents:

- (i) Preferably a Not-for-Profit organization in the field of research and education.
- (ii) Certificates of TIN / BIN.
- (iii) Submission report/Acknowledgement report of VAT for the last 3 years
- (iv) Certificate of Incorporation issued by the RJSC or other related authorities of the government of Bangladesh.
- (v) Full report on regular financial and compliance audits for the last 5 years.
- (vi) Submission report/Acknowledgement report of tax returns for a minimum of the last 3 years.

N.B. The subclauses number (iv), (v), (vi) of clause 8.1 will be relaxed for the Public University or state-owned/Autonomous/Statutory Bodies of Bangladesh.

##### 7.2. Minimum Experience Criteria

The consulting firm must have the following:

- I. At least 10 years of institutional experience conducting large-scale research in relevant fields.
- II. Have demonstrated experience in producing high-quality research papers, policy briefs, and policy analyses.
- III. Have proven experience advising national financial regulators or development agencies.
- IV. Possess expertise in gender studies, microfinance, financial inclusion, economics, and related areas.
- V. Demonstrate ability to work collaboratively with government agencies, international development partners, MFIs, and diverse stakeholders.
- VI. Have demonstrated experience in conducting gender-focused or gender-responsive research and producing gender-disaggregated analysis and policy recommendations.

##### 7.3 Minimum Technical and Supporting Criteria:

The consulting firm must have the following:

- I. Adequate Manpower to conduct comprehensive research.
- II. Adequate officer space
- III. Adequate technological backup
- IV. Adequate accommodation and transportation.
- V. Adequate logistics support.



## Appendix C

### DOCUMENTATION

EOI Responses are highly request to submit data and documentary evidences according to the order mentioned bellow:

SL	Name of the Chapter	Guideline
01	Profile of the organization	1.1. Berief documentary representation of the organization or consulting firm.
		1.2. Berief documentary representation of technical capacity according to the 7.3 clause of Appendix B
02	Manpower and brief introduction.	2.1. Berief documentary representation of Manpower including short Curriculum Vitae.
03	Comment on Appendix A	3.1. Consultant's proper/elaborated comment on Appendix A: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENT.
04.	Legal qualification	4.1. Proper documentary evidence of consultant's minimum legal qualification criteria according to 7.1 clause of Appendix B.
05	General and specific experience	5.1. Consultants are highly encouraged to submit documentary evidence of general and specific experience according to 7.2 clause of Appendix B.
		5.2. Consultants are guided to submit completion certificates for completed projects and authorized copy of agreement for ongoing projects.

