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i-eval Discovery

Mid-term Independent Evaluation of Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS)

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[1] Note The Evaluation Manager (Ahmad Sina Sabawoon) has no connection to the project and is appointed by EVAL from the ILO staff. Evaluation managers are responsible for managing the evaluation process independently of the programme or project being evaluated.

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Acronyms List

BAPA	Bangladesh Agro-Processors Association
BBDN	Bangladesh Business and Disability Network
BEF	Bangladesh Employers Federation
BLIMS	Beneficiary Learning Information Management System
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BTB	Bangladesh Tourism Board
BTEB	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
CAD	Canadian Dollar
CBLM	Competence Based Learning Material
CHD	Chittagong Hill District
CWCCI	Chittagong Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry
DAC	Development Assistant Committee
DFTATD	Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development
DTE	Directorate of Technical Education
EM	Ethnic Minority
ET	Evaluation Team
EQ	Evaluation Question
FBCCI	Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GEEW	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GET Ahead	Gender and Entrepreneurship Together
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GTMS	Graduate Tracking and Management System
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HDC	Hill District Council
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPDS	Indigenous Peoples Development Services
KII	Key Informant Interview

KS	Key Stakeholder
NSDP	National Skills Development Policy
MIS	Monitoring Information System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOWCA	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
NASCIB	National Association of Small & Cottage Industries of Bangladesh
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSDA	National Skills Development Authority
NSPD	National Skills Development Policy
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPD	Organizations of Persons with Disability
PIC	Project Implementation Committee
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
ProGRESS	Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QA	Quality Assurance
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
TAPP	Technical Assistance Project Proposal
TKHMI	Tony Khan Hotel Management Institute
TL	Team Leader
TMED	Technical and Madrasah Education Division
TOC	Theory of Change
TTC	Technical Training Center
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs
UN	United Nations

Executive Summary

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

This draft mid-term Independent Evaluation, commissioned by the ILO and conducted by Artival Research & Evaluation, assesses the **ProGRESS project** ("Promoting Gender-Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems") implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The evaluation is forward-looking, focusing on how the project promotes **gender equality and women's economic empowerment (GEEW)** and how it can be strengthened.

Context: Bangladesh has seen rapid economic growth, driven by the ready-made garment (RMG) sector and remittances. Still, it faces challenges of informality (85% of workers), weak labor rights enforcement, youth unemployment, and gender inequality in employment. Women's labor force participation has grown—mainly in RMG—yet remains lower than men's, with work concentrated in low-wage, insecure sectors. Cultural norms, mobility restrictions, and care responsibilities continue to constrain women, despite their key role in reducing poverty and shifting gender roles.

Project Description:

- **Duration & Budget:** 5 years (Oct 2022–Oct 2027), CAD 20 million.
- **Purpose:** Strengthen access to skills training and employment for women and disadvantaged groups by supporting Bangladesh's TVET system, building on over a decade of ILO engagement.
- **Approach:** Gender equality and women's empowerment as central drivers of policy reform, enterprise development, and skills provision.
- **Intermediate Outcomes:**
    1. Support national policy adoption/implementation promoting gender equality in TVET, digital access, enterprise development, and green jobs.
    2. Expand women's wage and self-employment opportunities, particularly in green growth sectors.
    3. Increase inclusive, sustainable, and accessible skills training for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and disadvantaged groups.
- **Lead & Partners:** Led by ILO and Bangladesh's Technical and Madrasah Education Division, with multiple government agencies (e.g., NSDA, DTE, Department of Women Affairs, SME Foundation, BMET) and private sector actors.
- **Target Areas:** Women and vulnerable populations in selected districts (Chattogram, Sylhet, Hill Tracts, Mymensingh, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, and coastal Khulna/Barishal).

Present situation of the project

The project is nearing the four-year mark (in October 2025). Implementation was significantly affected by the changing situation in Bangladesh, especially during 2024, and is expected to be further impacted by the political processes linked to the upcoming national elections in 2026.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation.

The evaluation serves two main **purposes**: accountability (assessing project performance for donors and ILO constituents) and learning (informing adjustments to strategies and interventions). Its objectives are to provide credible information for decision-making, promote learning, and improve effectiveness by assessing the project's design, implementation, and results against OECD DAC criteria**.**

Clients of the evaluation include primary users, mainly the ILO Country Office in Bangladesh and its partners, the Governments of Canada and Bangladesh (particularly TMED and partner ministries), ILO constituents in Bangladesh, ILO Decent Work Team in Delhi, the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and ILO's technical units in HQ; and secondary users, mainly beneficiaries, academia, researchers, and other implementing partners. In terms of **scope**, the evaluation covers the period between October 2022 and August 2025 and all ten districts**.**

Methodology of evaluation.

The mid-term evaluation, guided by ILO and OECD-DAC standards, assessed the ProGRESS project with a dual focus on accountability and learning. Using a theory-based, gender-responsive approach, it combined desk reviews, monitoring data, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and field visits across 13 districts[2]. Additional interviews were added to strengthen the validation process further and helped confirm the reliability of the findings. Stakeholder participation, triangulation, and a validation workshop ensured the credibility and utility of findings. While progress and lessons were identified, challenges such as the project's broad scope, gaps in monitoring data, and limited access to key stakeholders, such as the NSDA, constrained the depth of analysis and our ability to assess external coherence. Despite these limitations, the evaluation provides evidence-based recommendations to strengthen project strategies and enhance adaptability to emerging opportunities.

Main findings & conclusions

In terms of **relevance and strategic fit**, the project design proposes effective strategies to address existing needs. The main innovative element in the project design is the focus on inclusion of vulnerable population, specifically on gender. Alignment with donor, ILO and national priorities is confirmed through revisions at designated strategic points. The midterm evaluation is one of these key strategic points for revision.

The initial design suffered significant geographic expansion from three to ten districts, in reality reaching further as some of the projects expand beyond the geographic areas identified in the TAPP (as reflected in the fact that this evaluation included visits to thirteen districts). Without additional resources, this expansion has led to dilution of resources, especially in regard to the Chittagong area, as a key area selected, in addition to other considerations, due to its potential for coherence with other existing projects, but also leaving fewer resources available to focus on the innovative element of inclusion.

A strength of the project is that it has the participation of a broad mix of private, government, civil society and social partners to reach the different target groups. Going forward, this provides ILO with the opportunity to understand how effective/efficient different types of partners can be in different scenarios for different population groups. Still, monitoring systems do not incorporate indicators to measure this (aka the effectiveness of each type of partner and for which type of beneficiary). Similarly, the project does not currently measure how different sectors and regions compare in terms of job quality or sustainability; however, tools are being launched at this stage (e.g., GTMS and a tracer survey) that should help address this gap.

As described in detail in the report, several aspects of the projects are specifically focused on enhancing overall **coherence.** In terms of internal coherence, the project is aligned with the office's overall approach and ILO's global goals. Some synergies have been identified; however, the project continues to operate mostly in silos and would benefit from a more systematic approach to ensure coordination with other ongoing ILO projects and between project components. Similarly, while there are efforts to strengthen external coherence, and some innovative alliances have been created, including the Interministerial Taskforce for Gender Integration and brining UN Women into the sector, there is significant room and benefit to be obtained, especially towards strengthening sustainability, from increasing efforts to bring project partners together especially at the field level and by brining national partners into the district level.

In terms of **effectiveness,** the project shows progress in all three key areas of focus: increased capacity to promote gender policy, expanded wage and self-employment opportunities, and improved access to training. There are, however, some limitations on how progress is measured that limit managers' (and the evaluators') ability to assess the progress of each area independently. In terms of strengthening capacity to advance gender policy, it has focused on capacity building and awareness raising, promoting exchange and dialogue, and providing technical guidance, knowledge products, and tools. The interministerial skills task force has the potential to bring continuity to these efforts.

The project has improved the availability of training and targeted some accessibility issues, reaching 3,280 beneficiaries of whom 62% are female, and secured employment for roughly 67%of whom 28% were self-

[2] as some activities bleed outside the identified 10 districts

employed, with an additional 879 apprenticeships reported, the majority (98%) in the formal sector, and 61% being female, indicating a clear focus on promoting gender equality. A key ILO's comparative advantage is its ability to link skills training directly to employers. It should be noted that 28% of the beneficiaries who secured work did so in a sector outside the four identified as showing promise by the project. Analysis of the monitoring data highlights the importance of securing a dedicated position for job placement as a key factor in increasing the employment success rate. While women's enrollment is high, employment rates continue to lag. There is important progress towards the inclusion of ethnic communities (9.3%), with some innovative community-based approaches identified as having great potential for reaching ethnic communities and specifically women.

Key challenges identified include Limited knowledge of services available, especially for entrepreneurship and challenges accessing training centers, especially by those most vulnerable. Inclusion of persons with disabilities remains very weak (2%). A key challenge observed was some partners' inability or unwillingness to include persons with disabilities. There was also limited progress reported in the green sector.There is a need to improve identification and selection of beneficiaries and to identify mechanism to address their specific barriers.

In terms of **efficiency**, the project was delayed by the political changes in 2024, and further delays can be expected as part of the normal election process in 2026. Due to the expansion into new geographic areas described above, it is necessary for the project to reassess whether its targets and objectives are still feasible, and to strengthen management to ensure the project benefits from all potential synergies between its components. This revision should also consider the most effective way to ensure partners on the ground can make informed decisions and assess if targets with longer-term partners also need to be adjusted to focus on the most successful experiences and identify effective management mechanisms if the ones set out in the PRODOC are not realistic.

Important and innovative tools have been developed for the project's oversight, including BLIMS; however, project goals and monitoring systems are still not fully aligned to inform management decision-making effectively.

The project has demonstrated a positive direct **impact** on the lives of beneficiaries, including capacity building, for both partners, government counterparts and beneficiaries; through the creation of strategic alliances and facilitation of new partnerships/structures, as well as secured direct employment for some of its beneficiaries. Direct capacity building, coupled with strengthening partners and systems, promotes a more gender aware system. By working at national and district levels to addressing structural barriers, the project has furthered its aim to achieve systemic change and sustained behavioral change in partners; these long-term goals will require ongoing investment. Ultimately, these changes aim to create new partnerships and strengthen accountability, including introducing innovative tools such as the already mentioned Graduate Tracking and Management System, intended to be led by the government going forward.

The project interventions build on over a decade of support to Bangladesh's TVET system. They align with the ILO's overall global goals and national priorities, helping secure **sustainability**. The overall exit strategy builds on the identification and capacity building of strategic partners to ensure the inclusion and gender lens going forward within their own programming/financing; the introduction of changes to the system that incorporate an inclusive, green and gender lens to the system, and the provision of tools and evidence that will inform decision making and support advocacy. Strengthening the exit strategy should be a key focus of the second half of the project.

A key **good practice** identified is the development of BLIMS as a comprehensive and tailored system that provides real-time disaggregated data, by location, sex and sectors for the different project components and supports management in evidenced-based decision making. A key limitation is its lack of qualitative information. Another good practice identified is the identification of community-based tourism initiatives with the Tourism Board to empower communities, support traditions and increase income. Key **lessons learned** identified include the need for a designated person specifically assigned to link training and job placement to ensure Higher employment rates, and the need to assess the adequacy of facilities for training aimed at persons with disabilities. The report identifies other lessons learned and good practices that do not meet the criteria

to be considered as such, but have been included nevertheless for consideration and further investigation by the project team.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were identified and are described in detail in the body of the report.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen project impact by revisiting geographic and thematic scope through strategic prioritization, paying particular attention to identifying and promoting innovative solutions that build on ILO's comparative advantages and demonstrably work for women and other vulnerable populations.

Recommendation 2: The project should consider adopting a more strategically focused approach to sectoral engagement, building on evidence and lessons learned, to ensure greater alignment with labor market demand and national development priorities.

Recommendation 3: The project should shift focus from aiming to reach the target number of beneficiaries towards identification of innovative "proof of concept" models for replication and scale-up.

Recommendation 4: Ensure that success stories, lessons learned, and findings from knowledge products collected during the first half of the project feed into and inform the three project components going forward.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen project coherence. The evaluation underscores the urgent need for a centralized communication, knowledge and management system, supported by structured technical exchange platforms

Recommendation 6: Strengthen the results framework by ensuring greater conceptual clarity on how the projects' interventions generate transformative and measurable change (the theory of change) and support this with the identification and regular collection of indicators that measure key outputs/outcomes of each of these steps.

Recommendation 7: Strengthen beneficiary targeting to bolster access to employment results. This will require identifying and addressing specific barriers for each subgroup, including looking at cultural norms, financial constraints and access amongst other barriers.

1. Context and Project Description

This document presents the mid-term Independent Evaluation of the project Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) Systems (ProGRESS) from now on the project. This is an independent evaluation commissioned by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and implemented by Artival Research & Evaluation, an external consulting firm. It is a forward-looking exercise that will provide evidence to understand the progress achieved by the project's efforts in promoting Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW), and to strengthen it going forward.

1.1 Context.

Bangladesh has transformed into one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia, with steady GDP growth above 6% over the past decade. The ready-made garments (RMG) sector dominates exports and formal employment, particularly for women, while remittances from migrant workers form a crucial source of income. However, informality remains widespread—over 85% of workers are in the informal sector, with limited job security or social protection. Youth unemployment and underemployment are pressing challenges.

People's Republic of Bangladesh is a parliamentary democracy with a highly centralized governance system. Political stability has facilitated growth, but changing situations can occasionally disrupt labour markets and overall economic performance. The tension between the interim government and different political parties, mainly on the issue of elections, is impacting the functioning of the interim government, with uncertainty looming in relation to the elected government. The Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 is in place, and the country is working on broad reforms to modernize its labour laws and administration. [3]

With a population of over 170 million, Bangladesh has a large and youthful workforce. Women's labor force participation has increased, largely due to the RMG industry, yet it remains below that of men. Poverty reduction has been significant, but income inequality and urban–rural divides persist. Employment is often precarious, with limited access to decent working conditions.

Cultural norms influence gender roles in employment, with traditional expectations often limiting women's participation beyond certain industries. The strong role of family and community networks also shapes occupational choices, migration decisions, and access to informal work opportunities.

Since its independence in 1971, Bangladesh's labor force has shifted from an agrarian base to manufacturing and services. Historical struggles with poverty, political upheaval, and natural disasters have shaped resilience and migration trends. The rise of the RMG sector since the 1980s marked a turning point in employment, creating millions of jobs and exposing systemic labor and safety issues (e.g., Rana Plaza in 2013).

Each year, around two million[4] young people enter Bangladesh's job market, creating immense pressure on the economy to generate sufficient employment opportunities. While the country has achieved strong growth, job creation has not kept pace with the expanding labor force, leading to high youth unemployment rates and underemployment. Many young workers find themselves in informal, low-paid, or precarious jobs, while a mismatch between skills and market demand further limits opportunities. This demographic trend highlights the challenge of absorbing a large, youthful workforce and the potential to harness a demographic dividend if quality jobs and skills development are prioritized.

Women's employment in Bangladesh has expanded significantly over the past four decades, driven largely by the ready-made garments (RMG) industry, which employs millions of women and has been central to the country's economic growth. Female labor force participation has risen, though it remains lower than that of men and is concentrated in low-wage, labor-intensive sectors with limited job security. Outside RMG, women are engaged in agriculture, informal services, and overseas domestic work, but opportunities in higher-skilled or leadership roles remain scarce. Social norms, mobility restrictions, and care responsibilities continue to constrain women's participation, while workplace safety and labor rights remain ongoing concerns. Despite these challenges, women's entry into the labor force has contributed to poverty reduction, empowerment, and shifts in gender roles in Bangladeshi society.

[3] Source: ILO Bangladesh CO

[4] Source: The World Bank

The ongoing political transition has generated new expectations from stakeholders, including ILO's key partners, with direct implications for future programming. Identified priorities include private sector–led job creation, advanced skills development for youth, combating gender-based violence, empowering women through gender-responsive and inclusive programming, and advancing green initiatives[5]. These shifting dynamics create opportunities for the ProGRESS to broaden its impact in Bangladesh.

1.2 Project Description

The ProGRESS project, titled "Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS)", at the time of this evaluation, is in its third year of implementation. It is a five-year initiative scheduled to run from October 2022 to October 2027 with a budget of CAD 20 million. The main partners are the Technical and Madrasah Education Division of the Ministry of Education, National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), Directorate of Youth, Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Department of Women Affairs, SME Foundation, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), Bangladesh Tourism Board, SME Foundation, Bangladesh Employers' Federations, Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Chittagong Hill District Council, and various other government bodies.

The project's logic focuses on using gender equality and women's empowerment as central themes to drive improvements in policy, skills, and business service provision. The project aims to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women's employment and the increasing incidence of violence against women, which has further exacerbated gender inequalities. It does this through three intermediate outcomes:

1. Support towards the adoption and implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality in TVET (2012), TVET Development Action Plan; Draft National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2021, national budget and operational systems which promote gender equality, particularly in terms of digital access, enterprise development and green jobs.
2. Increased opportunities for wage and self-employment of women within selected value chains and market systems, particularly in the green growth sectors; and
3. Improved availability of accessible, inclusive, sustainable and green skills training opportunities for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups.

Its **purpose** is to strengthen access to skills training and employment of women and vulnerable populations through the strengthening of Bangladesh's TVET system, supporting the implementation of existing polices and strengthening the link between skills training and business service provision, building on over a decade of support, aiming to produce concrete impacts in terms of improved employment for women.

The project has three key intermediate outcomes (means of action):
Support towards the adoption and implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality in TVET (2012), TVET Development Action Plan; Draft National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2021, national budget and operational systems which promote gender equality, particularly in terms of digital access, enterprise development and green jobs.

Increased opportunities for wage and self-employment of women within selected value chains and market systems, particularly in the green growth sectors; and Improved availability of accessible, inclusive, sustainable and green skills training opportunities for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups. The project's theory of change was developed during the evaluability phase (see figure 1). It outlines how these three objectives and the activities attached are expected to lead to the project's overall intended outcomes through the three project components, which are also clearly reflected in the project structure.

The project is managed by the ILO Country Office in Bangladesh, with technical backstopping provided by the Decent Work Team in New Delhi. Collaborating ILO units include the Gender Technical Team (GTT), SKILLS, ENTERPRISES, GEDI, MIGRANT, ACTRAV, ACTEMP, SME specialist, GEDI, MIGRANT, ACTRAV, ACTEMP, and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) (the organogram can be found under efficiency findings) in

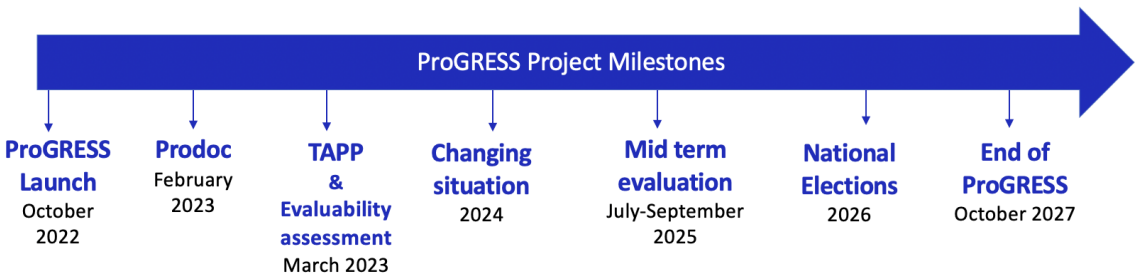
[5] ILO Strategic review of Global Affairs Canada-funded skills and employment development projects in Bangladesh, Sandra Rothboeck, May 2025

Bangkok and builds on over a decade of support by ILO to Bangladesh's TVET system. The project is being implemented through the Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED), Ministry of Education of Bangladesh Government as lead agency, and other key partners are Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), Directorate of Youth, Department of Women Affairs, SME Foundation, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), Bangladesh Tourism Board, etc. A full description of contributors can be found in annex 4.

The project scope includes women and vulnerable populations in Chattogram, Sylhet, Rangamati, Bandarban, Khagrachari, Mymensingh, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, and the Coastal districts of Khulna and Barishal divisions.
The project targets the following populations in Chattogram, Sylhet, Rangamati, Bandarban, Khagrachari, Mymensingh, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, and the Coastal districts of Khulna and Barishal divisions. However, some of the initiatives reach beyond these districts.

The progress implementation was significantly affected by the changing situation in Bangladesh, especially during 2024, and is expected to be affected by the political processes linked to the upcoming national elections in 2026. (see figure 1)

Figure 2 ProGRESS project milestones



The project contributes to the Country Priority 1 of the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) for 2017-2020: "Effective employment policies to enhance employability through skill development including for green growth" and more specifically Outcome 1.2: Promoted accessibility of TVET system, aligned with National Skill Development Policy (NSDP) especially for women, disadvantaged groups, people with disabilities and ethnic groups and in view of introducing skills in emerging technologies for climate resilient green growth.

The project is designed to contribute to SDG 4, SDG 5 and SDG 8; and to the ILO's Programme and Budget 2020-21, 2022-23 and 2024-2025, and specifically to Outcome 4 (Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work), Outcome 5 (Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market) and Outcome 6 (Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work).

2. Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

The evaluation covered the project from its launch in October 2022 to July 2025 (although some later data has been incorporated), looking at all components and planned results in all ten districts. The size and breadth of the project were highlighted as an evaluability challenge in the inception report, which required the evaluation team to keep the analysis at a higher level as set out in the TORs; this impacted the depth the evaluation achieved for each element. The agreed areas of focus were:

- Increased capacity to advance gender policy
- Increased opportunities for wage and self-employment
- Improved availability of training

In terms of cross-cutting issues, the focus of the evaluation remained aligned with the overall impact, mainly on women and girls.

2.1 Purpose, Scope and Objectives

The main purpose of this evaluation is 1) to assess the overall performance of the project to date, ensuring accountability to donors and ILO constituents, and 2) to facilitate organizational learning that can inform necessary adjustments in project strategies and interventions based on the evolving situation. As such, this exercise has both accountability and a learning objective.

The specific objectives are to provide credible and useful information that can inform decision-making, promote learning, and ultimately improve the effectiveness of interventions. This was achieved by systematically collecting data to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the project's design, implementation strategy and results achieved using OECD DAC evaluation criteria.

The Primary users of this exercise include ILO constituents, government/public institutions, donors, the ILO Country Office, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), Decent Work Teams (DWTs), HQ departments (technical units, Evaluation Office, PARDEV, PROGRAM), and partner organizations. Secondary users encompass the beneficiaries, academia/ researchers, other ILO units/regions and other implementing partners in Bangladesh.

In terms of scope, the evaluation looked at the project from its launch in October 2022 up to August 2025. A key evaluability challenge is the broad scale of the project, geographically, having grown to cover from three to ten districts, as well as the wide range of types of stakeholders it seeks to reach through a wide range of activities. The evaluation relied heavily on existing project documentation.

2.2 Evaluation Methodology

The mid-term evaluation was guided by ILO's evaluation policies and adhered to international standards and best practices, as articulated in the OECD-DAC Principles for evaluation. Similarly, the UN System Evaluation Norms and Standards and the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards require that gender be taken into consideration in all evaluations.

The evaluation approach is primarily theory-based and utilization-focused, while a focus on gender was maintained throughout. The use of multiple approaches and various data sources throughout the evaluation increases its utility and use, contributes to further learning and results in more comprehensive evaluations with purposeful recommendations.[6] Ultimately, the evaluation team (ET) believes that combining these approaches helped strengthen both the quality and the buy-in of the evaluation findings.

As such, this exercise has both accountability and a learning objectives. For the first, it relied on quantitative monitoring data collected by the project, mainly through the Monitoring Information System (BLIMS) and annual

[6] "The Use of Multiple Evaluation Approaches in Program Evaluation." Katrina L. Bledsoe and James A. Graham, American Journal of Evaluation, Vol. 26 No. 3, September 2005 302-319.

reports to examine progress and achievements since its launch. The table below summarizes the evaluation questions that were agreed upon as per the inception report.

2.2.1 Evaluation Questions and Data Sources

In terms of criteria, the team maintained all six standard evaluation criteria proposed in the TORs but, as anticipated in the inception report, and given the nature of the exercise and the delays in implementation, the focus has remained on the four key criteria, mainly; relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, with very limited findings around evidence of impact or sustainability beyond design at this stage. The link between the criteria and the evaluation questions can be seen in the table below and is described in detail in the inception report.

This exercise has both accountability and a learning objective. For the first, it relied on quantitative monitoring data collected by the project, mainly through the Monitoring Information System (BLIMS) and annual reports to examine progress and achievements since its launch. Table 1 below summarizes the agreed evaluation questions as per the inception report.

Table 1 DAC Criteria and key evaluation questions guiding the evaluation

DAC CRITERIA	KEY QUESTIONS
RELEVANCE	EQ1. Do the project objectives, strategies, and design align with evolving priorities of national stakeholders, donors and target groups (with a focus on gender differences)
COHERENCE	EQ 2. How well does the project fit in the Office's cluster approach, and complement other ILO projects, and the agenda/work of relevant national and international agencies working for gender equality in TVET and economic empowerment?
EFFECTIVENESS	EQ 3. How is the project progressing in delivering its outputs and toward preliminary outcomes?
EFFICIENCY	EQ 4. To what extent have the project management capacities and arrangements put in place been effective? Q 5. How efficient are the project's monitoring and oversight mechanisms?
ORIENTATION TO IMPACT	EQ6. Are there indications that the project will have a long-term impact? (intended/unintended, positive/negative)
SUSTAINABILITY	EQ 7. What foundational steps (e.g., capacity building, policy integration, systems building) have been taken to sustain the project results in line with ILO mandates?

The guiding cross-cutting issue for the evaluation was inclusion, with a focus on gender, which was highlighted through the evaluation tools, mainly the evaluation matrix in annex 8. A full description of evaluation sources can also be found in the evaluation matrix.

The evaluation is guided by the OECD DAC criteria, serving as the normative framework for making evaluative judgments. A total of six criteria is considered for the analysis: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, orientation to impact, and sustainability. Each criterion addresses at least one key question (Table 1), with gender equality and non-discrimination as cross-cutting areas.

2.2.2 Evaluation schedule

In addition to some remote interviews, the field mission took place between 20 July and 12 August. It included visits to 13 districts, the 10 districts officially part of the project, mainly Dhaka, Chattogram, Bandarban, Barishal, Khulna, Bagerhat, Habiganj, Moulavibazar, Sylhet and Rajshahi. Mymensingh, Dinajpur, Rangamati and

Khagrachari were also included as the project has de facto expanded beyond the ten districts. During this period, the evaluation team held 35 key stakeholder (KS) interviews (Table 2) and met with 134 beneficiaries. The breakdown by gender and district can be found in Table 3 below. Stakeholder interviews were done during the data collection phase, either in person or remotely. Additional requested interviews were undertaken for the final draft of the report. It should be noted that key stakeholders are selected in relation to the function they play in the project; as such, gender cannot be prioritized.

Table 2. Key stakeholder interviews

Persons interviewed	Women	Men	Total
Government	1	7	8
ILO	4	11	15
Donor (GAC)	2	0	2
Partners	3	7	10
Total	**10**	**25**	**35**

Table 3. Beneficiaries interviewed by district

Beneficiaries interviewed by region	Women	Men	Total
Chattagram	11	3	14
Bandarban	6	11	17
Sylhet	9	19	28
Hobiganj	2	4	6
Moulavibazar (Kamalganj)	15	1	16
Khulna	3	9	12
Bagerhat	3	8	11
Barishal	6	9	15
Rajshahi	6	9	15
Total	**61**	**73**	**134**

Lastly, an online survey was launched to cover 15 ILO project staff, five government partners and 14 key implementing partners as an additional data point for triangulation. Through the survey, the evaluation team gathered 12/14 responses from ILO staff, 3/5 from government counterparts and 10/15 from other partners.

The evaluation used the theory of change (TOC) developed during the evaluability assessment as a starting point to understand the project structure and underlying assumptions. The TOC allowed triangulation with the findings and serves as a basis for the recommendations presented. The team aimed for a participatory and utilization-focused approach to promote buy-in and use of the evaluation results. Therefore, there was an in-built space for feedback to the team from the inception phase, the in-country debrief and the in-country workshop. In addition, the team maintained regular email contact for any clarifications, methodological discussions and real-time feedback throughout the process.

2.2.3 Data Collection Methods

The key data collection methods used in this evaluation were:

Desk review: the evaluation team reviewed key project-related documentation and existing reports to inform its understanding of the project as well as its progress, lessons learned, strengths/weaknesses and existing opportunities. The initial desk review informed the inception report, including the evaluation matrix, the approach and methodology, the sampling strategy, and the selection of informants (see inception report for details). The consulting team continued reviewing and synthesizing relevant materials during the data collection and analysis phase.

Quantitative data review: The evaluation analyzed existing monitoring information systems and other relevant and available quantitative data collected by the project and held meetings with the M&E officer.

Self-administered survey. The evaluation team developed a brief web-based survey intended for the ILO and its partners. This brief survey focused on key evaluation questions and was purposely kept short to avoid overburdening partners. This served as an additional data point. The survey included open spaces, which allowed partners and ILO staff who had not been interviewed to provide additional information.

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGD). 151 persons participated in either interviews or FGD during the field data collection phase. The field visit included 10 districts (Dhaka, Chattogram, Bandarban, Barishal, Habiganj, Moulavibazar, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Bagerhat), which took place between 20 July and 11 August. Some additional remote interviews were undertaken both before and after. The full list of persons interviewed can be seen in Annex 1, and the field data agenda in Annex 2. The interview protocols were shared in the inception report.

2.2.4 Data Analysis

Collection of primary data allowed the team to probe findings and also look to provide feedback on how the project is being implemented, identify lessons learned and good practices, with the ultimate end to be able to make evidence based actionable recommendations that will support improvements to the project, including highlighting any relevant changes that will help the project to adapt to changes on the ground and to take advantage of possible new opportunities.

In addition to the data triangulation of different sources and investigator triangulation using different evaluators, the evaluation team conducted weekly internal meetings to triangulate data and deepen analysis. A specific data systematization tool was developed to support this analysis (see Annex 3).

In addition to the triangulation and systematization of data, an initial findings debriefing was conducted with project management on August 12, and a validation workshop took place in Dhaka on September 10, with the participation of all key partners, either in person or remotely. Stakeholders were given opportunities to provide feedback, share additional information, and fact-check the report before its final version.

The mid-term evaluation was guided by ILO's evaluation policies and adhered to international standards and best practices, as articulated in the OECD-DAC Principles for evaluation. Similarly, the UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards and the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards require that gender be taken into consideration in all evaluations.

The evaluation complied with the UNEG ethical guidelines (2020), namely the four (4) guiding ethical principles for evaluation: integrity, Accountability, respect, and beneficence, in addition to the following ethical standards :

ILO Code of Conduct: The ET has signed and complied with the ILO code of conduct, which is consistent with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service

Independence: MTE consultants ensured that the independence of judgement is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented. The consultants ensured an impartial and unbiased manner and gave a balanced presentation of the findings on project results, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impacts, sustainability, strengths and weaknesses.

Conflict of Interest: Any potential conflict of interest was avoided.

Prior Consents: The ET ensured that the participant contributed to the evaluation voluntarily, without coercion, with sufficient understanding of the procedures, potential risks, and potential benefits, and was free to choose whether to participate in the evaluation. Oral prior consent was established from all participants.

Confidentiality: The ET respected the confidentiality of information collected during the evaluation and did not use it for personal/financial gain. The team also respected participants' right to confidentiality and ensured that sensitive information could not be traced to its source.

2.3 Limitations and Mitigating Strategies

A key evaluability challenge, as described in the inception report, is the large scale of the project, both geographically and in the broad range of activities and types of stakeholders it seeks to reach, relative to the resources and time available to the evaluation team. This was highlighted as a limitation in the inception report. The agreed mitigation strategy was to focus on the three areas identified in the TORs and limit the geographic coverage to 5 districts. However, as the ILO managed the agenda and introduced last-minute changes (including taking out interviews or adding districts), the team could not apply the envisioned sampling. Ultimately, the evaluation team visited 13 field locations instead of 5, which negatively impacts the depth the team achieved in each district, and some key interviews planned were not included, most notably with the NSDA. To mitigate this, the evaluation team contacted partners not included in the agenda and continued undertaking in-person and remote interviews well into the validation phase.

As highlighted in the findings, the consistency between monitoring and evaluation tools limited the team's ability to assess the project's progress, especially as targets were not always clearly defined. Evaluations traditionally rely on monitoring data, which is then triangulated with other sources of information. Monitoring data was not always available or up to date, so triangulation was not always possible. Whenever triangulation was not possible, the team identified sources and/or limitations in the text (while respecting anonymity).

In terms of **external coherence**, the inception report already highlighted the evaluation scope as a key limitation, as no non-partners were to be interviewed; however, mitigation mechanisms as described in the IR were used, and links with outside partners and ongoing initiatives identified are included in this report.

3. Evaluation Findings

3.1 Relevance and strategic fit

The project proposes effective strategies to address existing needs; as such, it aligns with the priorities of national stakeholders, the donor, and the ILO's global priorities. This is achieved through a robust project design adapted to incorporate changes at designated points, the main one being adapting to include government priorities (through the TAPP), which led to a significant geographic expansion and diverted focus from the Chittagong area.

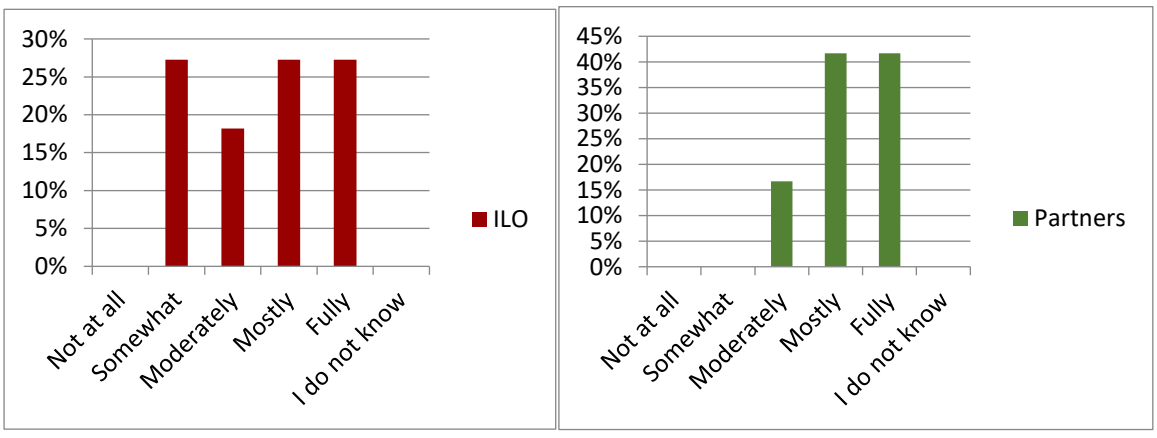
This section explores the quality of project design and the extent to which the project's interventions are grounded in a clear results framework and a thorough understanding of the context dynamics. Also, to what degree do project strategies respond to the needs of the key stakeholders and to what degree have there been any adjustments to the project design or theory of change to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

In terms of relevance, **the project design builds on the ILO's previous cooperation with Canada in support of the policy and governance systems of Bangladesh's TVET system.** In particular, the design is built on lessons learned from the B-Sep project supported by Canada, seeking to narrow down the focus to avoid dispersion. The key areas of focus are:

- the promotion of women's participation in the marketplace; and
- the inclusion of the vulnerable population. In this manner, the project design incorporates lessons learned but also responds to an important gap, the low employment rate of women in Bangladesh, which was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The agreement between the donor and the ILO was signed in March 2021. After this initial stage, the project was adapted to respond to the government priorities (through the TAPP), ensuring its alignment with national priorities to promote gender equality in TVET, achieve an enrolment rate of 40% by 2030, significantly increase women's graduation and labour market insertion, and address gender-based violence-free training and working environments. The project is also aligned with Bangladesh's 7th and 8th Five-Year Plans, which focus on employment growth as a development goal and identify skills constraints as a major challenge faced by Bangladesh, as well as with the National Skills Development Policy of 2011.

Figure 3 Survey question: In your view, is the project aligned with the national agenda/work



Responses to the survey confirmed ILO staff perceived alignment between the government and national agenda, with over 54% of respondents answering "fully" or "mostly". In the case of partners (both implementors and government), this positive response increased to 83% (Figure 2).

The TAPP with the Government was signed in March 2023. The long period of negotiation required for the approval of the TAPP was the first significant adaptation of the project to respond to government priorities, securing relevance and alignment with national priorities. This process led to a significant enlargement of

geographic coverage from three to ten districts of eight divisions. Given that the initial resources remained the same, this inevitably diluted the initial focus on the Chittagong region, particularly for the CHT districts. Some of the open responses in the survey highlighted the limited focus on the Chittagong region.

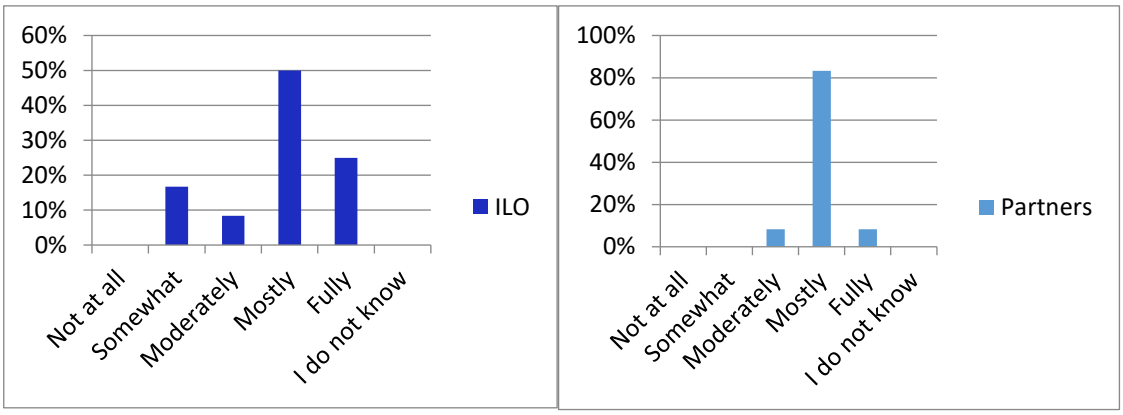
In terms of the **project's ability to adapt,** although no other formal adaptations were reported, **the project has effectively navigated the changing situation after this initial redesign taking advantage of existing opportunities**, The ET was informed that there are plans to use the midterm evaluation to address contextual changes in a substantive manner.

Relevance is strengthened through the project's alignment with ILO's P&B outcome (s): Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work. Outcome 5: Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market, and Outcome 6: Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all globally. This initiative aligns with SDG 4 by improving education quality, SDG 5 by promoting gender equality, and SDG 8 by fostering decent work and economic growth.

Project design

Stakeholders who participated in the data collection and survey (see figure 3) reinforced the evaluation's conclusion that the **project has developed suitable strategies to achieve its goals**. These strategies effectively address the employment requirements of disadvantaged groups, pay attention to gender-specific needs, and support other communities needing assistance.

Figure 4 Response to Survey question: In your view, does the project identify the right interventions for the results it seeks?



The design refers to a wide variety of vulnerable stakeholders, mainly women, youth, ethnic communities and persons with disabilities, however. While the evaluation team was we informed that these were selected based on previous needs assessments, **except women** (both the ProDoc and the TAPP identify seven types of barriers faced by women who want to access TVET) **there was no identification of barriers faced by the other target groups identified,** which would allow the project to develop strategies to address these barriers and for better targeting of beneficiaries. The de-facto strategy appears to be through the identification of partners with expertise, for example, the selection of the Bangladesh Business and Disability Network (BBDN) as a partner to facilitate participation of persons with disability; selection of three local NGOs and Hill District Council in each three CHT districts and the selection of Indigenous Peoples Development Services (IPDS) to reach indigenous peoples; the selection of partners focused on women (pe Chittagong Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CWCCI), Sylhet Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry and UN Women; and community-based partners to be able to develop community. This might be an effective mechanism, as each subgroup requires specific expertise[7] that cannot be easily secured within the project; further exploration is needed under efficiency.

[7] Evaluation of the Implementation of UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity policy.
Longitudinal evaluation, Final report, 2022

A strength of the project is that it has the participation of a broad mix of private, government and civil society and social partners (selected in the ProDoc) for the purpose of reaching the different target groups, e.g., the women chambers, women entrepreneurs, the CSOs to reach the indigenous communities, the government agencies, to improve the government systems, etc. Going forward, this provides ILO with the opportunity to understand how effective/efficient different types of partners can be in different scenarios for different population groups.

Figure 5. Theory of change developed during the evaluability assessment

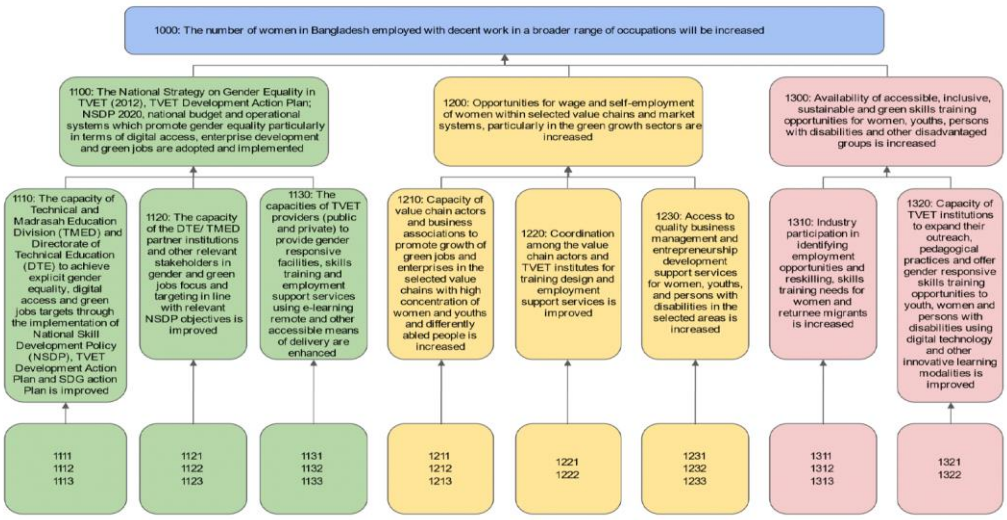
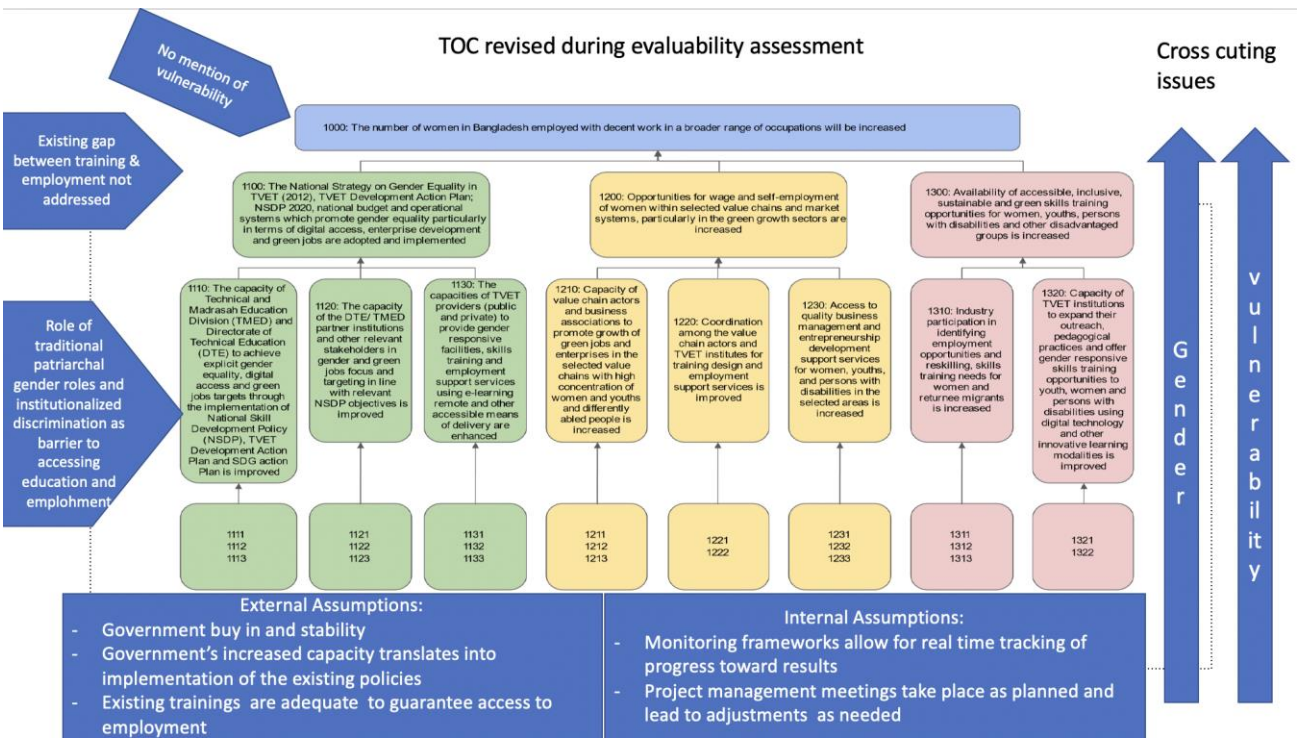


Figure 6. Identified gaps in the existing TOC

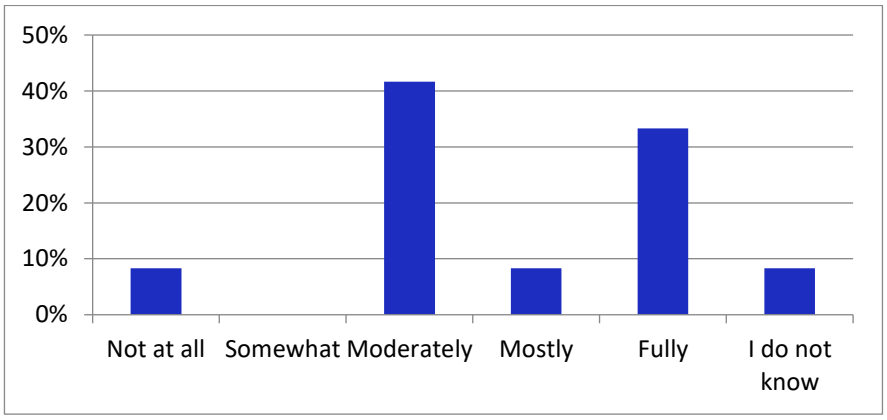


It should be noted **that the initial project document did not include a theory of change; however,** one was developed during the evaluability assessment (see Figure 1). As such, the TOC was created to reflect the existing design rather than to inform it.

As a result, it shares some of the same shortcomings identified in the project design. For example, the ultimate goal refers to increased employment of women, without mentioning other vulnerable populations, despite these populations being included in other objectives of the project. Figure 2 highlights some of the gaps identified in the TOC.

Similarly, the TOC did not reflect underlying assumptions, such as continued government support for the project (which ultimately played a significant role). While the project document identifies the gap between skills supply and existing demand from employers as a challenge, and many of the activities are geared towards addressing this (e.g., new curricula and competency standards, gendering and showcasing alternative training modalities such as apprenticeship), these are not clearly identified in the TOC.

Figure 7 ILO Survey Q6: In your view, does the project design have a clear logic?



Responses from staff to the survey appear to support the finding that certain gaps or oversights exist in the project logic (see Figure 6). While these gaps do not affect the relevance and strategic fit of the project, they do impact the project's efficiency (see section discussion on timing).

Another impact on design was that due to the initial approval delays, some initial objectives, mainly linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, are no longer included in the implementation; for example, there is no mention of access to digital devices. While it may no longer be relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital access may be an interesting avenue to explore for vulnerable groups, such as those far from training centers, and for women who may have limited mobility.

3.2 Coherence

In terms of internal coherence, the project is aligned (coherent with) the office's overall approach and ILO's global goals, as well as national priorities. It has mechanisms in place that help identify areas of complementarity with other projects, ensuring alignment between initiatives. This, and some synergies, have been identified. However, this identification of synergies seems opportunistic rather than structural, especially as the project continues to operate in silos. The project would benefit from a more systematic approach to coordination between projects and between project components. Efforts to strengthen coherence between project partners were observed, but opportunities exist to further enhance this, particularly at the field level, which will be crucial for both impact and sustainability. Externally, the project participates in key structures and proactively seeks to collaborate with other ongoing initiatives, successfully positioning the ILO as a key player in the sector.

This section examines the internal consistency of the project's components with other ongoing ILO initiatives and their external alignment with other interventions. The focus is on whether the intervention's objectives, strategies, and actions are logically connected, mutually reinforcing, and free from contradictions or unnecessary overlap with other initiatives in the same context. Coherence ensures that all elements of the project function together in a complementary way to advance its intended goals.

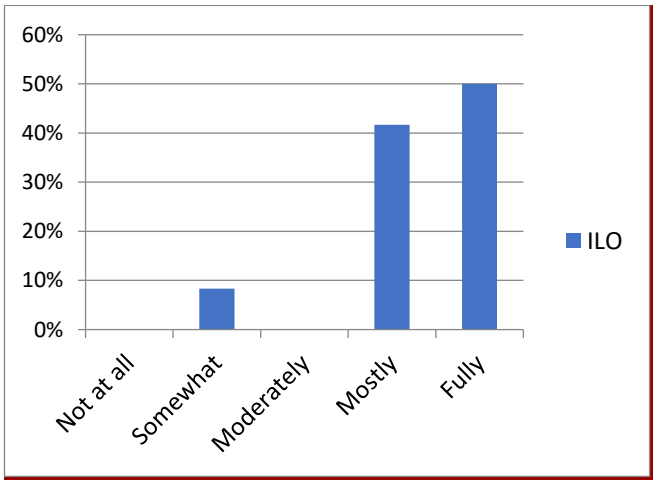
3.3.1 *Internal coherence*

This can be viewed from three different angles: 1) how the project interacts with other work within the ILO, either ongoing or previous, 2) coherence between the different components of the project and 3) coherence between project partners.

In terms of the coherence of the project with other ILO initiatives and between project components, as mentioned above in the relevance section, the project builds on years of investment in TVET and its relationship with the Canadian government (for example, the B-SEP program, the ISEC project in Cox bazar or the Skills 21 project). The project also builds upon existing initiatives, such as the gender-responsive career guidance cell and the BDS. As such, there is thematic coherence with the overall work of the office. In terms of coherence between projects, the ET was informed of office inter-project coordination meetings, which could support the sharing of information and allow for the identification of potential coordination, collaboration and synergies with other ongoing projects. However, several stakeholders pointed out that communication and collaboration, both among projects and between project components, were ineffective, resulting in a siloed approach to implementation. This issue is evident in the project's reports.

External coherence examines how the intervention goals and strategies are compatible with and complementary to the efforts of other actors[8], specifically the work undertaken by project partners. There have been several initiatives to bring partners together for various project components, including policy dialogues, validation sessions, and exchanges between skills centers and employers.[9] Some stakeholders interviewed reported that the project holds coordination meetings with all implementing partners and constituents, and documentation for two meetings was provided. During the field visits, it was observed that many partners were still unaware of the broader project and other ongoing initiatives, sometimes unaware of other project partners in the same district. This finding is supported by the survey, in which only 33% of project partners who responded felt they knew the project fully. Similarly, only half of the ILO staff implementing the project who responded to the survey felt they knew the project fully (Figure 7), reflecting the already mentioned siloed implementation. These findings were supported by some open survey comments, which highlighted the need for more regular interaction both within the ILO to help break silos and promote collaboration, as well as with and between partners. This is seen as a missed opportunity to create more momentum and synergies.

Figure 8. Survey question 3: How well do you know the project?



3.3.2 *Coherence at the Country-Level*

The project includes numerous activities that seek to create alignment and coherence between different institutions, including:

- policy dialogues

[8] Source: OECD, MOFA and Japan and APEA, Meghan Kennedy- Chouanne, Workshop February 2022
[9] AWP 2025 updated to reflect progress

- validation sessions, workshops
- coordination meetings
- exchanges between skills centers and employers
- gender Reporting Template: shared with representatives from 21 government agencies
- the inter-ministerial gender skills task force
- Common curriculum assessment

These initiatives seek to address the fragmentation identified between the different institutions in the national system.

The inception report already highlighted the evaluation scope as a key limitation, as interviews were limited to existing project partners; however, important potential links were reported.[10] during the interviews as follows:

- The project is working in coordination with other players, e.g., with GIZ, which includes joint planning and sharing knowledge/tools and formulating an MOU for gender mainstreaming in skills training centers.
- The ET was informed that the ADB has expressed interest in applying the apprenticeship modality and that the TMED has advocated for the WB-funded project to adopt the apprenticeship modality for skills development.
- Other initiatives include the ILO acting as a connector between the World Bank and employers for training in skills centers in Gulshan to promote this kind of demand-driven skills training further.
- The establishment of the Business Development Services (BDS) portal within the SME Foundation so that SMEs can easily access the BDS services online.

Other avenues for strengthening external coherence and coordination reported include:

- Working group meetings of the national consultative group, which includes all the development partners.
- The project participated in the Annual Development Planning (ADP) meetings and provided project updates. The Honourable Secretary of TMED chaired this ADP meeting.
- UN Joint workshop was held in Sylhet (May 2024) on Cottage, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (CMSMEs) Preparedness for LDC graduation. These were undertaken in coordination with UNRCO, UNDP, FAO, UNCDF, USAID, and the Bangladesh Cha Shramik Union. The workshop examined the various challenges faced by CMSMEs in the Sylhet region, including policy, productivity, financing, green transformation, market access, and growth.
- UNRCO joint missions in CHT (Bandarban, February 2024). to inform the operationalization of the One UN Vision for CHT into coordinated programming.

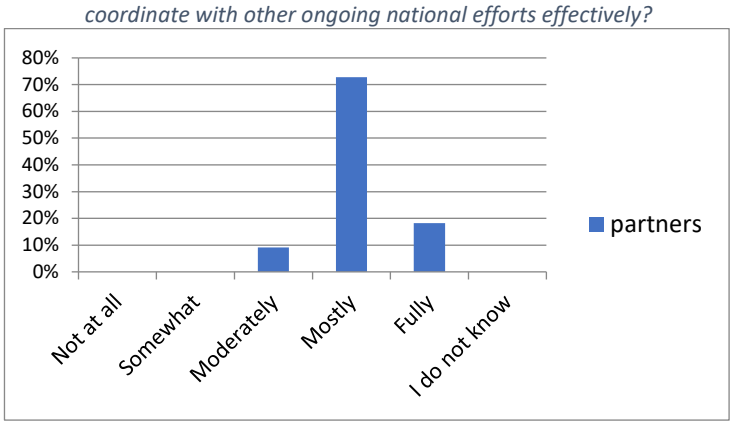
Furthermore, several aspects of these projects are specifically focused on enhancing overall coherence. For example, the Gender Reporting Template developed for the Gender and Skills Taskforce was shared with representatives from 21 government agencies under the leadership of DTE and TMED. Additionally, private sector and development partners, including the World Bank, BRAC, UCEP, GIZ, FBBCCI, and NCCWE, meaningfully participated in the Taskforce workshops organized by the ILO.[11] Similarly, policy work, such as the policy dialogues on gender-responsive budgeting, preventing gender-based violence, and the NSDP 2022 review, is geared towards creating momentum and coherence in the system to achieve greater inclusion of women and address barriers to their entry and retention in the mainstream labour market.

[10] Through interviews, the AWP progress report and reporting
[11] Source: 2025 AWP Jan-May update

With the active support of the ProGRESS project, the Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) is developing a Code of Conduct for Community-Based Tourism in Bangladesh. Additionally, BTB is reviewing the country's existing tourism laws with the intention of expanding the scope of the tourism sector and diversifying employment opportunities within it. BTB has also activated the District Tourism Management Committee (DTMC) to facilitate coordination with all key stakeholders and improve the tourism value chain governance

Figure 8 below from the survey highlights that partners see potential for increased coordination with national efforts.

Figure 9. Partners Survey Q 11. Does the project coordinate with other ongoing national efforts effectively?



3.4 Effectiveness of Interventions

The project shows progress in all three key areas of focus. In terms of strengthening capacity to advance gender policy, it has focused on capacity building and awareness raising, promoting exchange and dialogue, and providing technical guidance, knowledge products, and tools. The interministerial skills task force has the potential to bring continuity to these efforts.

The project has improved the availability of training, reaching 3,280 beneficiaries of whom 62% are female, and is on track to meet employment targets. It should be noted that 28% of the beneficiaries who secured work did so in a sector outside the project's focus, raising questions about the sector selection. While women's enrollment is high, their employment rates lag. Inclusion of persons with disabilities remains very weak (2%). However, while inclusion of ethnic communities remains limited (9.3%), some innovative community-based approaches have demonstrated great potential in reaching ethnic communities and women. The project does not currently measure how different sectors and regions compare in terms of job quality or sustainability; however, tools are being launched at this stage (e.g., GTMS and a tracer survey) that will help address this gap.

This section assesses the ProGRESS project's progress towards key outcomes: increased gender policy capacity, expanded wage and self-employment opportunities, and improved access to training. Identified in the MTE terms of reference, these areas were evaluated through documents, stakeholder interviews, monitoring data, FGDs, and field observations.

3.4.1 Progress towards preliminary outcomes

A. Progress towards increased gender policy capacity

Efforts were made to strengthen the capacity to address gender barriers to entry, in collaboration with government partners, the BEF, and TVET institutions. For example, through the Gender and Entrepreneurship Together (GET Ahead) training module project, the project trained 796 entrepreneurs, of which 85% were women (701 in GET Ahead and 95 in SYB), and 69 entrepreneurs received Improve Your Business training[12].

[12] M&E unit ILO Country office, august 2025 figures

Series of events were organized such as policy dialogues, for example on Widening Gender- Responsive Skills and Technical Education for Accelerating Women's Economic Empowerment in Bangladesh, (Dhaka 2023) or the Technical Dialogue on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) for Skills & TVET Sectors(Dhaka 2024); as well as awareness raising sessions on issues such as harassment and violence-free educational and workplaces (in Dhaka and Khulna) and the Gender Gap Analysis study validation workshop (Dhaka 2023).

Of note is the support provided to the Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF) for the development of a gender baseline assessment for 20 organizations in 10 districts, focusing on four sectors (agro-food processing, tourism, ICT and care work). In the future, the project aims to build on these findings through a series of workshops with the employers' organization to build awareness and enhance capacity on GESI. Finally, various workshops and validation sessions were held to create Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming in the workplace and the Gender and Skills Action Plan.

Perhaps the most significant achievement in this area is the creation of the Interministerial Taskforce for Gender Integration[13] (the Gender and Skills taskforce), which required significant interministerial coordination with representatives from 16 ministries and government departments[14] headed by the Secretary of the Ministry of Education and three Secretaries (TMED, MoWCA, and Ministry of Commerce), and the Executive Chairman of NSDA will be working as Co-Chair. The project secured high-level representation through a tripartite structure, where the Joint Secretary of TMED will be working as Member-Secretary of this high-level committee. This is already recognized as an important achievement.

B. Increasing opportunities for wage and self-employment

The project had secured employment for 2,093 beneficiaries, or 67% of the total 3,265[15] beneficiaries as of August 2025. This is roughly 42% of the target for the full project. Considering the project lifecycle (which includes the initial setup years), the project could be expected to reach its target by the end of the project.

Of those who secured jobs, 72% were wage employed (643 females vs. 340 males) and 28% self-employed.[16] (Figure 9). The project places great emphasis on results and training leading to employment; however, during the field visits, it was observed that in many cases, the TTC and BMET have no dedicated staff for working in the job placement role. It was sometimes observed that there was an employment officer, but since a different project paid them, they would not support ProGRESS. It was observed that **in locations with a dedicated position for job placement, such as Ashrai TTC and TKHMI, the employment success rate of TVET beneficiaries is significantly higher.** By contrast, in Rajshahi TTC, the rate of paid employment is low, and the involvement in self-employed enterprise is very limited.

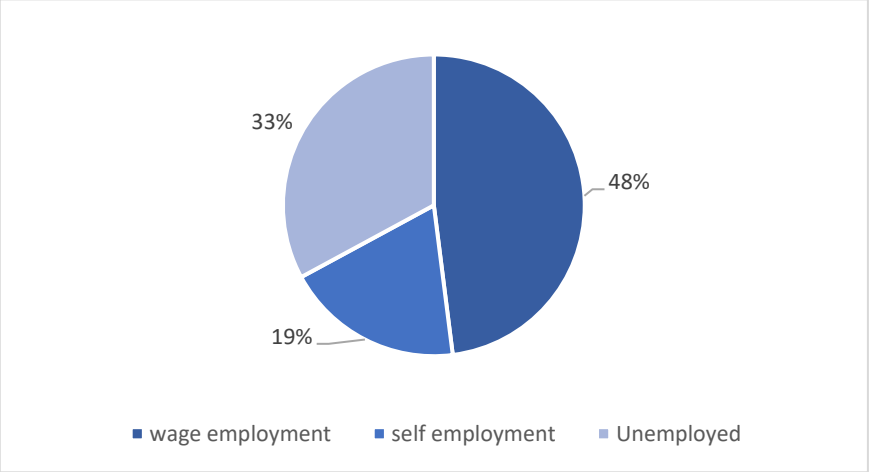
At the time of the evaluation there was no mechanism to measure the sustainability or quality of these employments, however significant progress has been made with the first tracer survey (august 2025) which surveyed 284 former participants (62.7% female) to enquire to have a better understanding of the kind of job they had secured (in terms of wage) the majority reported it took 1-3 months to secure employment. Most reported being employed in the care sector (22%) and food processing sector (24%); however, the largest number (28%) corresponded to "other", highlighting that perhaps the project is not focusing on the right sectors.

In the case of those who are self-employed, it is unclear from the data whether this represents a change from before they participated in the project. Once the GTMS is up and running, the project will have a better sense of this. Thirty-three % of participants remained unemployed, highlighting the need for continued strengthening of the linkages between training and employment, as well as the need for **better selection of beneficiaries.** Enrollment of women in the TVET training and for employment opportunities is somewhat better (62% of total

[13] The taskforce was created to address gender equity in the TVET landscape and is focused on mapping strategies, identifying priorities, improving inter-agency coordination, and establishing reporting mechanisms to advance gender equity.
[14] The Action Plan of the Taskforce specifies the role of the agencies of the Taskforce, and there is a dedicated Sub-committee for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Taskforce which includes 7 public and private agencies.
[15] There are discrepancies in BLIMS it sometimes appears as 3,119 total opportunities created (employment graph) and as 3,265 in the district breakdown
[16] BLIMS

participants were women). However, overall unemployment remains higher among females (12.4%) compared to males (7.5%)17.

Figure 10 Reported employment of beneficiaries (BLIMS)



Source: BLIMS

Only 2% of beneficiaries were persons with disabilities versus the 5% target. The project selected 10 Organizations of Persons with Disability (OPDs) with the support of BBDN to identify the eligible persons with disabilities for TVET training and link them with the training institutions. Efforts to increase participation of persons with disabilities include a recruitment drive for persons with disability with private sector employers completed in Dinajpur, Rajshahi and Khulna; 1600 Posters and leaflets on disability inclusion were printed and disseminated country-wide among government agencies, TVET institutes and the private sector, and several "drive-through" employment initiatives were conducted specifically to support persons with disabilities securing jobs[18].

During the field visits, it was evident that this linkage was underperforming, and the overall performance of inclusion of persons with disabilities is not encouraging at this stage of the project. Skill training providers, including TTCs, have no information about the name of the OPD working with the project. Some suggestions to address this include:

- All skill training providers involved in the ProGRESS project should maintain a database that includes disaggregated and easily accessible data on gender, types of disability, age groups, geographical areas, and educational status.
- There should be special focus on intersectionality, for example, women with disabilities, youth with disabilities, and ethnic persons with disabilities, for eligibility and inclusion in skill training.

Observations during the field visit are in line with the reported data mentioned above, **showing there is limited inclusion and services for persons with disabilities**. Activities are implemented through BBDN; however, most of the activities were reportedly delayed, and in some districts (Bandarban), no persons with disabilities are included in the project services, including training. KS also noted the project has no data on the eligible persons with disabilities who could be invited for the TVET training, nor has there been an analysis of which courses may be more suitable for which categories of persons with disabilities. An exception and example of good practice might be Ashrai TTC, which closely monitors and supports trained TVET beneficiaries. The Department of Social Welfare at the district level maintains a database of persons with disabilities. It distributes allowances under the government's social safety network programme, which is also available at OPDs. All skill training institutes should maintain a list of eligible persons with disabilities for selection in a specific sector. However, the ET team noted that no such information is available in the districts visited during the evaluation. Beneficiaries suggested

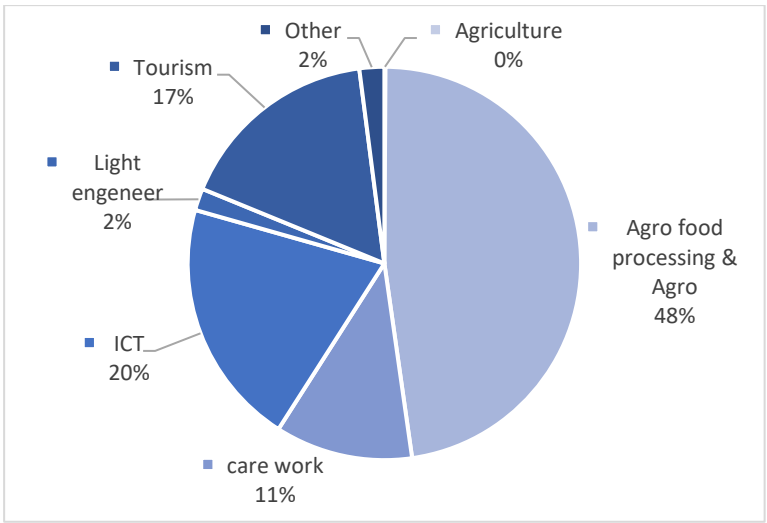
17 Tracer Survey Outcome – Skills beneficiaries 2025– ProGRESS Project
[18] 2025 AWP progress report

that the ILO could help ensure this list is accessible to all training centers, allowing them to select the more suitable trades. It was also suggested that the ILO conduct a capacity assessment to ensure disability-friendly infrastructure and trained human resources in different TTC and polytechnic institutes that participate in the project. (more details available in annex 4).

A key challenge observed was some partners' inability or unwillingness to include persons with disabilities. For example, PRAN-RFL cannot, as the company has no policy for recruiting persons with disabilities. BAPA was unable to include persons with disabilities due to the business owners' decision. KS reported that most government TTCs are not interested in enrolling persons with disabilities, despite being aware of government instructions for inclusive education and facilities. Similarly, some TTC and other training institutions have no plans to include ethnic communities living in the plains because of budget constraints for residential facilities and the unrealistic travel time and expenses required to attend the training. TTC Teachers and officials from BTEB and BMET stressed that specialized training arrangements for persons with disabilities are not available due to capacity issues. There are also examples of more inclusive industries; for example, the project, through the BBDN, has partnered with certain hotels willing to employ persons with disabilities. A more proactive approach to identifying inclusive industries may be necessary.

While only 1% of the total beneficiaries belonged to ethnic communities at the time of the data collection, participation through community-based initiatives rose significantly, bringing that overall percentage number to 9.3% by the time the final report was drafted. In addition to the initiative's participants, the wider community is also expected to benefit. An innovative experience in this area is the work done with the Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) to promote community-based tourism in tea gardens. The workshop organized in Sylhet aimed at expanding job opportunities for tea workers and indigenous people. **The Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) is recognized as a key partner in several of the most promising initiatives that enhance employability opportunities and broaden income options for vulnerable communities, with a focus on women and ethnic communities.** The evaluation team accessed promotional materials for tourist spots, and the information is also available online.[19]Further practical financial benefits are yet to be realized. As of June 2025, the BTB reported it had only utilized 4.8% of its total contract amount. The project is also active at the policy level, coordinating technical input to enhance Bangladesh's Tourism Law and supporting a Code of Conduct for Community-Based Tourism, both aimed at strengthening the tourism sector ecosystem.

Figure 11. Beneficiaries of skills training by sector (BLIMS)



Source: Blims

The project **conducted a value chain study to identify the most promising sectors** and identified four: (1) Agro-processing, (2) Tourism, (3) ICT Services and (4) Care work. Data from the BLIMS allows us to see the number of beneficiaries for each of these sectors. Monitoring data show that nearly half of the beneficiaries are in the agro-

[19] https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/CBT_Brochure.pdf

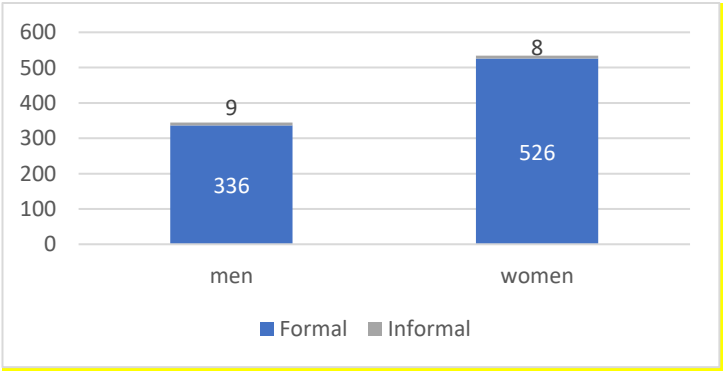
processing sector (1,566), followed by ICT Services (667), tourism (550), and care work (361). The ICT sector is particularly relevant for this project, as it can be conducted from home, providing access to employment for women who may not have the flexibility to work outside the home, as well as for people with disabilities who may have accessibility issues. The third-largest sector is tourism, which has provided some important examples with potential for greater impact on women (Figure 10). Particularly, community-based tourism initiatives, such as the one launched in collaboration with the Bangladesh Tourism Board and the local Khasi community in Jaflong, are seen as a potential best practice for reaching both women and rural populations, as well as ethnic communities.

The field visit highlighted how each of these sectors worked better in some districts than in others. For example, it was observed that graphics and online marketing training seemed to be opening up scope for self-managed enterprise by women and persons with disabilities. In the case of Care Work, good results were reported for the training arranged by Unicare Health and Technical Training Institute in Barishal. On the other hand, care work training conducted by IMT in Bagerhat (for four males and 16 females), where KS reported that there was no scope of employment in the district, and trained women were not interested in going outside the district; as a result, all 16 women remained unemployed. It was also reported that, due to limited capacity, the Bagerhat IMT hired external trainers who lacked the necessary qualifications. By comparison, six companies under BAPA conducted training on Agro-food processing. 64% were women, and almost 98% of them were reported to be employed by those companies. Going forward, it would be beneficial to collect more of this kind of qualitative/narrative data to inform the project.

Limited progress was reported in the green sector. Together with the National Association of Small & Cottage Industries of Bangladesh (NASCIB), the project developed and validated a code of conduct for green business, paving the way for a new area of work that is more eco-friendly. The project also plans a survey in 2026-2027 to measure the percentage of women employed in green jobs.

A total of 879 apprenticeship beneficiaries were reported, with the majority (98%) being formal, and 61% being female, indicating a clear focus on promoting gender equality (Figure 11). Stakeholders interviewed highlighted the importance of linking TVET trainees and apprenticeships, but reported the difficulty some training institutes (TTC/IMT) faced in securing apprenticeships. Stakeholders believed that apprenticeships are a viable alternative, particularly for students who have dropped out of school without acquiring skills. A good example of this was observed in Barishal with the PRAN-RFL company, which arranged apprenticeship training for 25 youths (male: 7, female: 18) over a period of 3 months. It was reported that currently 18 of them are working in the same company, highlighting the potential of opportunities where a direct link between employer and training is supported.

Figure 12 Beneficiaries participating in apprenticeship

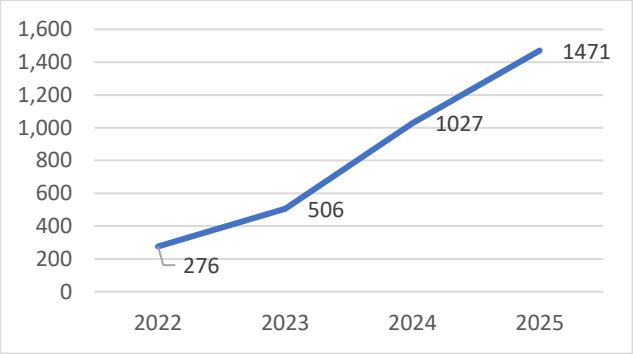


Source: BLIMS

C. Improved accessibility to training opportunities

As of August 2025, BLIMS reported a total of 3,280 beneficiaries trained.[20] as well as several curricula and competence-based learning materials (CBLM) developed[21]. The data does not identify whether or how many of these trainings focused on green skills. However, a positive sign observed in terms of progress is the year-on-year continued growth in the annual number of beneficiaries who received training (see Figure 12). In addition, with support from the project, more than 2,500 women/men entrepreneurs received business advisory support, also known as Business Development Support (BDS), from these platforms/chambers. As a result, most of the entrepreneurs were able to secure business certificates, such as TAX/VAT, Export, etc., or improved/expanded their businesses.

Figure 13 Annual growth in the number of beneficiaries trained



Source: BLIMS

The team visited five implementing partners in Barisal, Khulna, and Bagerhat districts. The people living in these areas, for the most part, are poor, and most of the youth are unemployed or underpaid. As such, the project has effectively expanded the scope of skill development training in promising sectors in vulnerable areas. In the women's TTC and healthcare training institutes, most beneficiaries are women, with many of them reportedly securing employment after completing the training. Field observations of this component align well with the project's priorities.

Other successful examples observed include the Head of PRAN-RFL factory in Hobiganj Industrial Park, who informed that the rate of worker turnover is higher than in other areas. However, the turnover of workers who received skills training with BAPA under this project is much lower.

In the area of green jobs, the project's reported progress includes the development of 46 green jobs-related capacity-based learning materials, as well as the development of a guideline with the BTEB to mainstream the "green element" across curriculum development.

An example of innovation is the establishment of a Shared Service Facilities Centre (SSFC) launched in June 2024, together with the Indigenous Peoples Development Services (IPDS) in the remote villages of Kamalganj upazila of Moulavibazar district, to boost economic diversification and community empowerment of tea garden communities working with the most disadvantaged groups of Monipur (an ethnic community). A total of 15 females completed the first batch of skill training, and the 2nd batch was ongoing during the visit.

A key area of work that leverages the ILO's comparative advantage from its tripartite mandate is the effort to link skills training with employers directly. The project organized field visits for three potential agro-food processing companies (PRAN, T.K. Food Products Ltd. and Rangamati Food Products Ltd.) in Bandarban, Khagrachari and Rangamati Hill Districts (February 2025). The purpose of the field visits was to establish the business partnership with the private sector on selected agro-processing foods engaging smallholder farmers/producers and also linking "agropreneurs" and processors in CHT within the supply chains of agro-processing industries (PRAN, TK Food, Rangamati Food Ltd). This is another innovative proposal that will need to be solidified in the second half of the project. An online survey was conducted, and several meetings were

[20] BLIMS
[21] 2025 AWP progress report

organized with key stakeholders, including BSRM, BRAC, and BBDN, as well as sessions with the private sector on systems and approaches to skills identification in Chattogram and Dhaka. Most KS interviewees agreed that in the future, the project should increase its focus on strengthening the linkage between training and employment, making full use of the ILO's unique comparative advantages, while also exploring the replication or identification of innovative solutions, such as community-based tourism or tea garden activities.

The project links skills training with employers through a partnership with BAPA, which, as already mentioned, has a high employment rate, as it selects and trains its workers to fill specific gaps. The project is also starting industry attachments in partnership with large companies. The initial pilot has begun with 47 students, a soft Skills Training of ToT followed by training of the students was scheduled for September 2025, and the pre-grooming phase to prepare students before their three-month industry attachment is scheduled to commence in October 2025. To operationalize this model, BTEB has already initiated MS Excel training for the 47 selected students. The Soft Skills Training ToT is currently running, with SOFT Skills training for students scheduled to follow from September 20 to September 30, 2025. The training will be delivered using a specialized curriculum developed by private sector HR practitioners and experts. The availability of data varied; for example, the Tony Khan Hotel Management Institute (TKHMI) in Sylhet maintained all data on the TVET training and post-training activities of the trained students, while Sylhet TTC had no updated employment-related information.

4.1.3 Challenges identified

Limited consultation with field-level implementers. While the respective institutes in the field sometimes selected occupations as per local employment opportunities in line with the training guidelines, some implementing partners felt they had been excluded from this process and that it would be more effective if the selection of trades and other practical decisions on what training to roll out were done in consultation with the field-level implementers.

While it is not part of the Project's design to equip training laboratories, many of the implementing partners raised concerns about the **budget allocation**, referring to other projects funded by ADB and the World Bank, where the budget is higher, which leads to lower motivation among trainers and instructors. Some interviewees in the field also highlighted the impact of budgets, noting that they lead to deficiencies in lab facilities that have not been improved, as well as the existence of outdated training equipment that does not meet employer requirements. It was suggested that the ProGRESS team assess lab facilities before approving any training courses going forward, to ensure they are adequate, ideally in conjunction with potential employers.

Limited budgets are seen as a risk factor, affecting the quality of the training, motivation of the staff, quality of facilities, for example, attendance of the trainees in Rajshahi TTC was around 40% and trainees do not regularly attend the training; some reported absences could go as high as 48% of the total number of students.

Some skill training providers expressed concern that adequate follow-up services were not ensured during the apprenticeship, as there was no budget allocation for the 4th month of the training, which they considered to be the most important for the trainees. It appears that non-governmental partners, such as Unicare Health and Technical Training Institute, TKHMI, and PRAN-RFL, have better job placement outcomes, with on-the-job training playing a significant role in both. There is not enough data available to triangulate this finding. A shortage of training materials and a recent price hike of raw materials for training needs were also identified as possible risks to project results. It was suggested that to prepare TVET trainees for transitioning to wage or self-employment, a career planning module could be provided in the last month of training and prior to graduation, to inform and educate the trainees on the employment market options available and how to navigate them.

Limited knowledge of services available. For entrepreneurship, it was observed that many TVET graduates were unclear about the services available to them from other sources, which they require during the start-up phase, such as financial support, trade licenses, and other regulatory requirements. The project could help link up with the Department of Social Welfare, SME Foundation, and MoWCA, which have the necessary facilities and can play an effective role, especially in the case of MoWCA, whose role is to support women entrepreneurs in coordination with TTCs to increase the employment rate.

Challenges accessing training centers. The team also noted that training centers are located in district towns, which are not easily accessible for women living in rural areas, who generally face higher levels of vulnerability. Access is equally limited for ethnic communitiesresiding in plain lands. Some SK identified the lack of residential facilities as a barrier to entry, especially for youth (specifically girls), persons with disabilities and ethnic communitiesin CHTs who are living in the remote areas of the district, while recognizing that residential facilities may not be an adequate solution for all districts/communities (due to cultural norms). Another possibility suggested is the possibility of mobile training facilities, which the ILO has developed in other countries, as a possible solution.

There is a need for improved identification and selection of beneficiaries. Although the team was informed that clear criteria existed for identifying participants, this was not consistently observed in practice, with many partners continuing to select participants as they had before the project. Of the 3,280 beneficiaries trained, 62%[22] were female, highlighting the project's success in achieving its goal of increasing access to training for women. Additionally, 13% of the participants belonged to ethnic communities. Still, only 2% were persons with disabilities, stressing that the project has not yet successfully managed to reach this group (see details below in the section for persons with disabilities).

Further, during the field visits, it was observed that some of the women interviewed expressed that their ability to seek employment would depend on family permission, for example, in Bagergat, out of 16 females, only two are working, with the others stating they are not interested in working due to family limitations. A weakness in targeting was also observed at Rajshahi TTC. Of the eleven students present during the visit, three already held diplomas from four-year programs, one had a master's degree, and four were currently studying at private universities.[23]. This highlights a clear flaw in the targeting process, as these individuals are not among the most vulnerable but appear to view TVET training primarily as a means of earning income.

These findings, along with the earlier example of persons with disabilities participants who were unable to retain employment due to their conditions (and the section on inclusion below), suggest a need for improved identification and selection of beneficiaries. The team was informed that the BMET has circulated a checklist among all the TTC to collect this information. This would ensure greater long-term impact beyond initial training and contribute more effectively to increased workforce participation. During the post-training follow-up calls scheduled by the project, ILO could further investigate potential barriers and assess whether they can be identified at the targeting stage.

3.5 Efficiency

While technical implementation has progressed well, the project has been severely impacted by the political changes in 2024, and further delays can be expected as a normal part of the election process in 2026. The identified resources are adequate, but there is dilution due to the geographic expansion. For these reasons, it is necessary for the project to reassess whether its targets and objectives are still feasible, and to strengthen management to ensure the project benefits from all potential synergies between its components. This revision should also consider the most effective way to ensure partners on the ground can make informed decisions, whether targets with longer-term partners also need to be adjusted and focus on the most successful experiences. Important and innovative tools have been developed for the project's oversight, including BLIMS and the GTMS. However, there is a need to identify clear targets and mechanisms that ensure regular and consistent monitoring and reporting of these, to inform management.

This section examines the effectiveness of the project management capacities and arrangements in place, as well as the adequacy of resources allocated, including the timeliness, accuracy, and utility of monitoring data.

[22] Note that Female enrolment in public TVET institutions is as low as 9–13%; higher in private ones (up to 33% in some trades). Source: K.M. Mahmud Hasan (2023) – *Empowering Her Future: Skill Development and Trade Opportunities for Women in Bangladesh*

[23] The team was informed that due to challenges around employability in higher education many university graduates are looking for odd jobs due to under employment, including enrolling in skills training as a means to access immediate employment.

This was accomplished by utilizing available reports, conducting KS interviews, accessing monitoring systems, and reviewing financial data provided.

4.5.1 Overall Financial Progress

At the time of the evaluation (August 2025), the project had committed 83% of the funds; however, expenditure was only at 23% (Table 4).

Table 44 Expenditure and commitment ProGRESS as of August 2025

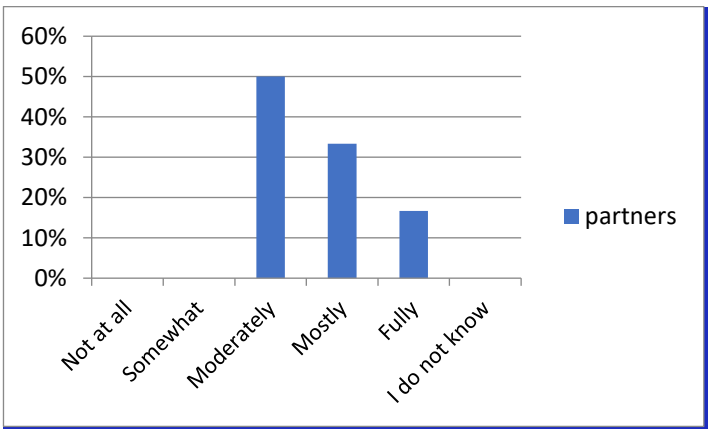
Amount in USD						For the current year 2025	
Expenditure until 11 August 2025	Year 2025					% of commitment	% of expenditure
	Budget	**Commitment**	**Expenditure**	**Commitment balance**	**Allocation**		
6,970,511	6,096,765	5,083,170	1,3985,02	3,684,667	1.013,595	83%	23%

Source: ILO Dhaka country office

The difference between commitment and expenditure is due to **significant delays suffered by the project**, mainly due to reasons outside its control and not related to technical implementation, mainly 1) Initial negotiations between the ILO and the Government took much longer than initially expected. This meant that some of the original objectives, such as access to online training due to the COVID-19 pandemic, were no longer relevant. More importantly, 2) the changing political environment , especially during 2024, had an important impact on project implementation at the national, regional and district level, as project focal points were changed or removed from their positions and new persons had to be onboarded and familiarized with the project. The CHT Hill District Council was particularly delayed, as some aspects of the project were frozen for sometimes as long as 5-6 months. Some partners were also affected, and others had to be replaced.

These findings are supported by the implementing partner's perceptions, as reflected in their survey responses, where most respondents perceive progress as "moderate" (see Figure 13).

Figure 14 Response to Survey question: In your view, how satisfactory has the progress of the project been?



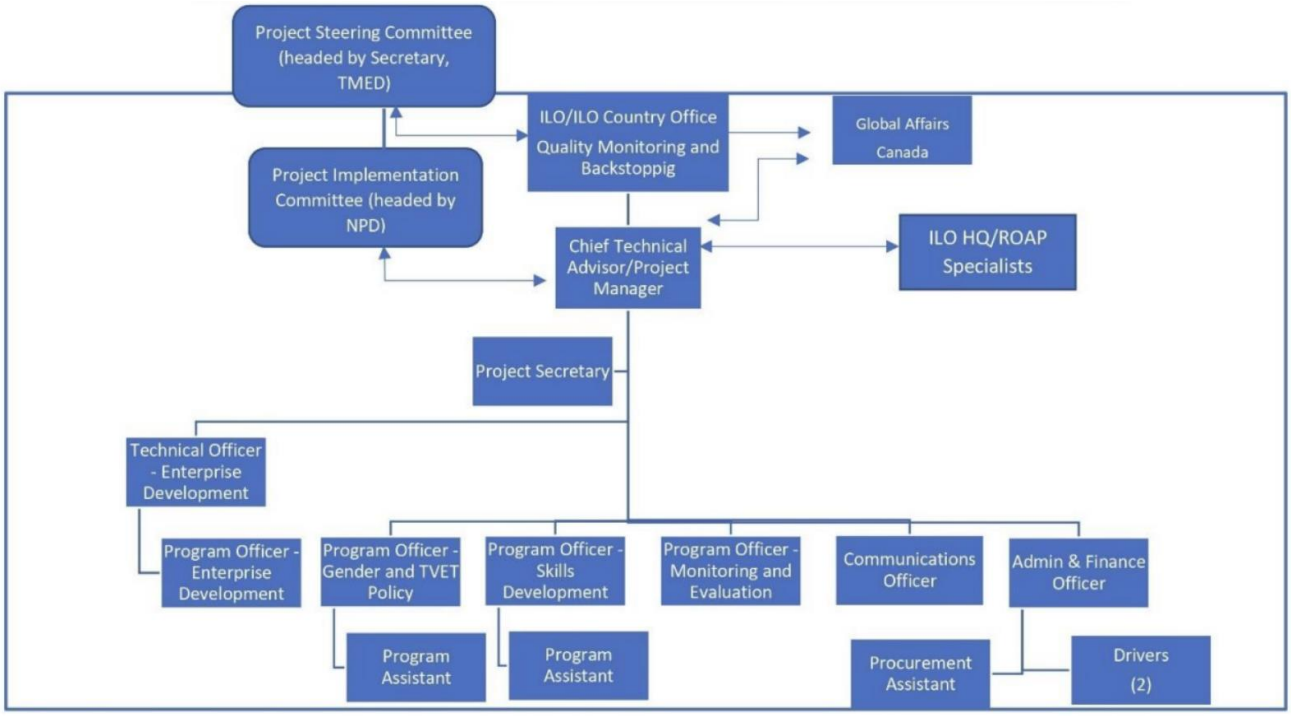
The key impact of this on project efficiency has been the dilution resulting from the geographic expansion. Inefficiencies linked to the lack of temporal alignment between components and activities were also identified and briefly mentioned in the relevance section. Because all three components are implemented in parallel, the project has not fully realized its full potential. This is particularly the case for knowledge products that should inform the other components. For example, the Assessment of gender equality and social inclusion gaps in the skills and TVET sector of Bangladesh, Promoting Gender-Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems

study was published in July 2025; as such, all work undertaken on skills training with the TVET before this launch did not benefit from the findings of this report.

3.5.1 Effectiveness of the management structure

In terms of structure, the project organogram in Figure 14 includes national and international staff based in Dhaka/Chittagong, as well as staff from the regional office.

Figure 15. The Flowchart of Project Management Setup



Source: Project TAPP

The project has secured technical staff to cover key areas, including both key components and other technical support areas, such as communication, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and finance. In addition to the project staff, the project benefits from ILO's broader technical expertise through the support of the senior programme officer, who promotes internal coherence and identifies potential opportunities or synergies with other ongoing projects, as well as from technical experts based in Delhi. The project's Programme Officer for Enterprise Development is based in the Chittagong office instead of Dhaka. It is unclear whether the project derives any benefits from a dedicated Chittagong office; however, several staff members raised it as a barrier to coordination.

While the **overall goal of the project is gender-oriented, the gender expertise is situated under one of the three core components** (Component 1). While the team was informed that advice to ensure consideration and gender sensitive language was incorporated into outputs of the other components, for example, for the TOR for the enterprise component[24], the structure does not necessarily promote consideration of gender from the beginning of these processes, where a more comprehensive or transformative approach could be proposed, in line with the recommendation to "Mobilize gender expertise at every step of the NEP process" as set out in the technical guidance note of the ILO on gender responsive national employment policies.

[24]https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/Technical%20Guidance%20Note%20Gender-Responsive%20NEPs%20-%2003.2025.pdf

The project sets out two managing structures, mainly the **Project Steering Committee (PSC)**[25] led by the TMED and in charge of providing overall strategic guidance, assessing all aspects of Project progress against targeted results[26]. The PSC was scheduled to take place every six months; however, in practice, it has met only three times, in October 2023, June 2024 and July 2025. Government counterparts interviewed highlighted the difficulty in calling these meetings due to other existing commitments.

The second management structure identified in the TAPP is the **Project Implementation Committee** (PIC), chaired by the National Project Director (NPD) in the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) under TMED, with the role to oversee overall project implementation. The PIC was expected to have a more hands-on approach and meet every three months. In practice, however, the PIC has only met four times (June 2023, February 2024, November 2024, March 2025). Different stakeholders offered different reasons why these had not taken place; however, the evaluation team considers this to be outside the scope of the evaluation and limits the analysis to the impact it has on the project.

3.5.2 Working arrangements with partners

The project has signed agreements with government line ministries, NGOs, private service providers, CSOs, and other agencies involved in skill development training, job placement, and/or capacity building. In most cases, the project signed short-term contracts, which are renewed based on performance. For example, some TTCs successfully provided training for one batch of students and established linkages with employers or helped them start self-employment; these were renewed, while others were dropped due to poor performance. Stakeholders interviewed saw this as an effective strategy.

Some partnerships were affected by the changing situation, and in some instances, this led to delays, ultimately resulting in the termination or discontinuation of the Project's agreement.

Field visits did not yield any evidence of involvement at the field level from some key partners who work with the project at the national level, such as the Department of Youth or MoWCA; however, these could play an important role in components 2 and 3, supporting youth and women trainees to secure employment.

In some instances, CB-TREE[27] and training needs assessment tools were used (e.g., Sylhet and in CHT), which allows the partners to identify suitable training needs. Some private partners, e.g., BAPA, had autonomy to decide what courses to offer, based on the needs of host companies. In other instances, for example, the case of SME Foundation, the project was not consulted on what trade to offer through BAPA. **Some implementing partners felt they had limited feedback or the ability to affect decision-making in the project implementation**. Some partners mentioned that it would be more effective if field-level implementers were consulted for -for example, the selection of trades. Other partners expressed concern that they would have insufficient time to deliver the agreed-upon results, given the delays, and were hoping for consideration of extensions. They were also **overburdened by regular reporting requirements**.

3.5.3 Effectiveness of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

M&E is managed by the M&E officer in Dhaka. The project has developed a series of oversight and monitoring tools, mainly:

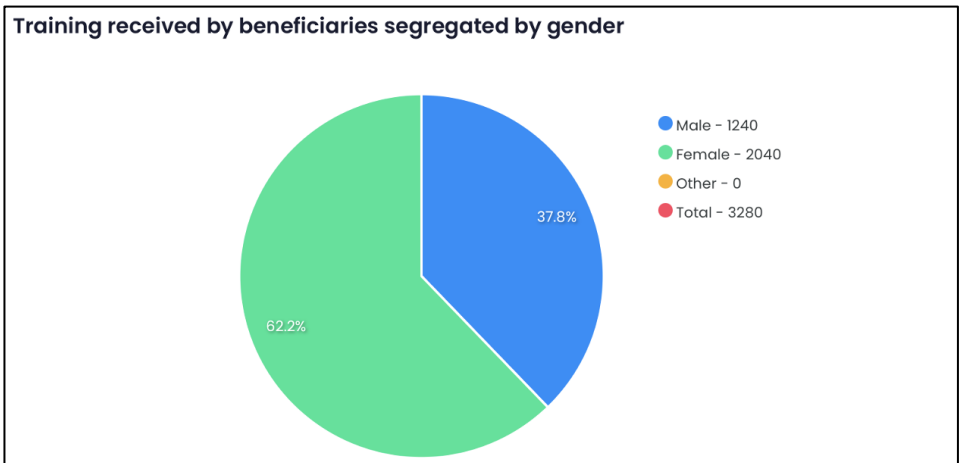
1) The project relies mostly on a tool developed specifically for the ProGRESS project called **BLIMS**, which allows for detailed real-time tracking of project beneficiaries by key variables such as gender, ethnic minority (EM) and persons with disabilities (PWD) by year. Figure 15 below is a screenshot from the BLIMS dashboard, which shows ProGRESS beneficiaries by sex.

[25] Description of the PSC as per the TAPP: There will be a PSC headed by the Secretary of the Technical and Madrasah Education Division, Ministry of Education. The PSC will be the oversight body for the Project. It will provide overall strategic guidance, assess all aspects of Project progress against targeted results, including examination of lessons learned and service delivery, review and endorse annual work plans.

[26] ProGRESS Prodoc

[27] CB-Tree is Community-Based Training for Rural Economic Empowerment

Figure 16. Screenshot of BLIMS dashboard summary of project beneficiaries segregated by gender



Year	Male	Female	Total	PWDs	EM
	144 (52.17 %)	132 (47.83 %)	276	2	0
2023	218 (43.08 %)	288 (56.92 %)	506	24	0
2024	265 (25.80 %)	762 (74.20 %)	1027	8	14

Source: BLIMS

It also allows for monitoring the number of events by type (see Table 5) while also breaking down participants by gender, ethnicity and disabilities.

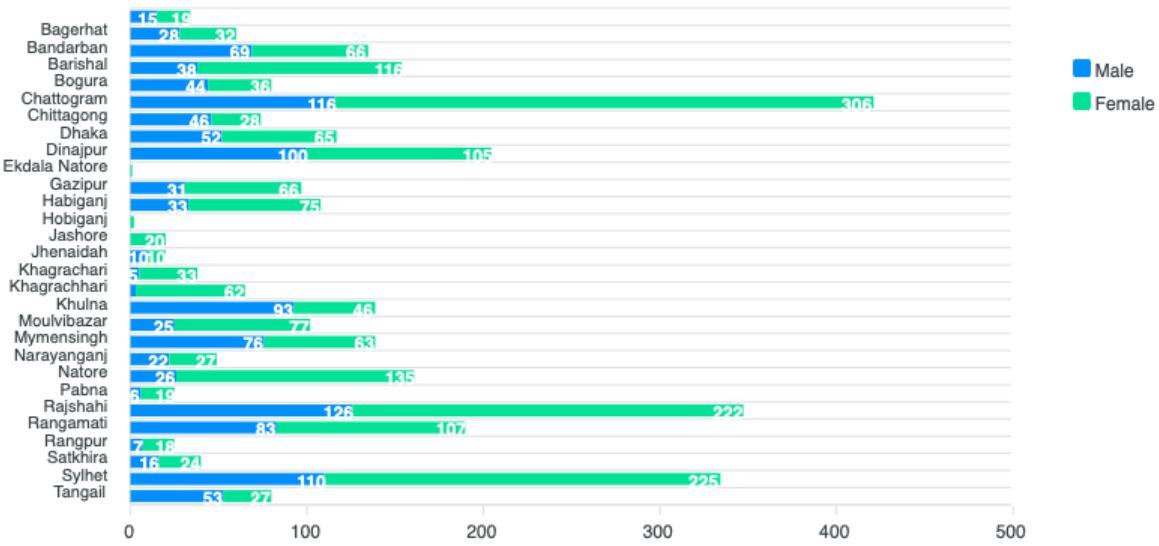
Table 5. Screenshot of BLIM's dashboard showing breakdown by type of event

Event	Number of Event	Male	Female	Total	PWDs	EM
Policy Dialogue	13	525 (68.72 %)	239 (31.28 %)	764	4	5
Policy Meeting	28	371 (45.02 %)	453 (54.98 %)	824	4	618
Round Table Discussion	24	356 (57.33 %)	265 (42.67 %)	621	1	426
Seminar	37	794 (48.12 %)	856 (51.88 %)	1650	7	701
Technical Meeting	135	1712 (44.39 %)	2145 (55.61 %)	3857	28	1768
Training	64	741 (47.44 %)	821 (52.56 %)	1562	118	584
Workshop	143	3328 (59.35 %)	2279 (40.65 %)	5607	587	633
Grand Total	444	7827 (52.58 %)	7058 (47.42 %)	14885	749	4735

Source: BLIMS

The BLIMS provides a breakdown by gender and region (as well as persons with disability persons with disabilities and Ethnic communities). This allows us to visualize districts where women's participation is higher (see Figure 16).

Figure 17. BLIMS dashboard. Beneficiary participation of apprenticeships by district and gender



Source: BLIMS

This breakdown, however, only reflects participation, so it is not possible to assess from the dashboard which districts were more successful at securing employment and which districts proved more successful at securing employment for women, EM, or persons with disabilities. **Being able to visualize the breakdown of these variables (employment generation) is key to being able to do an analysis of underlying success factors and barriers, and strengthen the project going forward.**

The evaluation team was informed that partners input the data directly into BLIMS while the M&E officer oversees "cleaning it" to ensure accuracy. Given the level of detail it includes per beneficiary (personal and family data, financial data, etc.), inputting it can be quite time-demanding for both partners and the M&E officer. However, implementers complained that they cannot access the detailed information and, as a result, are unable to benefit from much of this effort.

The BLIMS appears to be a very effective system, capable of providing accurate, timely, and detailed information. However, at the time of the mid-term evaluation, most of these interfaces had just become active, with some still in process. As such, it appears that for the first part of the project, the monitoring system was under development and did not support progress monitoring for much of the first half**.** Some staff members interviewed expressed interest in accessing detailed data, not just the dashboard summaries, to facilitate better analysis. It was reported that other projects were exploring the possibility of adapting BLIMS to their projects, recognizing it as a valuable tool.

2) **The Log frame** was developed at the start of the project and sets out indicators, targets, annual actuals and underlying assumptions. Targets are mostly clear, although some remain 'to be determined and some baselines are missing or also "to be determined". On closer inspection, the evaluation team verified that some Indicators set out are very clear, for example, 1213 "Members of selected business associations benefit from capacity building. Members of target business associations receive training on gender friendly business practices, policies and regulations and apply learning", with a planned reach of 60 members. Some are result-oriented, for example, 1121 "DTE and partners' institutions staff trained and engaged in gender planning, budgeting and monitoring" looks at % of TVET institutes implementing/coping gender and green action plan. It is noted that some indicators are still process-oriented (for example, 1123 examines the number of participants), but more importantly, actual data for 2023 and 2024 have not been updated, despite the M&E plan referring to an annual or semiannual data collection frequency. As a result, the log frame is unable to reflect progress against the plan as intended. Some of the KS interviewed confirmed they did not feel the current mechanisms allowed them to measure the project's progress.

In addition, the log frame database includes a results chain analysis (which presumably informed the development of the TOC), a detailed M&E plan, a performance monitoring framework, and a risk assessment and mitigation matrix. None of them have been updated to reflect annual data or revised to the changing environment.

3) **Annual workplans.** The team was informed that the annual work plan, developed jointly by all three components, is led and approved by the government and serves as guidance for the annual tracking of activities. The AWP includes targets, planned activities, details of tasks, and tasks for the year (by quarter). It also identifies implementing and collaborating partners. AWPs were provided for 2024 and 2025; however, the AWP for 2024 includes some updates for 2023, and an additional summary of the January to May progress update was also made available to the ET. This is a clear management tool that identifies all key relevant aspects needed for planning and implementation. KS agreed that this is an effective planning tool that helps guide annual work.

What does not come across clearly is how the different tools created come together. Initially, **there is limited consistency between the results framework and the indicators the M&E system monitors**. Similarly, there is limited continuity between the data that is collected in the BLIMS, and the goals as they are set out in the Log frame and the annual workplans. An example of these inconsistemcies between the different tools is presented in Table 6. As a result, many of the targets set out in the results framework do not have a corresponding indicator in the monitoring system. In effect this means there isn't always data to measure progress for the different goals in the results framework. This finding was confirmed by key stakeholder interviewed in country, at regional level and in Canada.

Table 6 Indicators for output 1111comparison

OUTPUT 1111			
Logframe	**AWP 24**	**AWP 25**	**BLIMS**
1) TOR for the Gender and Skills Taskforce team prepared, and the TF is operationalized.	1. Organize a half-day workshop for forming a gender and skills task force, including MOWCA, NSDA, TMED	1) Launch of the Gender and Skills Taskforce	number of events (policy dialogue, policy meeting, round table discussion)
2) 3 initiatives (training, policy dialogue or action plan), and	2. Organize a one-day orientation workshop with all taskforce and working group members after the formation of the taskforce	2) 10 Capacity building initiatives for Taskforce members (workshop/meeting/training)	
3) 25 officials trained.	3) Conduct # of workshops and # of meetings to form the task force		

3.5.4 Challenges identified include

At the field level, M&E activities, including tracking of post-training status, are mostly dependent on the ILO country office (this will change once the GTMS is functional, although that only applies to post-training tracking). Some KS also mentioned that they had not seen the reports; as such, there is room for increased sharing of information with project partners.

Many indicators are still process-oriented, focusing on the workshops or the number of trainings. With no indicators to look at, for example, the quality of the training. The results of the Tracer Surveyo**, as well as the Graduate Tracking and Management System (the app being developed for the Bangladesh government to improve post-training follow-up not only of ProGRESS but also of all TVET and diploma graduates in the country),** will be an important move in this direction. This more narrative/qualitative approach would focus on underlying variables. For example, care training was seen as relevant in some of the districts visited, but not in

others. The M&E system is currently unable to identify this type of more qualitative performance/results-based outcome.

In terms of timeliness, while the BLIMS may be accessed live, some lags were observed between the field data and when it is uploaded to the system.

As mentioned before, currently, ILO implementers do not have access to the full dataset for confidentiality reasons. This, together with the challenges mentioned above, limits the system's ability to influence decision-making and resource allocation. Perhaps a system can be developed to allow access to the full dataset with the exception of limited sensitive information (for example, names).

3.6 Potential Impact and Likelihood of Sustainability

3.6.1 Potential Impact.

The project has demonstrated a positive direct impact on the lives of beneficiaries, aligning with the ILO's tripartite mandate to secure employment. Direct capacity building, coupled with the strengthening of partners and systems, is promoting a more gender aware system. By working at both national and district levels and addressing structural barriers, the project aims to achieve systemic change and sustained behavioral change in partners; these are long-term goals that will require ongoing investment. Ultimately, these changes aim to create new partnerships and strengthen accountability.

The impact section assesses the extent to which project interventions have influenced behavioral change in partner organizations. It explores the presence of mechanisms for assessing the impact on partners' and institutions' capacities to deliver better and more accessible services. Ultimately, it highlights any positive changes in the lives of the project's ultimate beneficiaries. The evaluation team also examined the mechanisms in place and whether the current policy/regulatory environment is conducive to systematically anchoring and scaling up interventions. Additionally, it assessed how these changes align with the ILO's tripartite mandate.

Impact refers to the long-term, significant changes that occur as a result of an intervention, program, or policy, focusing on answering the fundamental question, "What difference did the intervention make?". In the inception report, the evaluation team already highlighted the expectation that "it is likely too early to look at impact," especially given the delays in implementation. The data gathering phase confirmed this, while many elements of the project design and some results observed are very likely to have positive impact, in most instances it is too early to be able to assert this with any confidence, however, the evaluation team focused on trying to assess to what extent the ProGRESS project has contributed to build stakeholders capacities to which are likely to lead to continue efforts beyond project duration.

Impact on overall goal: increased productivity and employment opportunities

In terms of **direct impact on beneficiaries' lives**, a reported 1,497 beneficiaries secured employment with the support of the project, and an additional 596 benefited from self-employment. Securing employment already has a direct impact. Many more saw their businesses strengthened either through increased capacity or direct support securing accreditation. An additional 879 beneficiaries gained access to apprenticeships, and 3,280 individuals will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills, making them more likely to secure employment or access increased opportunities. While, as stated in the inception report the evaluation team considers it is too early to be able to measure the longer-term impact of this investment, positive impact on participants' lives was already observed.

A key strength of the project in terms of impact is its focus on capacity building and awareness raising not only for gender but also for other areas, to affect the system and have a long-term impact, for example, with the creation of TOT on soft skills like ICT and the guidelines for introducing green jobs across the curriculum in TVET.

With a focus on gender but also building capacity for partners to be better positioned to support skills SME and other initiatives, together with support for more gender-responsive structures (including e.g. curricula), can be reasonably expected to lead to **increased awareness on gender issues at different levels (both district level and national level) and with it behavioral changes**. A key strength, and part of the project design, is the project's broad selection of partners (government, employers, NGOs) at both levels (national and district). Increased gender capacity at these different levels is seen as mutually reinforcing, strengthening the likelihood that progress and results will be sustained and lead to a positive impact. An important weakness identified is the need to strengthen the link between skills training and employment by continuing to support this interaction, as well as through the presence of job placement staff at skills centers.

One specific outcome is the creation of the Interministerial Gender Task Force. While the creation itself is not proof of impact, it is designed to promote coherence and accountability across government institutions, thereby strengthening the likelihood of impact. This is supported by the project's focus on the policy level, building capacity, raising awareness, and providing evidence through knowledge products to inform future decision-making. More structural changes in TVET, both in terms of curriculum and facilities, are also seen as important in institutionalizing results, which in the future should make skills training more accessible and effective.

Influence on partners' behavior and systemic changes

An important impact of the project is **the facilitation of new partnerships.** The project has brought new partners into the skills area, for example, by bringing in UN Women, who, by their own admission, did not have work with TVET as a primary sector before. The project is also bringing TVET closer to employers, leveraging its unique mandate. These actions create the conditions for potential to impact future work by securing a continued gender lens work and a more demand-oriented (effective) skills system. Another example of leveraging partners to strengthen buy-in is the work done with the SME Foundation tourism board. "We have been supporting them. They are the custodians." Wide participation leads to broader ownership of the project, as well as a broader impact that benefits the entire community. The primary weakness, from the perspective of impact and sustainability, in terms of partnerships, is the limited participation of women's organizations. These can ensure context-specific knowledge but may also serve as a security mechanism for sustainability in the event of political changes. Strengthening this element in the coming years will enhance the project's likelihood of sustainability.

The project has a series of initiatives which, once set up and if successful, should lead to long-term impact. For example, the project is currently setting up a Business Development service Portal. This portal aims to enhance the quality and responsiveness of business development services available to entrepreneurs, particularly women, by providing improved access to information and resources. The request for proposals was launched in June 2025, so this evaluation is not able to speak to. Similarly, the already mentioned **Graduate Tracking and Management System, intended to be led by the government, should strengthen the system going forward.** These initiatives build on pre-existing ILO initiatives, such as the Skills Needs Anticipation System, Employment Support Services, BDS services, or the ILO help desk, which continue to strengthen the national capacity to support and monitor ongoing efforts.

The project works to **address both the formal and informal barriers to women's access to skills and employment opportunities**. In the case of TVET-related work, knowledge products provide an opportunity to understand the differences between locations and identify concrete interventions tailored to each specific context. They also help create spaces that address specific barriers. Unlike more policy-oriented efforts, skill development initiatives tend to be less political, meaning future changes in this area are likely to face fewer obstacles.

The project builds on the ILO's tripartite approach as a strength and its overall global objectives.

When addressing the **commitment to tripartism**, which is the central framework modality and one guiding principle of ILO Bangladesh's DWCP design, implementation and governance, the evaluability assessment highlighted as a shortcoming that the project had not yet been able to foster the engagement of the private sector overall fully, and especially of the trade unions (NCCWE). Efforts to strengthen this link include regular participation of the NCCWE at divisional and national consultations, and the project also established a partnership with the Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies (a research wing of the Trade Union) in relation to

the “Workwise Youth” tool. The project signed an implementation agreement with the BEF in 2023; however, field-based findings did not reveal any business entities that had offered employment to TVET graduates or provided support for apprenticeships. At the district level, weak or no coordination was observed between skill training providers and employers or associations. The area where most progress was reported was in support of gender awareness, including:

- NCCWE/FBCCI/Women's Chamber has been engaged in drafting the Action Plan of the Gender and Skills Taskforce, as a member of the Sub-committee 2- Monitoring and evaluation.
- BEF conducted awareness-raising sessions on gender-responsive working environments with over 250 private sector representatives from district-level associations and chambers across 10 districts.
- BEF interviewed more than 250 HR representatives, owners and employees for a Survey on Recruitment and Retention of female employees
- Two National-level Validation Workshops arranged with the Dhaka-based owner, HR and employees on the Survey and the gender equality guidelines for the employers
- Development of Gender Equality Guidelines for the Employers with BEF as a first-of-its-kind guiding document for the private sector on ensuring a gender responsive work environment in the world of work.

It should also be noted that the Sylhet Women Chamber of Commerce, Chittagong Women Chamber of Commerce and NASCIB are all affiliated with FBCCI, which is a member of BEF.

ProGRESS’ objectives are aligned with the ILO’s Decent Work agenda, primarily focusing on promoting three key pillars of the Decent Work and Sustainable Development Goals agenda.[28], mainly employment creation, social dialogue and social protection. In 2015, these became an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically in relation to Goal 8, which calls for the promotion of sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work. The project is also aligned with the ILO’s transformative agenda on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment[29], specifically, the project looks at:

- Improving work conditions in the care sector, which women disproportionately dominate.
- Addressing and ending violence and harassment in the workplace. This is supported by international labor standards, such as the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).
- Supporting women entrepreneurs, particularly in the informal economy, including supporting women-owned businesses in the green, digital, and care economies.
- Assisting women working in the informal economy to transition to the formal sector, which provides access to better pay, markets, and social protection.
- Addressing discrimination, including gender, race, indigenous status and disability.

3.6.2. Sustainability.

The project interventions build on over a decade of support to Bangladesh’s TVET system and are in line with the ILO’s overall global goals and national priorities, helping to secure sustainability. The overall exit strategy focuses on identifying strategic partners and barriers to entry and then building up their capacity and awareness to ensure an inclusive and gender lens, and to provide them with the tools and evidence to be able to continue implementing and/or advocating with this inclusion/gender lens going forward within their own programming/financing.

In this section, the evaluation team assessed the extent to which the project design incorporates clear exit strategies and whether they are being implemented, whether some partners are seen as better placed to

[28] https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/decent-work#[ilo_url_NOT_FOUND_id:3648]
[29] the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25

contribute to the sustainability of the project's initiatives, as well as engagement of target groups and stakeholders to ensure buy-in post-project ownership.

Contribution of ProGRESS towards building capacities and conditions for sustainability

As highlighted in the inception report, the evaluation team approached this from the perspective of project design, given that it is likely too early to see any evidence of sustainability. None of the assessed interventions had an explicit sustainability or transition strategy in place. The ET found no references to the institutional framework, resources, and human capacity needed to sustain the benefits post-implementation; however, the project design includes a series of elements geared towards sustainability.

A clear focus on policy, increased awareness of gender issues, and support through knowledge products that identify, for example, barriers to entry for women, are facilitated by the development of tools/guidelines and participatory processes (such as the interministerial skills taskforce). This leads to an increased capacity to support gender policies beyond the project.

Through the **creation of knowledge products** that can provide evidence to help inform future evidence-based decision making in terms of knowledge creation, the project has undertaken three reports, as well as technical guidance, such as the technical guideline on gender and green jobs and a desk review of national policy was undertaken jointly with UN Women. The project reports that over 15,300 persons participated in the various events organized by the project (47% women), which helps to build momentum for these products to have a life beyond the project. The key knowledge products produced are:

- FINAL REPORT on Gender Responsive Budgeting Dialogue
- Policy Brief on Gender Responsive TVET and Skills System
- Gender gap assessment
- Desk review on National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2022 through a gender lens

The project also aims to undertake **structural changes to TVET,** both in terms of curriculum and facility improvements. This can be seen as a means of institutionalizing results and securing sustainability, and can also serve as models for replication and are by design expected to outlive the project.

Many of the project's elements are geared towards affecting the system, and as such, to have a long-lasting, sustainable impact. For example, the Interministerial gender skills task force already mentioned is a novel proposal to ensure a more coherent, government-wide approach to mainstreaming gender and *«marks a step towards sustainably integrating gender equality and social inclusion in structural reforms».*[30] Similarly, the work with institutions like the TVET, addressing gender and examining structural barriers, as well as changes to the TVET curriculum, structures, and training of trainers, is, in principle, an intervention designed to have a long-lasting effect.

Inclusion of a broad spectrum of partners helps to strengthen the ecosystem.

A holistic Community approach has helped to empower partners, ensuring that ownership and accountability rely on partners, not the ILO. One example of this is the work with the Khasia indigenous community, managing Community-Based Tourism (CBT) at Jaflong, Sylhet. The CBT is managed and led by the Destination Management Committee, which involves the entire community. With strengthened capacity and improved business support services, the DMC is expected to be able to continue the initiatives beyond the project tenure. Similarly, the Shared Service Facility Centre (SSFC) is led by a community management committee and equipped with weaving machines produced by craftspersons in the same community, backed up by women's entrepreneurship trainers. This can have a sustainable impact, boosting wages and self-employment.

At the field level, different partners demonstrated varying levels of engagement, which was also true for the different beneficiary groups observed. A more qualitative/narrative approach to monitoring, as mentioned earlier, would enable the ILO to gain a better understanding of which partners are more invested and to

[30] ILO *Strategic review of Global Affairs Canada-funded skills and employment development projects in Bangladesh. May 2025. Sandra Rothboeck, Consultant*

understand the reasons behind this. This report highlights several variables to consider, for example, the motivation (or lack thereof) stemming from lower wages compared to other ongoing projects.

The report also emphasizes the importance of accurately identifying beneficiaries as a crucial factor **for sustainability**. The project is putting mechanisms in place to be better able to track graduates (e.g., the evaluation team was informed that through the use of the Graduate Tracking and Management System, the project had secured the commitment from the government to continue tracking the status of beneficiaries over 12 months after training. This will enable the project to assess its sustainability and results. These assessments should include questions that allow the project to identify underlying variables as to why -or why not- employment was secured (and ideally if retained), variables to differentiate beneficiaries who sought employment but failed to secure it from (and why) from those that did not actively seek employment after training.

The **project's alignment with national priorities is seen as an important element to secure sustainability**, mainly its contribution to the Country Priority 1 of the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) for 2017-2020: "Effective employment policies to enhance employability through skill development including for green growth" and more particularly the following DWCP outcomes: Outcome 1.2: Promoted accessibility of TVET system, aligned with National Skill Development Policy (NSDP) especially for women, disadvantaged groups, people with disabilities and ethnic groups and in view of introducing skills in emerging technologies for climate resilient green growth ensures there project's efforts have a natural "home" for continuity once the project is over. The upcoming elections are viewed as a risk to sustainability, as they may lead to changes in government leadership. This key project partner could, in turn, result in shifts in government priorities. Policy-level work in component 1 is especially at risk.

4. Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices

In this section we include lessons learned and good practices identified during the evaluation that meet ILO criteria. A more detailed description for each of these can be found in annex F.

4.1 Lessons Learned

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may beincluded in the full evaluation report.

1. **Higher employment rate when there is a designated person is specifically assigned to link training and job placement**. While a the main target of the project is to reach 10,000 beneficiaries, the ultimate goal is to secure employment. During the field visits it was observed that the existance of a **designated person assigned for job placement** within the skills learning centers significantly improved the likelihood of securing employment, however, funding for this role was not always prioritised, undermining the project's long-term impact.

2. **Need to assess adequacy of facilities for training aimed at persons with disabilities.** Since the project specifically aims to reach persons with disabilities, it is necessary to ensure facilities are accessible and meet specific requirements, including a supportive learning environment and a well-equipped lab. It is also necessary to understrand it partners are able (and willing) to take on this population, and lastly, ensure that facilities are adequate but also that the sectors identifeid for training are adequate and friendly to the needs and limitations

4.2 Emerging Good Practices

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation.

1) **Development of a system that provides real-time dissagregated information of the data collected by the project.** The Beneficiary Learning Information Management System (BLIMS) is a unique system developed by the ProGRESS to capture the quantitative information and able to provide accurate, timely

and detailed information to the project team and other authorized users. The BLIMS is able to provide real time disaggregated data, by location, sex and sectors on the different project components and supports management in evidenced-based decision making. However, this is not able to provide any qualitative information, i.e. impeding and influencing factors and issue related to low or not performing and information on what works and what not and why, and most users were unable to access raw data to undertake further analysis.

2) **Promotion of employment and empowerment of ethnic communities through community based initaitives.** The ProGRESS project together with the Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) identified community based initiatives to boost employment in tourism for the Khashia ethnic community by promoting homestays, cultural experiences, and environmentally friendly activities,. creating new income opportunities for local residents. With the support of ProGRESS, BTB in revising policies and guidelines to promote inclusive practices that create decent work opportunities and encourage participation of women, youth, and other ethnic communities in the tourism sector. The BTB is also preparing a Code of Conduct for Community-Based Tourism to enhance the sector's ecosystem in Bangladesh. The tourism sector is identified as having significant potential through a comprehensive value chain study conducted by the project. Community based tourism is relatively new concept in Bangladesh.

5. Conclusions

The ProGRESS project is appreciated by all stakeholders as highly ***relevant***, addressing pressing issues faced in the TVET system in Bangladesh in line with national priorities and the ILO's global agenda. The ILO is uniquely positioned to address these gaps due to its tripartite mandate, as well as its ability to build on its extensive experience working with the Government of Canada to support the TVET system.

The project demonstrates high levels of coherence, systematically addressing the reform needs highlighted in national development plans and strategies, and providing continuity to similar TVET reform projects implemented by the ILO. The project is also actively seeking to align itself with other major initiatives in the sector to maximize its impact. Internally, there are opportunities to strengthen coherence by promoting exchange between partners, especially at the district level, breaking silos between components and promoting participation of national-level partners at the district level. Increased involvement of women's rights groups would further strengthen the project. (recommendation 3)

Efficiency was greatly affected by national turmoil in 2024 and further hampered by limited coordination mechanisms, which have led to an increasingly decentralized and siloed approach. The resources were adequate for the initial project design, however, the geographic expansion from 3 to 10 districts, without an accompanying increase in resources, has led to dilution, especially in regard to areas of focus both geographically (Chittagong) and the innovative element of inclusion. (recommendation 1) . This project should also consider how to make oversight and management mechanisms fit-for-purpose to ensure managers and partners can make informed decisions and identify effective management mechanisms if the ones set out in the PRODOC are not realistic. (Recommendation 4).

The project would have benefited from a more realistic Theory of Change with a clear, overarching results chain and well-defined targets and indicators, which could have highlighted causal effects and better communicated progress and higher-level impact. The project's logic—both within and across components —remains insufficient, limiting the ability to assess which interventions are truly effective and to strengthen partners' performance. Effective tools have been developed to monitor the project, such as BLIMS or the GTMS; however, there is a need to ensure that targets are measurable and to identify indicators that can track progress against those targets. The project needs to introduce a more qualitative approach that looks not only at "what" happened but tries to understand the underlying causes, the "why" and "how" it happened. (recommendation 4). Inefficiencies linked to the lack of temporal alignment between components and activities were also

identified. Because all three components are implemented in parallel, the project has not fully realized its full potential. This is particularly the case for knowledge products that should inform the other components. (recommendation 2).

ProGRESS has ***effectively*** achieved significant milestones and pushed forward all key medium-term goals. It has strengthened national capacity to advocate for the implementation of gender policy and demonstrated its ability to enhance the links between skills training and employment, while improving accessibility for women and ethnic communities to skills training. Success between sectors is varied; for example, there is limited progress in the ICT and green sectors, while there are successful and innovative proposals in the agro and tourism sectors. Much of the employment reported was secured in sectors outside the four prioritized. It may be opportune to analyze which sectors have been more successful and consider whether the project should continue to push all sectors as initially identified, going forward.

ILO's transversal themes were incorporated into the project design and reflected in the implementation of interventions and reporting to different degrees. Specifically, the gender equality approach is clear throughout the project. There is, however, significantly less progress in support for people with disabilities, ethnic communities and environmental sustainability. Some innovative initiatives to support ethnic communities have been identified and should be further explored. The project should consider it was overly ambitious in its intended scope. The proposed revision should consider what can be realistically achieved in support of other groups, mainly persons with disabilities, perhaps prioritizing structural change and guidance for example, identifying standards for skills centers that want to include persons with disabilities; identifying sectors/companies that can be linked to this sector, rather than focusing on including a certain number of persons in trainings that may not lead to effective employment opportunities. Adequate targeting and the strengthening of the link between skills and employment remain key areas of focus going forward as is the need to identify tailored responses that address the challenges faced by the different groups. (recommendation 5).

Many of the projects' strategies are inherently geared towards system change and aim at sustainability, including strong policy engagement, evidence building, capacity building, and stakeholder consultation. The project has further strengthened its exit strategy through the identification and capacity building of a broad range of strategic partners, providing evidence and promoting spaces for coordination to build coherence and promote continued implementation within their own structures.

Given the delays and that the project is significantly smaller than other similar initiatives, as well as ILO's unique tripartite mandate and the general agreement that current supply-driven systems are not able meet employer's demand, the project is particularly well positioned to act as a piloting ground for innovation to address the systemic inefficiency identified, with successful experiences informing larger projects of the IFIs. To secure ***impact***it may be preferable to reduce the target number of beneficiaries and focus on developing strategic and catalytic models that strengthen readiness and can be replicated. This is particularly important, given the expressed preference by key stakeholders for innovation that moves away from the "business as usual" model. From this perspective, the mid-term is a strategic time to review progress, goals, and the feasibility of achieving the original goals. Still, it's also an opportunity to adapt the project to the current environment and make strategic changes based on successes, taking advantage of existing opportunities stemming from the work of other actors, which will help maximize the project's impact and contribution to the greater environment.

Sustainability is reinforced by the fact the project builds on years of collaboration with the Governments of Canada and Bangladesh. Strengthening the exit strategy should be prioritized in the project's second half by ensuring lessons learned are incorporated into its strategic partnerships; capacity of strategic partners continues to be reinforced to ensure the systematic inclusion and gender approach.

6. Recommendations

The following five recommendations offer practical guidance to sustain and strengthen the ProGRESS project during its second half. They aim to address the challenges described in the report and consider the current socio-political landscape.

Recommendation 1: Strengthen project impact by revisiting geographic and thematic scope through strategic prioritization, paying particular attention to identifying and promoting innovative solutions that build on ILO's comparative advantages and demonstrably work for women and other vulnerable populations.

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of resources
CO project management with component leads	**High**	**Immediate**	**Medium**

Given the implementation delays (in the past and expected with the upcoming elections) and the evaluation's conclusion that the project has suffered from dilution, the evaluation recommends project management to identify key thematic areas for prioritisation during the second half of the project. A more deliberate refocusing could help safeguard project achievements to date while positioning the initiative to deliver more sustainable and impactful outcomes over the longer term.

The project should also reassess and refine its geographic scope. At present, resources are spread too thinly across multiple locations, which dilutes efforts, limits opportunities for innovation, and reduces the project's capacity to generate tangible, high-quality results. By concentrating activities within a smaller and more clearly defined geographic focus, the project would be better positioned to engage more deeply with local stakeholders and partners, adapt interventions to specific contexts, and demonstrate measurable change more effectively.

A more focused geographic approach would also enhance efficiency by reducing logistical complexity and helping to improve coordination among partners and constituents, strengthening sustainability. Concentration of efforts would further strengthen visibility, as results would be more evident and easier to communicate to the government, social partners, and development partners. Ultimately, a strategic narrowing of geographic scope would not only maximize the value added by current resources but also create a stronger foundation for sustainability and long-term impact.

Lastly, it may be worthwhile to assess whether some implementing partners require an extension of timelines to complete their deliverables to the expected level of quality. Granting such flexibility could prevent rushed outputs, allow for deeper engagement, and ensure that the products developed meet both technical standards and stakeholder needs.

Recommendation 2: The project should consider adopting a more strategically focused approach to sectoral engagement, building on evidence and lessons learned, to ensure greater alignment with labor market demand and national development priorities.

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of resources
CO project management with component leads	**Medium**	**Immediate**	**Low**

At present, interventions span a wide range of sectors, but without clear prioritization, there is a risk of dispersing resources and limiting the depth of results. A sharper focus, grounded in existing evidence, would enable the project to concentrate its efforts on those sectors most likely to generate sustainable employment

opportunities, particularly in the medium to long term. Evidence-based sectoral targeting would also help ensure greater alignment with labor market demand and national development priorities.

In defining this focus, attention should be given to sectors that are more accessible and welcoming to women, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups. By prioritizing inclusive sectors, the project can play a critical role in advancing equity and empowerment, while also addressing structural barriers to decent work. Furthermore, identifying sectors with high growth potential can create pathways for large-scale employment generation and foster stronger engagement with private sector employers.

Another important consideration is the type of training and support provided within these sectors. The project should establish clear criteria for when standardized, competency-based training is most appropriate—such as in sectors with established occupational standards and formal career pathways—versus when more flexible approaches, such as informal training, apprenticeships, or entrepreneurship support, may yield better outcomes. Tailoring the training modality to the specific characteristics of each sector and target group will increase both relevance and impact.

Finally, sectoral prioritization should be accompanied by geographic considerations, recognizing that certain industries are regionally concentrated. This will enable the project to maximize synergies between sectoral and geographic targeting, thereby enhancing efficiency and the likelihood of demonstrable impact. A more deliberate and evidence-informed sectoral focus would not only improve the project's effectiveness but also strengthen its ability to generate models for replication and policy influence.

Recommendation 3: The project should shift focus from aiming to reach the target number of beneficiaries towards identification of innovative "proof of concept" models for replication and scale-up.

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of resources
CO project management with component leads	**High**	**Immediate**	**Medium**

While the initial target of reaching 10,000 beneficiaries is considered achievable, the evalution concludes it may be more strategic to place greater emphasis on piloting and identifying innovative models that have strong potential for replication and scale-up, thereby amplifying the project's systemic impact, even if that is at the expense of reaching less beneficiaries. This approach would capitalize on the ILO's comparative advantages, particularly its unique capacity to connect skills development with labor market demand by directly engaging employers. While reductions in the number of beneficiaries may affect the project's short-term reach, this approach could significantly strengthen its credibility and long-term impact/reach.

Furthermore, the refocused strategy should pay particular attention to identifying and promoting innovative solutions that demonstrably work for women and other vulnerable populations. By prioritizing the identification of catalytic and successful gender-responsive and inclusive approaches, the project can inform broader national efforts and have a greater impact on addressing structural inequalities while ensuring that its interventions lead to broader social and economic transformation. By focusing on the specific strengths of its mandate, in the link between skills training and employment, the ILO would enhance the relevance and visibility of its work in Bangladesh's evolving development landscape.

The transition from small-scale pilot initiatives to broader, scalable "proof of concept" models represent a critical next step for ensuring that the lessons learned through the project translate into meaningful and lasting impact. Pilots have played a crucial role in testing innovative approaches, generating valuable insights, and demonstrating what is possible in specific contexts. However, without deliberate strategies to scale them up, their influence remains limited to localized successes rather than contributing to systemic change.

Moving towards scale requires more than replication. It involves distilling key lessons from pilot experiences and transforming them into actionable roadmaps that can guide long-term progress. This includes identifying the

conditions under which interventions are most effective, adapting models to different contexts, and securing the institutional buy-in necessary for wider adoption. Importantly, scaling also calls for stronger alignment with national policies, sectoral strategies, and the priorities of government and social partners, ensuring that interventions are embedded within existing systems rather than operating in parallel to them.

The ILO's comparative advantage positions it well to drive this process. Its ability to link skills development with labor market demand, through direct engagement with employers and industry associations, provides a unique platform to ensure that scaled initiatives are not only relevant but also sustainable. Leveraging partnerships with the government, the private sector, and training institutions will be key to mobilizing the resources and networks required for expansion.

At the same time, scaling up should place particular emphasis on inclusion and equity. The design of scalable models must ensure that women, youth, and vulnerable populations are not left behind but are actively prioritized. Innovative approaches that demonstrate a measurable impact for these groups, such as those with the Bangladesh tourism board, should be highlighted and promoted as part of the scaling strategy, and new partners identified (for example, in this case, UNESCO could be brought on board).

Ultimately, the transition from pilot to scale should be viewed as an opportunity to consolidate the project's legacy, building pathways for long-term skills development that can contribute to more resilient labor markets, enhanced employability, and inclusive economic growth in Bangladesh.

Recommendation 4: Ensure that success stories, lessons learned, and findings from knowledge products collected during the first half of the project feed into and inform the three project components going forward.

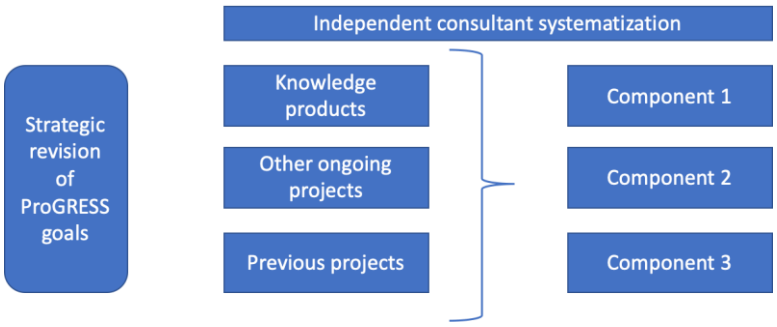
Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of resources
Component leads	High	Short term	Medium

The project has generated a considerable body of studies and analytical work, many of which are still in the process of being finalized and/or published. Alongside these outputs, substantial data have also been collected through the BLIMS system, tracer surveys, and a series of strategic reviews. Taken together, these represent a rich evidence base with significant potential to inform decision-making, strengthen implementation, and enhance accountability. However, the lessons and findings emerging from these studies and research initiatives have not yet been fully capitalized upon—if at all. Similarly, insights and learning from other previous and ongoing projects have been only marginally incorporated. This lack of systematic knowledge integration limits the project's overall effectiveness and constrains its ability to leverage existing evidence for larger-scale planning, replication, and impact.

Addressing this gap will likely require additional resources dedicated to knowledge management, documentation, and harvesting of lessons learned. One option would be to engage an independent consultant, a young professional, or an intern to support the systematic organization and synthesis of findings. Such a role could focus on developing a structured process for consolidating evidence from diverse sources and ensuring that knowledge products are not only produced but actively used. This would involve an initial step of systematizing findings from studies, reviews, and monitoring systems, followed by close collaboration with component leads to ensure these insights are disseminated and embedded across the project cycle (see figure 17).

To maximize value, this process should be carefully aligned with—and ideally undertaken right after—the strategic review under Recommendation 1. By doing so, the project can ensure that the documentation and learning system is coherent, strategically relevant, and positioned to inform both ongoing implementation and future programming directly. Over time, a stronger culture of learning and knowledge sharing would also contribute to greater efficiency, adaptability, and sustainability of results.

Figure 18 proposed learning systematization process



Recommendation 5: Strengthen project coherence. The evaluation underscores the urgent need for a centralized communication and knowledge management system, supported by structured technical exchange platforms.

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of resources
ILO CO management	Medium	Short term	Low

The evaluation highlights the pressing need for a more centralized communication and knowledge management system, supported by structured technical exchange platforms. Such mechanisms would not only facilitate better information flow but also enable the ILO to fully leverage its institutional knowledge, partnerships, and technical expertise. At present, communication across project components remains fragmented, with limited collaboration and sharing of lessons learned. This issue has also been flagged in other recent strategic reviews, reinforcing the finding that the lack of coordination hampers the ILO's ability in Bangladesh to maximize synergies, scale results, and achieve higher-level, transformative impact.

A more cohesive system of communication and knowledge sharing would create stronger internal alignment, reduce duplication of efforts, and foster a culture of collaboration across thematic areas. This is particularly important in a context where multiple interventions operate simultaneously, often with overlapping objectives. Without effective mechanisms for exchange, valuable experiences and innovations risk remaining siloed within individual projects rather than contributing to collective outcomes.

To address these gaps, the project should prioritize the development of an office-wide thematic and programmatic approach. This approach should aim to deepen thematic expertise, strengthen coherence across interventions, and enhance internal communication, cross-learning, and joint problem-solving among project components. By creating deliberate spaces for dialogue and reflection—such as joint technical working groups, knowledge-sharing events, or digital collaboration platforms—the project can ensure that evidence and experience are systematically captured, analyzed, and applied to improve ongoing programming.

Importantly, such a strategy should not be limited to the national office. It should also draw upon and connect to the wealth of global and regional expertise that the ILO has systematically built over decades. By aligning local initiatives with broader organizational learning and best practices, the project can enrich its technical depth, position itself more strategically within Bangladesh's development landscape, and strengthen its overall value proposition. Over time, this integrated approach would enhance the visibility, credibility, and effectiveness of the ILO's work, ensuring that interventions are not only impactful in isolation but also collectively contribute to sustainable, systemic change.

Some specific recommendations include:

- Introduce regular spaces for internal coordination where components present progress, successes and challenges to facilitate collaboration and identify early potential synergies. This should also help ensure a more strategic approach to the gender-transformative element, ensuring it is considered at the design stage of new initiatives. This would go a long way towards breaking silos between components.
- Introduce quarterly strategic review meetings for all thematically related projects to review progress, logic and strategy, look at challenges and identify potential synergies or collaboration. This will go a long way towards ensuring that ProGRESS (and other projects) benefit from the ILO's overall expertise.
- Create opportunities for interaction between partners at the district level on specific themes, for example, to investigate partners that could support a more comprehensive approach to the inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Seek active involvement of the Department of Youth Development, Social Welfare and Ministry of women and children affairs to support job placement post-training.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen the results framework by ensuring greater conceptual clarity on how the projects' interventions generate transformative and measurable change (the theory of change) and support this with the identification and regular collection of indicators that measure key outputs/outcomes of each of these steps.

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of resources
ProGRESS management and M&E staff	High	medium term	Low

Greater conceptual clarity of the project's results framwork is needed to ensure a better understanding of how how the project's interventions generate the transformative and measurable change envisioned. To address this the it will be necessary to strengthen the existing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to ensure coherence between goals and indicators. The system should not only track outputs but also support evidence-based decision-making, encourage reflection, and generate timely, actionable insights.

This should differentiate between different types of constituents, differentiating between implementation partners, and, most importantly, can measure results for women and disadvantaged groups. At present, data collection is systematic, disaggregated and mostly quantitative. Many targets remain unspecified (or unmeasurable), and there is limited consistency between the targets and the indicators being monitored, resulting in fragmented reporting.

ProGRESS has laid important groundwork for systematic implementation and has begun to develop indicators that capture change, including those addressing gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) transformation. However, further effort is needed to strengthen the conceptualization of measurable indicators that go beyond outputs to capture transformation and systemic change meaningfully.

Recommended changes required include:

Agree on a practical management structure that can bring together ILO and the Governments of Bangladesh and Canada with certain regularity. The ILO can organize biannual strategic meetings to ensure progress is shared and decisions are made, even if the full project steering committee or the project implementation committee are unable to meet.

Agree on the monitoring tools to be used and discard others. Currently, there are too many monitoring tools (logframe, M&E plan, BLIMS, detailed activity mapping, results chain, annua work plan). Some suggested actions to achieve this include

- Identify clear and measurable targets in the log frame (some are still to be defined or left undefined, such as "percentage of…" or "# of workshops").
- Ensure indicators selected have realistic measuring tools (and do not rely on national figures) and are regularly updated.
- Ensure reporting derives from these and year-to-year consistency in reporting, which shows continuity.

Incorporate qualitative monitoring to understand the underlying variables that will enable the identification of variables contributing to success, such as the type of partner and contextual considerations. The BLIMS currently focuses on output level (number of events, number of persons trained, etc.) the evalution recommends the introduction of change indicators (qualitative in nature) to understand, for example, which trainings have a higher employment success rate; what is the employment rate for each partner, by distric, gender, sector and beneficiary group. Which types of events have led to measurable impacts (e.g., agreements or new partnerships)? Versus others that have not. Increased focus away from the activities and towards understanding what if those activies led to any changes.

Systematize post-training monitoring. The project has begun post-training monitoring in the form of the tracer survey. Soon to be launched, the Graduate Tracking and Management systems and standards for post-training follow-up must be systematized.

Promote partners' participation in and use of monitoring systems for their own successful management and quality oversight, with the hope that they will incorporate good practices (such as data disaggregation or post-training monitoring) into their own systems.

Recommendation 7: Strengthen beneficiary targeting to bolster access to employment results. This will require identifying and addressing specific barriers for each subgroup, including looking at cultural norms, financial constraints and access amongst other barriers.

Addressed to	Priority	Implementation	Level of resources
ProGRESS Manager and component leads	High	medium term	Low

Understanding the specific needs of beneficiaries and ensuring that responses are tailor-made to address those needs is critical and must be further strengthened. Projects should not only aim to deliver standardized interventions but also recognize the diverse realities faced by the different groups it aims to support. In particular, it is essential to conduct an in-depth analysis of the critical barriers that prevent women and other disadvantaged groups from fully participating in training programs, workplace-based learning opportunities, entrepreneurship initiatives, and ultimately, what are the barriers between training and access to employment. These barriers may include socio-cultural norms, limited access to information, financial constraints, mobility challenges, discrimination, or lack of supportive networks.

To respond effectively, the project should establish clear, transparent, and inclusive criteria for identifying participants. This will require:

- **Comprehensive needs assessments** – this has been done for women's access, but the project needs to gather both quantitative and qualitative data to understand the constraints for other beneficiary groups.
- **Stakeholder engagement** – consulting with community leaders, women's organizations, employers, and other relevant actors to validate findings and co-design solutions. (see recommendation above to include women's organizations).
- **Inclusive targeting mechanisms** – ensuring that selection criteria are clear and shared with partners, and that they take into account gender, socio-economic background, disability, and other intersecting vulnerabilities. The monitoring system should help identify the beneficiaries, both those most in need and also more likely to benefit from the project's support.
- **Flexibility in program design** – adapting training methods, schedules, and delivery channels to better suit the circumstances for the different groups, this is especially true for women, persons with disabilities and ethnic communities, each of whom needs different variables for consideration, which at present are not always taken into account.
- **Supportive measures** – the project should consider if partners can provide complementary services such as childcare, transportation allowances, mentorship, or mobile units or residential options to enable meaningful participation.
- **Inclusion of a broader network.** The project should consider the need to include applicants' families from the outset and before the submission of applications. Parents' participation, particularly in the case of female applicants, may foster a sense of ownership and ensure that parents and family members provide support to the trainees, rather than acting as a barrier to their participation in training and to the subsequent utilization of the skills acquired.
- There should be special focus on **intersectionality**, for example, women with disabilities, youth with disabilities, and ethnic persons with disabilities, for eligibility and inclusion in skill training.

By adopting this approach, projects will be better positioned to promote equal access, empower underrepresented groups, and create pathways for sustainable inclusion in the labour market.

ANNEXES

Annex A. List of Stakeholders Interviewed

Government

Sl.	Name of Respondents	Designation	Organization	Location
1.	Ms. Fatema Jahan	Joint Secretary	TMED	Dhaka
2.	Mr. Sohaib Ahmed Khan	Director General (NPD)	Directorate of Technical Education	Dhaka
3.	Mr. Quamruzzaman	Director-ITC	Bangladesh Technical Education Board	Dhaka
4.	Mr. Maksudul Karim	Program Officer (Monitoring and Documentation)	-do-	Dhaka
5.	Mr. Mohibul Islam	Deputy Director-Marketing and International Relations	Bangladesh Tourism Board	Dhaka
6.	Engr. Md. Salah Uddin	Director (Training Operation)	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training	Dhaka
7.	Engr. Mohammad Ali Mortaza	Deputy Director-Training	-do-	Dhaka
8.	Mr. Mahbubur Rashid	Program Coordinator	-do-	Dhaka

Donor

Sl.	Name of Respondents	Designation	Organization	Location
1.	Ms. Riful Jannat	Senior Development Advisor	Canadian Embassy	Dhaka
2.	Ms. Nathalie Labonte	Project Team Leader-BGD (based in Canada)	Canadian Embassy	Dhaka

Other Stakeholders

Sl.	Name of Respondents	Designation	Organization	Location
1.	Ms Navanita Sina	Deputy Country Director	UN Women, Bangladesh	Remote
2.	Md. Saidul Islam	Additional Secretary General	Bangladesh Employers Federation	Dhaka
3.	Joha Jamilur Rahman	Head of Training	-do-	Dhaka
4.	Ms. Aziza Ahmed	Director-Operation	Bangladesh Business and Disability Network	Dhaka
5.	Arup Ratan Chawdhury	Programme Manager	-do-	Dhaka
6.	Ms. Rubaiya Sultana	Senior Programme Officer	-do-	Dhaka
7.	Mr. Abu Syed	Manager	SME Foundation	Dhaka
8.	Kbd. Md. Nurul Islam	Project Manager	ILO-BAPA ProGRESS project	Dhaka
9.	Khan Md. Ahsan Al Salam	Apprenticeship Advisor	-do-	Dhaka
10.	Kbd. Md. Ashraful Alam	Coordinator (Training and Monitoring)	-do-	Dhaka

ILO-ProGRESS Management

Sl.	Name of Respondents	Designation	Organization	Location
1.	Mr. Mohebur Rahman	Programme Officer (M&E)	ProGRESS-ILO	Dhaka
2.	Mr. Ahmad Sina Sabawoon	Evaluation Manager (based in Afghanistan)	ProGRESS-ILO	Dhaka
3.	Mr. Peter Jr. Bellen	Chief Technical Advisor	ILO- ProGRESS project	Dhaka
4.	Mr. Saif Moinul Islam	Senior Programme Officer	ILO Country Office	Dhaka

5.	Mr. Tanjel Ahsan	National Programme Officer (Skills Dev.)	ILO- ProGRESS project	Dhaka
6.	Mr. Mohammad Tamim	Project Officer	ILO- ProGRESS project	Dhaka
7.	Mr. Alexius Chicham	Head of ILO CTG office	ILO- ProGRESS project	Dhaka
8.	Mr. Nabin Kumar Karna	Technical Officer-Enterprise Dev.	ILO- ProGRESS project	Dhaka
9.	Gabriel Bordado	ILO, Skills Specialist in Delhi	ILO Regional office	Remote
10.	Ms Masreka Khan	Gender and Policy, ProGRESS project	Gender and Policy, ProGRESS project	Remote
11.	Gunjan Dallakoti	Enterprise Specialist	ILO Bangladesh CO	Dhaka
12.	Ms. Lotte Kejser, Chief Skills-	Technical Advisor of ILO	Skills 21 Project, ILO	Dhaka
13.	Mr. Towhidur Rahman,	National Programme Officer	Skills 21 Project, ILO	Dhaka
14.	Mr. Md. Anisuzzaman,	Senior Programme Officer	Skills 21 Project, ILO	Dhaka
15.	Ms. Sohana Sharmin Chowdhury	Senior Programme Officer	Skills 21 Project, ILO	Dhaka
16.	Tumo Poutiainen	Former Country Drector	Deputy Regional Director	Online

Beneficiaries and Skill Training Providers

Sl	Name of Respondents	Designation	Organization	Location
1.	Engr. Ashrifa Tanzim	Principal (in-charge)	Chattagram Women Technical Training Centre	Chattagram
2.	Engr. Palash Kumar Barua	Principal	Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre, CTG.	-do-
3.	Mr. G. A. Rayhan	Chief Executive Officer	Chattagram Women Chamber of Commerce & Industries	-do-
4.	Mr. Md. Tawfique Hyder	Project Coordinator	-do-	-do-
5.	Ms. Rupkatha Gupta	Entrepreneur & Member of CWCCI	-do-	-do-
6.	Ms. Meshbahunnesa	-do-	-do-	-do-
7.	Ms. Panna Goshwamy	-do-	-do-	-do-
8.	Ms. Urmila Barua	-do-	-do-	-do-
9.	Ms. Arabin Nahar	-do-	-do-	-do-
10.	Ms. Sonia Jahan	-do-	-do-	-do-
11.	Ms. Shamima Nasrin	-do-	-do-	-do-
12.	Ms. Nargish Jahan	-do-	-do-	-do-
13.	Ms. Sadia Jahan	-do-	-do-	-do-
14.	Ms. Habiba Naurin	-do-	-do-	-do-
15.	Mr. Singui Marma	Project Coordinator	Tahzingdong (NGO -partner of ProGRESS) in Bandarban	Bandarban
16.	Mr. Hla Win Prue	Technical Officer	-do-	-do-
17.	Ms. Eshita Mazi	Finance & Admin Officer	-do-	-do-
18.	Ms. Mayecee Prue Marma	Community Mobilizer	-do-	-do-

19.	Ms. Parumay Sing Marma	Community Mobilizer	-do-	-do-
20.	Mr. Khemajan Tripura	Project Coordinator	Bandarban Hill District Council	-do-
21.	Mr. Emon Barua	Entrepreneur (Shop)	ProGRESS Beneficiary	-do-
22.	Mr. Utoayai Sing Marma	Entrepreneur (Pig-farming)	-do-	-do-
23.	Ms. Samransing Marma	Entrepreneur (Candle Making)	-do-	-do-
24.	Ms. Susmita Barua	Persons with disabilities	Protibandhi Kallyan Songstha	Bandarban
25.	Mr. Sownai Ching Marma	persons with disabilities	-do-	-do-
26.	Mr. Habibullah	Persons with disabilities	-do-	-do-
27.	Ms. Rozi Akhter	Guardian of persons with disabilities	-do-	-do-
28.	Mr. Imtiazul Islam	Persons with disabilities	-do-	-do-
29.	Mr. Bandan Tripura	Chairman	-do-	-do-
30.	Mr. Mimnon Marma	Coordinator	-do-	-do-
31.	Mr. Jorge Tripura	Executive Director	-do-	-do-
32.	Mr. Miraj Khan	Principal	Unicare Health and Technical Training Institute	Barishal
33.	Khushi Chandra Sarker	TVET Graduate (Beneficiary)	-do-	-do-
34.	Mr. Ahmed Al Imran	Principal (in-charge)	Barishal Women TTC	Barishal
35.	Ms. Supriya Halder	Senior Instructor-CAD	-do-	-do-
36.	Ms. Fatima Jahan Taposhi	Senior Instructor-Computer	-do-	-do-
37.	Mr. Mohammad Hasan	Instructor-Computer	-do-	-do-
38.	Ms. Puja Rani Das	TVET Graduate (Beneficiary)	-do-	-do-
39.	Ms. Sumaiya Akhter	TVET Graduate (Beneficiary)	-do-	-do-
40.	Ms. Sadia Akhter Sumi	TVET Graduate (Beneficiary)	-do-	-do-
41.	Ms. Madhuri Akhter Maria	TVET Graduate (Beneficiary)	-do-	-do-
42.	Mr. Abdul Baten	Factory Head-PRAN	PRAN-RFL Barishal	Barishal
43.	Mr. Tauhidur Rahman	Manager-Production and Trainer	-do-	-do-
44.	Md. Sharif	Beneficiary-Employed	-do-	-do-
45.	Md. Rasel	Beneficiary-Employed	-do-	-do-
46.	Md. Shakil	Beneficiary-Employed	-do-	-do-
47.	Mr. Md. Ziaur Rahman	Principal	TTC-Khulna	Khulna
48.	Mr. Md. Maruf Ahamed	Instructor- RAC	-do-	-do-
49.	Mr. Md. Abdul Manan	Senior Instructor	-do-	-do-
50.	Mr. Md. Abid Hasan	Guest Teacher	-do-	-do-
51.	Mr. Gourango Kumar Paul	Job Placement Officer	-do-	-do-

52.	Mr. Md. Ershad Hossain	Guest Teacher	-do-	-do-
53.	Mr. Krshno Das	TVET Trainee-RAC	-do-	-do-
54.	Mr. Md. Tanjir Alam	TVET Trainee-RAC	-do-	-do-
55.	Ms. Rani Khatun	TVET Trainee-RAC	-do-	-do-
56.	Ms. Chumki Khatun	TVET Trainee-RAC	-do-	-do-
57.	Ms. Mahfuza Yasmin	Beneficiary (trained)	-do-	-do-
58.	Mr. Nashrullah Tamin	Beneficiary (trained)	-do-	-do-
59.	Mr. Hasan Miah	Instructor -Neval Architect	IMT-Bagerhat	Bagerhat
60.	Mr. Sazzad Hossain Talukder	Instructor-Electrical	-do-	-do-
61.	Mr. Abdur Rashid Sardar	Craft Instructor-Physics	-do-	-do-
62.	Mr. Md. Alauddin Sarkar	Port Officer-Physical Training	-do-	-do-
63.	Ms. Sarmin Akhter	Trainer-Care Giving	-do-	-do-
64.	Ms. Sornali Akhter	Trainer-Care Giving	-do-	-do-
65.	Mr. Mozharul Hasan Khan	Instructor (Revenue)	-do-	-do-
66.	Mr. Mithun Maitra	Job Placement Officer-Asset Project	-do-	-do-
67.	Ms. Samim Akhter	TVET Graduate-Care Giving	-do-	-do-
68.	Mr. Bayezid Rahman	TVET Graduate-Care Giving	-do-	-do-
69.	Mr. Mollik Md. Abdullah	TVET Graduate-Care Giving	-do-	-do-
70.	Mr. Md. Al Mamun	Manger-HR	PRAN-RFL Habiganj Industrial Park	Habiganj
71.	Mr. Mohammad Ali	Manager-Production	-do-	-do-
72.	Mr. Shariful Hasan	Sub-Assistant Manager	-do-	-do-
73.	Mr. Mahbub Hossain Nayan	TVET Beneficiary (Employed)	-do-	-do-
74.	Ms. Ruma Akhter	TVET Beneficiary (Employed)	-do-	-do-
75.	Ms. Priya Biswas	TVET Beneficiary (Employed)	-do-	-do-
76.	Ms. Surunjona Singh	Training Officer	Share Service Facility Center-IPDS	Kamalganj, Moulavibazar
77.	Mr. Sumoin Koiree	Field Officer	-do-	-do-
78.	Ms. Kinjabati Sharma	Field Officer	-do-	-do-
79.	Ms. Niddha Singh	Training Officer	-do-	-do-
80.	Ms. Monica	TVET trainee	-do-	-do-
81.	Ms. Suhana Sultana	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
82.	Ms. Scechan Chati	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
83.	Ms. Monica Projapati	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
84.	Ms. Baby Projapati	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-

85.	Ms. Smriti Goyala	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
86.	Ms. Konika Projapati	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
87.	Ms. Shanti Biva	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
88.	Ms. Taslima Akhter	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
89.	Ms. Mou Akhter	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
90.	Ms. Dipika Mridha	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
91.	Ms. Shefali Projapati	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
92.	SK Mohammad Nahid Shiraj	Principal	TTC- Sylhet	Sylhet
93.	Mr. Omar Faruque	Instructor-Computer	-do-	-do-
94.	Mr. Rubel Mollick	Guest Trainer-Graphics	-do-	-do-
95.	Mr. Abu Sayeed	Trainer-Graphics and UI Design	-do-	-do-
96.	Mr. Sultan Ahmed	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
97.	Mr. Munna	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
98.	Mr. Mahin Ahmed	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
99.	Md. Mostafizur Rahman	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
100.	Md. Manna	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
101.	Ms. Joyita Rani Dey	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
102.	Ms. Afsana Rahat	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
103.	Ms. Farhana Akhter Ema	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
104.	Ms. Sajida Akhter	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
105.	Ms. Khadiza Akhter Ima	TVET Trainee	-do-	-do-
106.	Mr. Shah Alam Patwary	Chief Instructor-Food and Beverage	-do-	-do-
107.	Mr. Mohammad Zakarai	Guest Trainer-F&B	-do-	-do-
108.	Mr. Tamim Bin Imdad	General Manager	TKHMI-Sylhet	Sylhet
109.	Mr. Heal Uddin Ahmed	Principal	-do-	-do-
110.	Mr. Eahyea Choawdhury	Chef Trainer	-do-	-do-
111.	Ms. Masuma Begum	Chef Trainer	-do-	-do-
112.	Ms. Shamima Akhter	Trainer	-do-	-do-
113.	Mr. Rayhan Ahmed	Lead Trainer- Food Service	-do-	-do-
114.	Mr. Sabbir Azad	Job Placement Officer	-do-	-do-
115.	Mr. Samadur Rahman	Trainer-Housekeeping	-do-	-do-
116.	Mr. Joynal Abedin	Trainer- Cooking	-do-	-do-
117.	Mr. Anwar Hossain	TVET Graduate-Employed	-do-	-do-

118.	Ms. Panna Begum	TVET Graduate-Employed	-do-	-do-
119.	Ms. Munni Begum	TVET Graduate-Employed	-do-	-do-
120.	Mr. Abdullah Al Salafi	Principal/Sr. Deputy Director	Ashrai TTC (RTO)	Rajshahi
121.	Mr. Nazir Hossain	Job Placement Officer	-do-	-do-
122.	Mr. Mehedi Hasan	Instructor	-do-	-do-
123.	Ms. Pinky Karmaker	Beneficiary-Employed	-do-	-do-
124.	Ms. Mim Akhter	Beneficiary-Employed	-do-	-do-
125.	Mr. Salman Ebn Atik	Beneficiary- Self Employed	-do-	-do-
126.	Mr. Jamil Hossain	Manager and Trainer	-do-	-do-
127.	Ms. Riya Khatun	Beneficiary-Employed	-do-	-do-
128.	Mr. Sajedul Islam	Beneficiary-Employed	-do-	-do-
129.	Mr. Shariful Islam	Beneficiary-Employed	-do-	-do-
130.	Engr. Md. Nazmul Haque	Principal, TTC	TTC-Rajshahi	Rajshahi
131.	Mr. Rafiqul Islam	Senior Instructor	-do-	-do-
132.	Ms. Rizial Sultana	Instructor-Computer	-do-	-do-
133.	Ms. Sabiha Sultana	Instructor- Food and & Beverage	-do-	-do-
134.	Ms. Moumita Afrin	TVET Graduate-Employed	-do-	-do-
135.	Ms. Lotte Kejser	Chief Technical Advisor of ILO Skills-21 Project.	ILO	Dhaka
136.	Ms. Sohana Sharmin Chowdhury	Senior Programme Officer of ILO Skills-21 Project	ILO	Dhaka
137.	Mr Tumo Poutiainen	previous country officer representative in ILO Bangladesh	ILO	remote
138.	Mr. Towhidur Rahman	National Programme Officer of ILO Skills-21 Project	ILO	Dhaka
139.	Ms Communications	Communications officer ILO Bangladesh ProGRESS project	ILO	Dhaka
140.	Mr. Md. Anisuzzaman	Senior Programme Officer of ILO Skills-21 Project	ILO	Dhaka

Annex B. Field visit data collection agenda

Date	Day	Place of visit	Activities	Remarks
20.07.2025	Sunday	Dhaka	KII with Secretary General of BEF	Y
20.07.2025	Sunday	Dhaka	KII with BBDN- Head of Operation (persons with disabilities focused)	Y
21.07.2025	Monday	Dhaka	KII with General Manager of SME Foundation	Y
21.07.2025	Monday	Dhaka	BTEB- Mr. Kamruzzamana (Director-ITC)	Y
22.07.2025	Tuesday	Dhaka	BMET Officials	Y
22.07.2025	Tuesday	Dhaka	KII with Bangladesh Tourism Board	Y
23.07.2025	Wednesday	Chattogram	▪ FGD with the beneficiaries, ▪ FGD with Teachers of Polytechnique Institute ▪ KII with the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industries ▪ KII with Employee's Association ▪ KII with Business Service Provider	Y No, replaced by Women TTC and BKTTC Y No No
24.07.2025	Thursday	Bandarban	▪ FGD with the beneficiaries (representative from trained youths- male and female, ethnic communities and persons with disabilities ▪ FGD with the TTC Teachers ▪ KII with women entrepreneur ▪ KII with NGO-involved in Skill Dev. Training ▪ KII with CHT district council	Y Dropped Y Y Y On-spot visited on OPD in Bandarban
25.07.2025	Friday		Travel back from CTG to Dhaka	
27.07.2025	Sunday	Barishal	▪ FGD with the beneficiaries (representative from trained youths- male and female, ethnic communities and persons with disabilities ▪ KII with Principal -TTC ▪ FGD with the TTC Teachers (Polytechnique Institute) ▪ KII with BTEB-RTO official ▪ FGD with Care-Work Beneficiaries	Yes, at PRAN-RFL company premises Y Yes, but Polytechnique institutes was dropped Y Y

28-29.07. 2025	Monday and Tuesday	Khulna and Bagerhat	▪ FGD with the beneficiaries (representative from trained youths- male and female, ethnic communities and persons with disabilities ▪ FGD with the TTC Teachers (Polytechnique Institute) ▪ KII Institute of Marien Technology ▪ FGD with Beneficiaries	Y Yes, with TTC teachers, and Polytechnique institute is dropped Y Y
30.07.2025	Wednesday	Dhaka	KII with BAPA management	Y
03-04.07.2025	Sunday and Monday	Sylhet	▪ FGD with the beneficiaries, ▪ FGD with Teachers of Polytechnique Institute/TTC ▪ KII with Tourism Association ▪ KII with DMC ▪ KII with BAPA ▪ FGD and observation of share service facilities-Kamalganj	Yes, at the PRAN-RFL company Y No, dropped No, dropped Y Y
05.08.2025	Tuesday		Travel back from Sylhet to Dhaka	
06-07.08.2025	Wednesday and Thursday	Rajshahi	▪ FGD with the beneficiaries (representative from trained youths- male and female, ethnic communities and persons with disabilities ▪ FGD with the TTC Teachers (Polytechnique ▪ KII with principal -TTC ▪ KII with BAPA ▪ KII with BTEB-RTO	Yes, at the PRAN-RFL company Yes, with TTC, not the Polytechnique institution. Y Y
07.08.2025	Thursday	Travel back from Rajshahi to Dhaka		
11.08.2025	Monday	Dhaka	▪ KII with Director General of DTE ▪ KII with the Joint Secretary of TMED ▪ KII with GAC at the Canadian Embassy	Y Y Y
12.08.2025	Tuesday	Dhaka	▪ KII with the Chief Technical Advisor, ProGRESS, ILO Country Office ▪ KII with Senior Programme Officer, ILO Country Office (Back Stopping support) ▪ KII with Enterprise Development team, ProGrESS and ▪ KII with Skills Development Team ProGRESS	Y

Note:

- No training institute (Polytechnique Institutes) under BTEB was visited because of cancellation by ILO
- KII with NSDA is dropped as the officials are newly positioned and having no experience on the project
- No field-based tour operators were visited

Annex C. Data systematization tool

Question/Sub Question	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Summary of findings		
Relevance and strategic fit		**wk 1**	**wk 2**	**wk 3**
EQ1. Do the project objectives strategies and design align with evolving priorities of national stakeholders, donors and target groups (with a focus on gender differences)				
SQ 1.1: Quality of project design: To what extent are the project' interventions logical and grounded in a clear results framework thorough understanding of the context dynamics. Does the Theory of Change require to be adjusted or restructured?	- Perception of ILO staff - Extent to which the design follows a clear results logic and identifies links to context dynamics - Extent to which the Theory of Change is sound towards achieving expected goals.			
SQ 1.2: **Appropriateness relative to stakeholder groups**. To what degree do project strategies respond to the needs of the key stakeholders, (including looking at women, youth, persons with disabilitiess, and ethnic communities); national government priorities; donors and ILO's mandate/policies (including normative mandate, including tripartism, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and disability inclusion)?	- Documented or reported extent to which the ILO consulted with final beneficiaries and /or established mechanisms to regularly collect and incorporate feedback from beneficiaries for sampled projects. - Extent of recognition of gender and inclusion issues (i.e. explicit and detailed/ mentioned but not detailed or not mentioned) in key documents from national constituencies from country-case studies from the past two years. - Perceptions of ILO staff and other key stakeholders			
SQ1.3: Ability to adapt. Have there been any adjustment to the project design or theory of change to address emerging challenges (e.g., post-political shift) or changing socio-economic context? Does the design allow for adaptation to changing needs, new risks/opportunities?	- Documented or reported adjustments to respond to changes in environment and perceived/reported effectiveness of these - Perceptions of ILO staff and other key stakeholders			

SQ 1.4: **Appropriateness Relative to context**: how appropriate and valid are the project objectives, strategies, and assumptions for achieving planned results?	- Documented or reported consultative process undertaken with constituencies/implementing partners. - Document or reported alignment with government priorities - ILO staff and partners' perceptions of alignment between the project and the evolving context	
Coherence		
EQ 2. How well does the project fit in the Office's cluster approach, and complements with other ILO project', and the agenda/work of relevant national and international agencies working for gender equality in TVET and economic empowerment?		
SQ 2.1: **Internal coherence**: Have any synergies been created? How well do these changes observed align with the ILO's normative mandate?	- Reports or documents that highlight initiatives to ensure internal coherence with other ongoing projects - ILO staff perceptions of the level of connectedness /linkage between project and other ongoing interventions at national level - ILO staff's perceptions on the level of adequacy of project with ILO global frameworks and policies and priorities on GEEW	
SQ 2.2 External coherence: How has the project ensured that its approach has not duplicated or undermined existing services for strengthening related initiatives? How are the different components of the project coordinated to ensure a unified approach?	- Perception of coherence and /or duplication and no duplication by ILO staff and other key stakeholders on how the project fills gaps at the national and regional level	
Effectiveness & Progress		
EQ 3. How is the project progressing in delivering its outputs, and toward preliminary outcomes?		

SQ 3.1: Focus on a) the effectiveness of training programmes and b) partner's and service providers ability to improve employability in skills and enterprise development	*Progress*: - Analysis of actual achievements vs targets Status of training activities (Have established interim goals been met? Are expected results expected to be met in the project timeframe?) *Effectiveness:* - Percentage of trained beneficiaries involved in paid employment and/or self-managed enterprise. - Perception effectiveness of training programmes by beneficiaries and implementing partners	
SQ 3.2 How efficient has the cooperation been among project partners, and what is the value added of this collaboration to the project objectives?	Cooperation - Documented or reported achievements resulting from partnerships (probe as to why or why not successful)	
SQ 3.3: What **early successes**, best practices, lessons and innovations are emerging? What are the projects strengths?	- Documented or reported evidence of successful achievement, and influencing factors of the project - Documentation, lessons sharing and adaptation of promising practices - Innovations on ILO's work as perceived by different stakeholders (by ILO staff, constituencies and other UN agencies)	

SQ 3.4: What **challenges** and barriers have been encountered in the implementation of project activities, including considerations for tripartism, gender equality and social dialogue? How have these challenges been mitigated? What alternative strategies/approaches would have been possible or can still viable?	- Documented challenges or changes to original plan that respond to difficulties.	
EQ 4. To what extent have the project management capacities and arrangements put in place been effective?		
SQ 4.1: Are the resources allocated (human resources, time, expertise, funds etc.) and considered sufficient and adequately used to support progress toward the expected results?	- Spending/disbursement on track as planned - Stakeholders' perception of adequacy of resources	
EQ 5. How efficient are the project's monitoring and oversight mechanisms?		
SQ 5.1: What lessons have been learned about the timeliness, accuracy, and utility of monitoring data gathered in guiding adaptive management or corrective actions	- Evidence of designing appropriate performance monitoring plan and its regular. - Perception by stakeholders of the adequacy and timeliness of the M&E system	
SQ 5.2 Are there any systematic gaps (e.g., capacity, tools, stakeholders' management) and how can these be addressed?	- Perception by stakeholders of any existing gaps/ needs - Perception by stakeholders of adequacy of M&E tools	

SQ 5.3 How has the M&E system directly influenced decision-making, resource allocation or adjustments to implementation strategies to improve delivery?	- Documented or reported changes stemming from the findings from the M&E system	
Orientation to Impact		
EQ6. Are there indications that the project will have long term impact? (intended/unintended, positive/negative)		
SQ 6.1: Are there indication that the gender-responsive strategies will help to advance long-term outcomes?	- Documented evidence of positive contributions from ILO's project to programmatic outputs	
SQ6.2: What initial changes has the project brought about in target groups' lives"	- Reported and documented of improvement in the lives of project participants	
SQ 6.3: How well do these changes observed align with the ILO's normative mandate?	- Evidence of changes that are aligned with ILO's normative mandate	
SQ 6.4: Are there any unforeseen positive or negative effects observed?	- Existing signs of any positive or negative effects that have been noticed by the ET	
Sustainability		
EQ 7. What foundational steps (e.g., capacity building, policy integration, systems building) have been taken to sustain the project results in line with ILO mandates?		
SQ 7.1 Are there any initial indications of sustainability of the project outcomes at both the system and operational/technical levels, particularly in terms of skills development, enterprises, and those employed?	- Evidence of arrangement that indicating the signs of sustainability, at both the system and operational/ - Technical levels, particularly in terms of skills, development, enterprises and	

	secure employment or allocated funding	
SQ 7.2: Which project partners are seen as better placed to contribute to the sustainability of the project's initiatives?	- Partners reported existence of transfer/scalability strategies (sustainability plans) planned and/or funding assigned	
SQ 7.3: To what extent are target groups and stakeholders (government, employers, workers and civil society organizations) engaged in the project to ensure buy-in post-project ownership of outcomes?	- Extent of active involvement of target groups and stakeholder and displayed their role to ensure buy-in post-project ownership of outcomes. - Positive attitude of the government (line ministry) in undertaking adequate measure to attain the sustainability	

Annex D. Description of contributors' role

The ILO will be responsible for the implementation of the project outputs, and the financial and administrative rules of the ILO will govern the institutional framework of the ProGRESS Project.
Governmental Institutions:

Roles of The Ministry of Education (MoE) and its Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) under the Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED):

- Key responsibility to lead Project Steering Committee and Project Implementation Committee to provide oversight, policy direction and advice to the ProGRESS Project.
- Collaboration and coordination with other ministries such as the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment and its Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), and Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA)
- Suggest for forming a taskforce that would help for smoothly implementation and joint monitoring (with the donor and partners) on a regular basis, as per the requirements.
- Ensure skills initiatives spearhead by the TMED to provide the impetus for the mobilization of other key stakeholders.
- TMED is the main provider of formal TVET through the network of public polytechnic Institutes and Technical Schools and Colleges (TSCs) across the country. TMED will provide directions to the TSCs to collaborate with the ProGRESS 2) The Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) is the national regulatory body in charge of accreditation and certification of qualifications, curriculum development and examinations

Roles of BTEB:

- Overview the standards and ensure that the accreditation, certification of qualifications and curriculum development comply with government standards.
- Provide guidance on setting quality standard, quality control and development of new curriculum of technical education through the ProGRESS Project.
- Ensure that the trainings are relevant as per market demand to create jobs and self-employment with rapid technological innovations.

Roles of the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) and its Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), and TTC & IMTs:

- Provide support through collaboration and coordination in conducting informal/formal and special training courses through 63 Technical Training Centres (TTCs) and Institutes of Marine Technology (IMTs).
- Provide guidance and support on labour market study, research and assessment.
- Dissemination of labour market study, research and assessment findings with the TTC, IMTs and others.
- Provide direction to organize, strengthen and extend training programs to enable persons with disabilities to attain and maintain maximum physical, mental, social and vocational ability.
- Collaboration and support on self and wage employment activities including
- promoting apprenticeships.

Roles of Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE):

- Support a as a focal point for collaboration and consultation with worker and employer organizations (such as NCCWE and BEF).
- Review and help in enhancing regulatory and policy environment in the target local areas to make it more conducive for decent employment with combination of skills and enterprises.
- Provide strategic directions on improving industrial and labour relations.
- Collaborate with returning workers who come back and join the domestic market also fall under the purview of MOLE.
- The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) under the office of Prime Minister is a high-level partnership between government, industry and unions, mandated to implement the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP).

Roles of NSDA:

- Facilitate and coordinate relevant Industry Skills Council (ISC) for extending support towards ProGRESS project for enterprise development, value chain product selection. Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) as a key instrument for social dialogue which use a tripartite approach for bringing together the major
- enterprises and industry bodies within an industry sector to discuss skill development issues affecting their sector.
- Provide guidance, direction and coordination support towards ProGRESS project for relevant policy revIs1on, action plan development, certification/recognition of skills training, RPL, in line with draft NSDP 2021 as a member of PSC and PIG.
- Take part in identification of priority occupations and selection of training institutes for skills training for women, youth and disadvantaged groups

Role The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA)- Department of Women Affairs (DWA) runs many training institutions and it is a key ministry for inclusion.
Roles of MoWCA and DWA:

- Provide policy direction on gender issues in both the areas of job creation and employment.
- Support for strategic collaboration with other agencies on using innovative approaches to identify opportunities and challenges for women's meaningful participation and suggesting recommendation.
- Provide guidance and direction for organizing training, promotion of green economy, digital innovation, selection of value chain products, study and assessment for marginalized groups.

The Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs (MoCHTA)
operates and coordinates technical training institutions in Chattogram Hill Tracts. MoCHTA is the territorial ministryin Bangladesh fr coordinating all development initiatives in CHT.

Roles of MoCHTA:

- Provide guidance and coordination support to ProGRESS project through its three Hill District Council and CHT Regional Council
- Provide support and guidance/direction to conduct research/study, selection of value cha in products/enterprise development/skills need assessment etc.
- Facilitate, coord inate and provide administrative support for ProGRESS project to carry out missions

Roles of SME Foundation:

- Provide guidance, directions and coordination support towards enterprise development.
- Provide skill development and capacity building training, facilitating training adaptation wit the appropriate technologies and access to ICT, providing business support services, etc.

Private Sector and NGOs:

- Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) are tripart it e, sector r based bodies responsible for strengthening links between industry and the education and training system.
- Private Training Centres and RMG sectors have pioneered adoption of competency based training and assessment and demonstrated the value to industry of training investment.

• **Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF),** Local Chambers of Commerce and other Employer organizations have engaged actively in promoting the linkages between the TVET and the industry, including through strong representation in, and assistance to ISCs.
• **NGOs** have established training centres serving specific groups, often marginalized. These centres offer useful demonstrations of inclusive service provision, and also help articulate the needs of different populations. There are many other NGOs comprised of and providing services to persons with disabilities who would be contacted for information and potential supply of services as required.

Workers' Organizations
• Workers Organizations/ Trade Unions are an important group of Stakeholders and represent a tripartite constituent of the I LO that shall be involved in all stages of the Project to secure a coordinated and coherent effort is exercised by all during Project implementation phase. Representatives of the National Coordination Council for Workers' Education (NCCWE) and other related structures will be involved and consulted on an equal basis in all Project activities

Annex E. Documents consulted

1. Terms of Reference for the Mid-term Independent Evaluation of Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS)
2. Final version of Technical Assistance Project Proposal (TAPP) -Part-A of ProGRESS project
3. ProGRESS project document signed between ERD and ILO
4. Final version of the study on Value Chain Analysis for Productive Employment Opportunities of Women and Vulnerable Group in Bangladesh
5. Assessment of Gender and Social Inclusion Gaps in the Skills and TVET System in Bangladesh
6. Report of Technical Dialogue on Gender Responsive Budgeting for Skills and TVET Sectors, March 2024
7. Report of Technical Dialogue on Gender Responsive Budgeting for Skills and TVET Sectors, August 2023
8. Policy Brief: Gender responsive TVET and Skills Development systems: Progress, challenges, and policy options for women's economic empowerment
9. Strategic Review 2024, ILO, Dhaka
10. Annual Report of ProGRESS-2023 (with annexes)
11. Annual Report of ProGRESS-2024 (with annexes)
12. Annual work plan 2024
13. Annual work plan 2025
14. Training Program of ProGRESS project, ILO
15. Theory of Changes (ToC) of ProGRESS project
16. Logical Framework of ProGRESS project
17. Study Report on Stocktaking of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutions in Bangladesh, Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP), Finance Division, Ministry of Finance
18. Final Tracer Study Report for the Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP), (November 2022), Finance Division, Ministry of Finance
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20. ILO Guidance note 3.1: Integrating gender equality into monitoring and evaluation (2020) https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@eval/documents/publication/wcms_746716.pdf
21. ILO Guidance note 4.1: The evaluation manager: role and function (2020) https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@eval/documents/publication/wcms_746720.pdf

22. ILO Checklist 4.8 writing the inception report https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@eval/documents/publication/wcms_746817.pdf

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26. ILO (6 may 2025) Community-Based Tourism in Bangladesh brochure. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/CBT_Brochure.pdf

27. ILO Brief (29 July, 2025) Assessment of gender equality and social inclusion gaps in the skills and TVET sector of Bangladesh Promoting Gender-Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS) Project, ILO Bangladesh. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/GESI%20Report%20Brochure_0.pdf

28. ILO (21 march 2025) Gender-responsive National Employment Policies: A path for gender equality. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/Technical%20Guidance%20Note%20Gender-Responsive%20NEPs%20-%2003.2025.pdf

29. ILO Strategic review of Global Affairs Canada-funded skills and employment development projects in Bangladesh. Sandra Rothboeck, Consultant. 6 May 2025

30. ILO Assessment of gender equality and social inclusion gaps in the skills and TVET sector of Bangladesh, July 2025 https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/ILO_GESI_Report_040725_Draft_Final.pdf

31. ILO, *Strategic review of Global Affairs Canada-funded skills and employment development projects in Bangladesh, Sandra Rothboeck, Consultant, May 2025*

32. K.M. Mahmud Hasan (2023) – *Empowering Her Future: Skill Development and Trade Opportunities for Women in Bangladesh*

33. ILO Meeting Minutes: Meeting with Executive Chairman (EC)-NSDA on Gender and Skills Taskforce. Date: 9th June 2024

34. ILO, SKILLS 21-empowering citizens for inclusive and sustainable growth project. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) For Khulna Mohila Polytechnic Institute, Khulna To Become Model TVET Institute (MTI)

35. Independent evaluation of ilo skills 21 project – empowering citizens for inclusive and sustainable growth (2017-2024)

Annex F. ILO Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practice Templates

Mid-term Independent Evaluation of Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS)

Project DC/SYMBOL: Eval/ProGRESS/01/2025

Name of Evaluator: Artival Research & Evaluation

Date: 22 September 2025

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	Development of a system that provides real-time dissagregated information of the data collected by the project
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	BLIMS- Beneficiary Learning Information Management System This is a unique system developed by the ProGRESS to capture the quantitative information and able to provide accurate, timely and detailed information to the project team and other authorized users.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	BLIMS is a digital innovation introduced by the project to streamline the data collection, tracking, and reporting and offering a real-time, centralized platform for monitoring beneficiary progress, employment outcomes, and stakeholder activities Its interactive dashboard, mapping features, and automated reporting capabilities enable government counterparts, including DTE and TMED, to access critical insights for policy formulation and programmatic adjustments.
Establish a clear cause- effect relationship	The BLIMS is able to provide real time disaggregated data, by location, sex and sectors on the different project components and supports management in evidenced-based decision making. However, this is not able to provide any qualitative information, i.e. impeding and influencing factors and issue related to low or not performing and information on what works and what not and why.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	BLIMS is used to measure the progress against all 3 components (gender, skill training and enterprise) and clearly segregated the data by sex, location, persons with disabilities and ethnic communities . This is mainly designed for the project management and field level implementing partners.
Potential for replication and by whom	The BLIMS is primarily providing quantitative information as part of monitoring system, but there should have scope of tracking qualitative information. This is and an innovative monitoring tools and other projects implementing under line ministries may replicate the BLIMS for monitoring.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Strong monitoring is pre-condition for achieving better performance of the project/programme, though the existing monitoring system of ProGRESS project is mainly capturing quantitative information and closely linked with the project goal.

Other documents or relevant comments	

Mid-term Independent Evaluation of Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS)

Project DC/SYMBOL: Eval/ProGRESS/01/2025
Name of Evaluator: Artival Research & Evaluation
Date: 22 September 2025

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	**Promotion of employment and empowerment of ethnic communities**
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Community-based Tourism Services is a key initiative of the ProGRESS project, implemented by the Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) to boost employment in tourism. Jaflong, located 65 kilometres from Sylhet, is home to the Khashia ethnic community and offers notable natural attractions. To address the lack of tourist facilities and create new income opportunities for local residents, community-based services are being developed. BTB is also preparing a Code of Conduct for Community-Based Tourism to enhance the sector's ecosystem in Bangladesh.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	With the support of ProGRESS, BTB in revising policies and guidelines to promote inclusive practices that create decent work opportunities and encourage participation of women, youth, and other ethnic communities in the tourism sector. BTB is developing a comprehensive code of conduct for tourism industry in the country, emphasizing ethical practices, environmental sustainability, community tourism and inclusivity towards diverse groups. It is anticipated that BTB will create the facilities to attract tourists interested in responsible and inclusive travel experiences, highlighting Bangladesh's unique cultural heritage, natural beauty, and the diverse workforce within the tourism industry. ProGRESS is also providing support to BTB in establishing and improvement of community tourism infrastructure and services, ensuring diverse needs of tourists, particularly women, youth and disadvantaged, are met.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	Tourism sectors is identified as most potential sector through a comprehensive value chain study conducted by the project. Community based tourism is new concept in Bangladesh and have huge scope leveraging its benefit.

Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Devising comprehensive approach of capacity building initiatives to skill the labor force engaging in this industry, creation of training module and guidelines and ensuring academia industry collaboration to get better output and feedback to the industry. This intervention is targeting the disadvantaged ethnic communities, craft producers, transport workers and through attracting local tourist as well as international tourist.
Potential for replication and by whom	The community-based tourism initiatives in Jaflong, Sylhet would create significant income and job opportunities for indigenous Khasi communities by promoting homestays, cultural experiences, and environmentally friendly activities. There are numbers of small community-based tourism spot in Bangladesh and this will be replicated through private entrepreneurs in creating similar facilities

Mid-term Independent Evaluation of Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS)

Project DC/SYMBOL: Eval/ProGRESS/01/2025
Name of Evaluator: Artival Research & Evaluation
Date: 22 September 2025

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	**Higher employment rate when there is a designated person is specifically assigned to link training and job placement**.
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The achievement of the project is very dependent on securing employment, it was observed that the existance of a **designated person assigned for job placement** significantly improved the likelihood that persons would suceesffully transition from training to employment.
Context and any related preconditions	The project targeted the most disadvantaged communities in improving livelihood through income earning through employment immediately after attending the sector-based skill development training. It is noted that the rate of employment is higher in those districts where job placement office is positioned.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ProGRESS project management, line ministries and stakeholders involved in the project and other organization implementing similar project
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Line ministries who are involved in this project will be responsible for taking forward the project in future as the skill development training are being governed by these ministries. A certificate of skill training will have no results if the TVET graduates are not employed in any places. Role of job placement office ris to link with the employers and it need strong liaison, networking and collaboration. Challenge is financial allocation and adequate funding for job placement officer and logistics related to these actions.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Successful achievement in terms of job placement are observed in the districts where some NGO and private skill training providers are involved in the project and they achievement is the ultimate results of deploying job placement officer.

ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	The Project is designed based on the lessons from previous project, analysis of current context, gap and priorities and managing by the well expereinced staff members. Due to some external issues, project experienced some delays and implementation of major activities by the government stakeholder's are somewhat slower than the planned actions.

International Labour Organization

Evaluation Office

F-4: Lessons Learned

Mid-term Independent Evaluation of Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS)

Project DC/SYMBOL: Eval/ProGRESS/01/2025
Name of Evaluator: Artival Research & Evaluation
Date: 22 September 2025

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	**Need to assess adequacy of facilities for training aimed at persons with disabilities.**
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	**Increasing physical and lab facilities of the skill training providing institutions.** Since the project targets persons with disabilities, providing accessible facilities, a supportive learning environment, and a well-equipped lab is essential for quality training.
Context and any related preconditions	Assessment of physical facilities of training providers and of employment opportunities would be before the selection of training institutions and suitable TVET sectors in the district. Well-equipped lab facilities are a key element for successful training as the TVET graduate will be employed by large companies where the incumbent should have adequate skills to operate and perform as per employers' expectation. Similarly, most of training provider have no capacities in delivering training to persons with disabilities due to its sensitive handling issues.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ProGRESS project management, line ministries and stakeholders involved in the project and the skill training providers at the district level.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Most of skill training providers have no adequate facilities in the lab that are currently being used and the employers are searching skill persons, it is informed by BEF that without improving the lab facilities, these training will have no/little use, also the training providers have no capacity to deliver the training to persons with disabilities, that require mind set-up, understanding of mental attitude and creation of safe learning environment. ProGRESS project should assess the facilities mentioned above before selection and arrangement of training.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Companies under the BAPA is doing better as they are using their existing facilities of the factories, while TTCs/IMT have no improved lab facilities and

	these are administered by the BMET, it is not easy to get allocation of required fund for renovation of the lab and placement of suitable instructors for the training of persons with disabilities. ProGRESS can play a vital role in managing these issues for successful achievement of the project's objectives. .
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Within the ProGRESS team, there is no specialized staff members of taking care of the training delivery issue of persons with disabilities, and also no visible steps are taken for the skill training providers. Adequate resources need to be allocated for result based project management, instead of achieving the quantitative target.

Terms of Reference

Mid-term Independent Evaluation of Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS)

Key facts

Title of project being evaluated	Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS)
Project DC Code	BGD/18/02/CAN
Type of evaluation (e.g. independent, internal)	Independent Evaluation
Timing of evaluation (e.g. midterm, final)	Mid-term
Donor	The Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), Global Affairs Canada
Administrative Unit in the ILO responsible for administrating the project	ILO Country Office, Bangladesh
Technical Unit(s) in the ILO responsible for backstopping the project	Decent Work Team New Delhi, SKILLS, ENTERPRISE
P&B outcome (s) under evaluation	Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work Outcome 5: Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market Outcome 6: Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work
SDG(s) under evaluation	SDG 4; SDG 5; SDG 8
Budget	CAD 20 million

Background information

Bangladesh has experienced steady economic growth over the past decade, with an average annual growth of over 7% in recent years. The government has set ambitious targets to transition the country into a middle-income economy by 2031, driven by sectors such as ready-made garments (RMG), agriculture, and emerging industries like renewable energy. However, despite these positive economic trends, growth has not been evenly distributed, and significant gender disparities persist, particularly in the labour market. Women's participation in the workforce has declined from 36% in 2010 to 33% in 2017, with women facing higher unemployment rates (7%) compared to men (3%). Women are disproportionately concentrated in low-paying, informal sectors such as agriculture, while men dominate higher-paying industries like manufacturing and services. Automation in sectors like RMG has further marginalized female workers, with their participation dropping from 64% in 2015 to 60.8% in 2016, as factory owners often perceive women as less capable of handling modern machinery.

The political landscape in the Bangladesh has been marked by efforts to drive economic development through large-scale infrastructure projects. The government has allocated approximately $3.5 billion for mega projects such as the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, the Rail Metro Project, and the development of economic zones aimed at creating millions of jobs. However, these initiatives often overlook to potential gendered impact and fail to consider how women can equally benefit from these opportunities. The

Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) has plans to establish economic zones across the country by 2030, targeting the creation of 10 million jobs. Yet, there is a significant gap in terms of gender-sensitive policies and skills development plans that can enable inclusive growth, limiting the ability address these disparities.

Traditional patriarchal norms and institutionalized discrimination in the country continues to restrict women's access to education, skills training, and employment opportunities. Female drop-out rates at the secondary level are significantly higher (46%) compared to males (34%), and many of these dropouts enter low-skilled informal jobs or remain unemployed. Women are also underrepresented in technical and vocational education and training (TVET), with only 24% female enrolment in 2015, far below the national target of gender parity. Cultural barriers, such as societal expectations and lack of parental support, further hinder women's access to non-traditional occupations and entrepreneurial opportunities. Women with disabilities face even greater challenges, as they are often subjected to social stigma and exclusion from economic activities. Traditional gender roles heavily influence women's participation in the workforce and public life. Occupational segregation is prevalent, with women concentrated in low-paying, "feminized" sectors such as nursing, handicrafts, and beauty parlours, while men dominate fields like engineering, construction, and technology. This segregation is reinforced by societal attitudes, limited access to resources, and restricted opportunities for women to acquire technical and entrepreneurial skills. Women entrepreneurs face significant barriers, including limited access to credit, lack of business networks, and dependence on male family members for decision-making.

The ProGRESS project, titled "*Promoting Gender Responsive Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS)*" is a five-year initiative running from October 2022 to October 2027. The project is implemented in Bangladesh with a budget of CAD 20 million. Key partners include the Technical and Madrasah Education Division of the Ministry of Education, National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), Directorate of Youth, Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Department of Women Affairs, SME Foundation, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), Bangladesh Tourism Board, SME Foundation, Bangladesh Employers' Federations, Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Chittagong Hill District Council, and various other government bodies.

The Theory of Change focuses on using gender equality and women's empowerment as central themes to drive improvements in policy, skills, and business service provision.

The project has established three intermediate outcomes:

Adoption and implementation of National Strategy on Gender Equality in TVET (2012), TVET Development Action Plan; Draft National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2021, national budget and operational systems which promote gender equality particularly in terms of digital access, enterprise development and green jobs.

Increased opportunities for wage and self-employment of women within selected value chains and market systems, particularly in the green growth sectors

Improved availability of accessible, inclusive, sustainable and green skills training opportunities for women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups.

The project is managed by the ILO Country Office in Bangladesh, with technical backstopping provided by the Decent Work Team in New Delhi. Collaborating ILO units include GEDI, MIGRANT, ACTRAV, ACTEMP, and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) in Bangkok.

The interventions build on over a decade of support to Bangladesh's TVET system, aiming to produce concrete impacts in terms of improved employment for women. Key milestones include the establishment of a market-oriented, competency-based skills system and the promotion of green

enterprises. The exit strategy focuses on achieving sustainable change through capacity building, policy support, and practical demonstration.

The project contributes to the Country Priority 1 of the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) for 2017-2020: "*Effective employment policies to enhance employability through skill development including for green growth"* and more particularly the following DWCP outcomes:

Outcome 1.2: Promoted accessibility of TVET system, aligned with National Skill Development Policy (NSDP) especially for women, disadvantaged groups, people with disabilities and ethnic groups and in view of introducing skills in emerging technologies for climate resilient green growth.

The project also contributes to SDG 4, SDG 5 and SDG 8; and to the ILO's Programme and Budget 2020-21 and 2022-23, specifically:

Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work

Outcome 5: Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market

Outcome 6: Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work

It is also aligned with P&B 2024-25.

This project strongly supports Bangladesh's 7th and 8th Five Year Plans, which focuses on employment growth as development goal and identifies skills constraints as a major challenge faced by Bangladesh. It also aligns with the National Skills Development Policy of 2011, which is due for update. The project directly supports the Government of Bangladesh's commitment to promoting gender equality in TVET and achieving an enrolment rate of 40% by 2030.

The project targets the following populations in Chattogram, Sylhet, Rangamati, Bandarban, Khagrachari, Mymensingh, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, and Coastal districts of Khulna and Barishal divisions for skills and enterprise development:

Young women entering the labour market, who will have access to a wider range of occupations and sectors due to improved TVET programs that offer training, apprenticeship and entrepreneurship support programmes that meet market opportunities. Young men will also benefit from improved quality of TVET

Women including COVID19 impacted returnee migrants, persons with disabilities and disadvantaged groups, women from ethnic minorities especially those who are affected by gender-based violence during pandemic

Women and men who are not in education, employment and training, and lack formal recognition of their skills, who will gain access to better employment opportunities through Recognition of Prior Learning system

Women entrepreneurs willing to start or improve their Micro, Medium and Small Enterprise (MSME), e-commerce in the targeted sectors

Women and men working in small, medium and large enterprises in the target value chains.

Women and men willing to explore entrepreneurship/self-employment opportunities in the care work sector

Direct beneficiaries include:

Directorate of Technical Education under Technical and Madrasa Education Division of the Ministry of Education

Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industry Corporation and including the SME

Foundation under the Ministry of Industry

Department of Women Affairs of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA)

Bangladesh Tourism Board

Chittagong Hill District Councils

Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)

Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB)

Public, private and the NGO led skills training institutes

Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF), relevant Industry Skills Councils, Women

Chamber of Commerce, women business associations and enterprise operating in identified value chains

Business development service (BDS) providers

National Coordination Committee on Workers Education (NCCWE), and Employee Associations

Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

This independent mid-term evaluation, to be conducted through an independent evaluator or evaluation team, aims to assesses the overall performance of the project to date, ensuring accountability to donors and ILO constituents, facilitate organizational learning and inform necessary adjustments in outcomes, strategies and interventions based on evolving situation. It applies the six OECD-DAC criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact orientation, and sustainability, to evaluate progress toward objectives, alignment with strategies and implementation modalities, and management effectiveness. The assessment is also expected to bring about the successes, best practices and lessons learned from project activities, and identify changes in the project contexts, opportunities, challenges and barriers, including their root causes. It will also provide mitigation measures. Building on the findings of the assessment, actionable recommendations will be suggested to enhance delivery during the remaining project period and inform future interventions.

Primary users include ILO constituents, government/public institutions, donors, ILO Country Office, Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ROAP), Decent Work Teams (DWTs), HQ departments (technical units, Evaluation Office, PARDEV, PROGRAM), partner organizations. Secondary users encompass academia, researchers, general population and other ILO units/regions.

The evaluation adheres to ILO policies and UNEG ethical guidelines, annexed to the ToR. As a learning-focused exercise, it prioritizes evidence-based insights to guide the project's continuation, emphasizing strategic and operational adjustments to strengthen sustainability and impact.

The specific objectives of this evaluation are the following:

Independently assess the achievements and progress of the ProGRESS Project toward its intended results, based on the project document, logframe and indicators framework

Evaluate the continued relevance of the project's outcome indicators in the context of the diminished impact of pandemic and evolving socio-economic conditions and propose rephrasing or repurposing to ensure alignment with current priorities and effective measurement of progress toward intended outcomes.

Analyse the strengths and weaknesses in the design, planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and knowledge management; and inform the ILO and stakeholders on whether the current project strategy is working.

Identify and document good practices, lessons learned and key insights that can contribute to the ILO's learning and knowledge development, as well as benefit project stakeholders.

Evaluate the project's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), the Programme and Budget (P&B), and relevant national priorities.

Identify synergies and collaborative efforts with other ongoing projects or programs in the same area, assessing how these collaborations might strengthen the project's outcomes.

Examine the project's initial outcomes on addressing discrimination, exclusion, and gender disparities, focusing on interventions aimed at equality and their effects on the target population.

Provide necessary recommendations at both strategic and operational level to address the gaps and opportunities identified in the evaluation and enhance the likelihood that the project reaches its objectives.

Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will assess the process, achievements and progress of the ProGRESS project in Bangladesh, covering the timeline from its launch in October 2022 to October 2027, and encompass all components and planned results of the Project, with a particular focus on the project's current outcomes:

Adoption and implementation of National Strategy on Gender Equality in TVET (2012), TVET Development Action Plan, Draft National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2021, national budget and operational systems which promote gender equality particularly in terms of digital access, enterprise development and green jobs.

Improved capacity of TMED and DTE to achieve explicit gender equality, digital access and green jobs targets through the implementation of National Skill Development Policy (NSDP), TVET Development Action Plan and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Action Plan

Improved capacity of DTE/TMED partner institutions and other relevant stakeholders in gender and green jobs focus, and targeting in line with relevant NSDP objectives

Enhanced capacities of TVET providers (public and private) to provide gender responsive facilities, skill training and employment support services using e-learning, remote and other accessible means of delivery

Increased opportunities for wage and self-employment of women within selected value chains and market systems, particularly in the green growth sectors

Increased capacity of value chain actors and business associations to promote growth of green jobs and enterprises in the selected value chains with high concentration of women and youth differently abled people.

Improved coordination among the value chain actors and TVET institutes for training design and employment support services.

Improved access to quality business management and entrepreneurship development support service for women, youth and persons with disabilities in the selected areas

Improved availability of accessible, inclusive, sustainable and green skills training opportunities for women, youth, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups

Increased industry participation in identifying employment opportunities and reskilling, skills training needs for women and returnee migrants

Improved capacity of TVET institutions to expand their outreach, pedagogical practices and offer gender responsive skills training opportunities to youth, women and persons with disabilities using digital technology and other innovative learning modalities

The gender dimension should be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables, and final report of the evaluation. In terms of this evaluation, this implies involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team. Moreover, the evaluators should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve the lives of women and men. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and evaluation report.

Evaluation criteria and questions (including Cross-cutting issues/ issues of special interest to the ILO)

The evaluation will examine the project along the following six standard evaluation criteria, taking into account the ILO cross cutting areas (international labour standards, social dialogue and gender equality and non-discrimination). A more detailed analytical framework of questions and sub-questions will be developed by the evaluator. This may involve adapting the evaluation criteria/questions, in agreement with the Evaluation Manager.

Relevance and Strategic Fit of the Intervention

How do the project objectives, strategies and design align with and adapt to the evolving priorities of national stakeholders, donors, and target groups (including women, youth, PWDs, and ethnic communities)? How do they reflect the ILO's normative mandate, including tripartism, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and disability inclusion?

Have there been any adjustment to the project design or theory of change to address emerging challenges (e.g., post-political shift) or changing socio-economic context?

To what extent are the project' interventions logical and grounded in a clear results framework (linkages to CPOs, DWCP, P&B outcomes, SDG targets), thorough understanding of the context dynamics, current needs and future risks/opportunities?

Relative to the contexts, how appropriate and valid are the project objectives, strategies, and assumptions for achieving planned results? Does the Theory of Change require to be adjusted or restructured?

Coherence

How well does the project fit in the Office's cluster approach, and complements with other ILO project', and the agenda/work of relevant national and international agencies working for gender equality in TVET and economic empowerment? What synergies have been created?

How have the project ensured that its approach have not duplicated or undermined existing services for strengthening related initiatives? How are the different components of the project coordinated to ensure a unified approach?

Intervention Progress and Effectiveness

How is the project progressing in delivering its outputs, and toward preliminary outcomes? With main focus on the effectiveness of training programmes and implementing partners and partners service providers in improving employability in skills and enterprise development.

What are the early successes, best practices, and lessons that have emerged, and innovations that were produced? What challenges and barriers have been encountered in the implementation of project activities, including considerations for tripartism, gender equality and social dialogue? How have these challenges been mitigated? What alternative strategies/approaches would have been possible or can still viable?

How effective were the project interventions/activities in advancing ILO's normative mandate, including tripartism, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and disability inclusion?

Beyond the project's planned results, what unforeseen positive or negative effects have been observed during its implementation?

Efficiency of Resource Usage:

Have resources (human resources, time, expertise, funds etc.) been allocated and used strategically and efficiently to support progress toward the expected results? (Specific sub-questions can be: (i) To what extent have the project management capacities and arrangements put in place? (ii) Have the project's activities/operations been in line with the schedule of activities as defined by the work plans?

How efficient are the project's monitoring and oversight mechanisms in timely, cost-effective and quality delivery of outputs and outcomes=? (Specific sub-questions can be: (i) What lessons have been learned about the timeliness, accuracy, and utility of monitoring data in guiding adaptive management or corrective actions; (ii) What are the key strengths and weaknesses of the project's M&E system; iii) How has the M&E system directly influenced decision-making, resource allocation or adjustments to implementation strategies to improve delivery; iv) What systematic gaps (e.g., capacity, tools, stakeholders management) hinder the M&E system, and how can these be addressed to enhance project efficiency?)

How efficient has the cooperation been among project partners, and what value has their collaboration added to the project?

Orientation to Impact

What initial changes has the project brought about in target groups' lives, particularly regarding the intended outcomes? To what extent do these changes suggest potential long-term impact? How well do these changes align with the ILO's normative mandate?

How have gender-responsive strategies been positioned to advance long-term outcomes?

What is the likelihood of the project generating positive or negative, intended or unintended, overarching impacts?

Sustainability

What foundational steps (e.g., capacity building, policy integration, systems building) have been taken to sustain results in line with ILO mandates?

What are the initial indications of sustainability of the project outcomes at both the system and operational/technical levels, particularly in terms of skills development, enterprises, and those employed? Which project partners can contribute to the sustainability of the project's initiatives? What actions could have been taken, or can be taken, to further improve the sustainability of project initiatives?

To what extent are target groups and stakeholders (government, employers, workers and civil society organizations) engaged in the project to ensure buy-in post-project ownership of outcomes?

Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted in line with the ILO's evaluation policy and procedures, which adhere to international standards and best practices, articulated in the OECD/DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) from 2016. The evaluation will comply with the UNEG ethical guidelines (2020).

The evaluation methodology should include examining the interventions' Theory of Change, specifically in the light of logical connect between levels of results, its coherence with external factors, and their alignment with the ILO's strategic objectives, SDGs and related targets, national and ILO country level outcomes. The evaluation should consider that the project has used M&E approaches and systems. A special focus will also be on the response of the project to evolving project context.

The evaluation methodology is expected to use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, to be defined and approved as part of the evaluation inception report. All data will be triangulated. The methods are expected to create a space for a sample of all stakeholders and beneficiaries to voice their opinions and analysis, that will be compared and consolidated into the evaluation document. To the extent possible, all categories of project participants should be represented.

To this end, the consultant's wok will comprise:

Desk review: the project will make available all its documents, including proposal, project document, logical framework, baseline study, various Technical Progress Reports (TPRs), news on activities and other relevant material. The consultant team is expected to conduct a comprehensive desk review of project documents, including the ProGRESS MIS data and reports, to systematically analyse existing data and identify key trends, achievements and challenges

Qualitative data: Through at least 5 focus group discussions (FGDs) and at least 20 key informant interviews (KIIs), the consultant team (evaluator team) will engage with a diverse and representative sample of stakeholders, including project staff, tripartite constituents, beneficiaries, and partners. These discussions will provide in-depth insights into the project's potential impact, effectiveness and relevance. The evaluation will involve field visits and face-to-face engagements with project staff, tripartite constituents, stakeholders and partners, considering the situation (if not advisable, interviews should be done only virtually). During these field visits, the consultant team will check the evidence of data recorded through desk review. Participants for qualitative methods will be selected using purposive sampling to ensure inclusion of key groups (e.g., marginalized populations, implementers) and balanced demographic representation (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability status)

Quantitative data: The consultant team will produce data collection tools for both qualitative and quantitative data. During the field visits, the evaluator team will conduct surveys using a statistically representative sample of respondents selected from representatives of project staffs, project direct and indirect beneficiaries, and other project partners. The sample size for data collection through structured questionnaires from direct beneficiaries will be at least 110. Structured questionnaires will be administered, with data disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity and other relevant factors. The sampling approach will follow stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation of target groups and alignment with evaluation objectives.

In line with ILO's evaluation policy guidelines and related guidance notes, the evaluation will pay specific attention to ILO's cross-cutting issues, notably the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, environmental sustainability, and disability inclusion. Contribution of the ILO to the relevant targets set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will also be considered by the evaluation. The gender equality dimension will be a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables, and final report of the evaluation. This implies involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team as possible. Moreover, the evaluator team should review data and information that is

disaggregated by sex and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender and disability inclusion related strategies and outcomes within the purview of ILO's work. Specific measures to reflect gender and inclusion concerns should be elaborated in the inception report, in line with the UN GEEW-SWAP guidance in this regard.

Building on the aforementioned approach, the consultant will develop a detailed methodology that will enable him to achieve evaluation expectations.

During the evaluation, the consultant team will discuss with several actors, including Evaluation Manager, Project team, ILO's constituents, project beneficiaries, and other stakeholders deemed relevant.

The evaluation team should assess each of the project's objective(s), outcome(s), and output(s) according to the following scale:

High: met or exceeded most targets for the period evaluated, with mostly positive feedback from key stakeholders and participants.

Above-moderate: met or exceeded most targets for the period evaluated, but with mostly neutral or negative feedback from key stakeholders and participants.

Moderate: missed most targets for the period evaluated, but with mostly positive feedback from key stakeholders and participants.

Low: missed most targets for the period evaluated, with mostly neutral or negative feedback from key stakeholders and participants.

Main deliverables

The evaluation consultant is expected to provide the following deliverables:

Inception Report: This operational evaluation plan will include evaluation purpose, a detailed review of the evaluation questions and methodology, updated based on the TOR and providing necessary details on data collection methods. It will also contain data collection tools (e.g., survey questionnaire, KII/FGD/interview guides, focus group discussion questions), a list of stakeholders to be interviewed (considering a gender approach), criteria for selecting these stakeholders, a detailed data collection and tabulation plan, a worksheet (provided by the evaluation manager and possibly updated by the consultant team), and a detailed work plan for the entire mission, indicating the various phases of the evaluation.

First Draft Report (Initial Report): The evaluation consultant will conduct fieldwork to collect data from stakeholders and prepare the initial report, which will include the evaluation findings, addressing the evaluation questions, and highlighting identified strengths, weaknesses, successes, challenges, barriers, best practices, and lessons learned, including results from the evaluation workshop. Based on these findings, the team will develop conclusions and recommendations. The report should follow this structure:

Table of content

List of acronyms

Executive summary

Introduction and Project description

Objectives of the evaluation

Evaluation criteria and questions

Methodology

Difficulties encountered

Findings of the evaluation

Conclusions

Lesson learnt and good practices

Recommendations

Annexes: Terms of Reference, list of documents consulted, list of stakeholders met, photos, templates for lessons learned and good practices.

The report is expected to incorporate visuals, including text boxes, photos, infographics, pull quotes, to enhance clarity, engagement and narrative coherence. All visuals will adhere to ILO's communication guidelines, ensuring alignment with branding standards (e.g., colour schemes, typography), accessibility principles (alt-text for digital formats), and ethical practices (informed consent for photos, culturally sensitive imagery). Visuals will be professionally curated, contextually relevant, and consistently formatted to reinforce the report's credibility and readability.

Stakeholder Workshop: The consultant team will organize a validation workshop to present the preliminary findings of the evaluation with stakeholders. This workshop will be conducted in English.

The workshop aims to:

Present the initial findings of the evaluation.

Gather feedback and insights from stakeholders.

Discuss the strengths, weaknesses, successes, challenges, barriers; -present best practices, and lessons learned identified during the evaluation.

Develop a collaborative approach to refine the conclusions and recommendations based on stakeholder input.

Final Report and separate executive summary: This is the revised report, enriched with comments from the stakeholders, evaluation manager, project team, regional evaluation officer, responsible officer of evaluation and donor It follows the previously outlined structure and includes a cover page, and a separate executive summary (using ILO/EVAL template).

The consultant team is required to produce the evaluation deliverables (inception, first draft, and final reports) in English. The quality of all reports will be assessed against the relevant ILO's Evaluation Checklists and guidelines, key versions of which are annexed to this ToR.

Management arrangements and work plan (including timeframe)

The evaluation management process is as follows:

The Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders for The Evaluation Management:

Evaluation manager

The designed Evaluation Manager is Mr. Ahmad Sina Sabawoon (sabawoon@ilo.org). He has no direct bearing with the project. He will work in close coordination with Pringsulaka Pamornrat

(pamornrat@ilo.org), who is the responsible Regional Evaluation Officer (REO) in the ILO's Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP). The evaluation manager will oversee the evaluation process, including receiving project documents from the project team, selecting the evaluation team, and briefing them on ILO policies, procedures, and expected deliverables.

The Evaluation Manager will receive the inception report from the evaluator/team. He will review and approve it by mutual agreement with the responsible regional evaluation officer. After this approval, the evaluator/team will start data collection process and produce the first draft report of evaluation (initial evaluation report). The Evaluation Consultant will submit this first draft report to the Evaluation Manager. This draft will be reviewed by the Evaluation Manager for quality and compliance with international standards before being circulated to other stakeholders for comments. Stakeholders will provide feedback through a log form, which the Evaluation Manager will consolidate and share with the evaluation team for report updates. After incorporating stakeholder feedback, the consultant will submit the revised report to the Evaluation Manager, who will review it before sharing it with the REO and EVAL for the final quality review, and approval. Once approved, EVAL will notify the project responsible official, request the management response to the recommendations, and upload the report to i-eval Discovery. EVAL will then submit the approved final evaluation report to the project team.

Evaluation Consultant/Team

The Evaluation Team will comprise 2 consultants: A Team Leader (an international consultant) and a national/local consultant. The Team Leader will be responsible for the overall evaluation process. S/He will develop a detail methodology for the evaluation, inception report, data collection tools, lead the data collection process, and draft the reports, including inception, first draft report and final report as per ILO's checklists. The national consultant will play, during the fieldwork, the role of interpreter on behalf of the international consultant, to enable her/him to understand stakeholders' feedback, as needed. He will also conduct focus group discussion and support the international consultant in various data collection process, as needed. Building on the information gathering through desk review of project documents and field work, the evaluator team will produce expected deliverables.

Project Team

The project team will gather project documents and share them with the Evaluation Manager, including the list of project beneficiaries (direct and indirect). The project team will also provide administrative and technical support to the Evaluation Consultant/Team. The project team will prepare and organize the information sharing workshop with project stakeholders. During data collection process, the evaluator will consult the project team as project stakeholders. The project team will provide comments on the draft report.

Responsible Regional Evaluation Officer (REO)

The REO will provide consistent support to the Evaluation Manager throughout the evaluation process. She will also assist the evaluation manager in ensuring the quality of evaluation deliverables.

Project Stakeholders

This group comprises ILO's constituents in Bangladesh (representatives of government entities, representatives of employers' and workers' organizations), donor, other partners. They will provide inputs to the Evaluation Consultant/Team as project stakeholders, through interviews, focus group discussion, etc.

Workplan (Including Timeframe)

The evaluation assignment will be undertaken over four months as follows: From May to August 2025. To perform it, the Evaluation Team Leader / International Consultant and National/Local Consultant should

work for 27 days. The fees of consultant / team will cover honorarium, travel to project area, transportation, and Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA).

The suggested workplan and timeframe of the evaluation will be updated by the Evaluation Consultant/Team and included into the inception report. However, the project management will bring all logistic support for the fieldwork, including the workshop to share the evaluation preliminary findings.

Tasks	Responsible Parties: Evaluation Manager / Evaluation Consultant / Regional Officer / Project Team	Number of Working Days: Team Leader/ International Consultant	Number of Working Days: National/ Local Consultant	Completion Date
PLANNING – DESIGN OF THE EVALUATION				
Signature of contract and code of conduct for Evaluation Consultant/Team	Evaluation Manager, Responsible Regional Evaluation Officer, responsible officer in the evaluation office (EVAL); issued by Project team			05 May 2025
Initial consultation with the evaluators	Evaluation Manager, Evaluation Consultant/team	1	1	10 May 2025
TOTAL 1		1	1	
INCEPTION PHASE				
Desk review of documents (interviews as needed) **Drafting Inception Report (First draft, and revision based on comments)** **Development of data collections tools / stakeholders' identification for main data collection stage**	Evaluation Consultant/team Evaluator (comments from Evaluation Manager in coordination with Project Team and Responsible Regional Evaluation Officer) Evaluation consultant/team	8	7	23 May 2025
Review of draft inception report	Evaluation Manager and Project Team			31 May 2025
TOTAL 2		8	7	
DATA COLLECTION - FIELD WORK & SURVEY PHASE, ANALYSIS AND REPORTING				
Data Collection and Internal Debriefing	Evaluation Consultant/team	5	10	15 June 2025
Data analysis and triangulation; and drafting the first draft of report	Evaluation Consultant/team	8	5	30 June 2025
Workshop (presentation and validation of preliminary findings)	Evaluation Consultant/team, Evaluation Manager and Project Team	1	1	10 July 2025
Comments on first draft report	Evaluation Manager in consultation with Project Team and Stakeholders,			23 July 2025
Submission of revised evaluation report	Evaluation Consultant/team	2	1	15 September 2025
Review of revised evaluation report	Evaluation Manager and Project Team			Ocotber 10 2025
Final revision of report by evaluation team		2	2	Octobre 21 2025
Approval of report (EM, REO/DEPF, EVAL)	Responsible Regional Evaluation Officer, responsible officer in the evaluation office (EVAL)			30 october 2026
Dissemination	Project Team			10 November 2025
TOTAL 3		18	19	

Final				
TOTAL		27	27	

The Evaluation Manager, Regional Evaluation Officer, ILO's Evaluation team at HQ, and the Project Team will be available to provide guidance and support throughout the process, ensuring the successful completion of the evaluation assignment.

Profile of the evaluation team

Given the interdisciplinary focus of the project (gender, enterprise, and skills), the evaluation team will ideally be composed of a consulting firm with a multidisciplinary team to ensure comprehensive expertise across all three domains. If individual consultants are proposed, their combined portfolios must demonstrate proven, complementary experience in gender equality, enterprise development, and skills/TVET programming.

International consultant (Team Leader)

Hold an advanced degree (Master's or PhD) in Social Sciences, Economics, International Development, Development Studies, Gender Studies, Education, Public Policy, or a related field, combined with a minimum of 7 years of proven experience in project and programme evaluation including at least 3 years in a leadership capacity.

Demonstrate extensive experience in evaluating large-scale development projects, specifically in the areas of TVET/skills development systems, enterprise development and gender-focused (Gender marker – 3) programmes and women's economic empowerment.

Advanced expertise in evidence-based research methodologies, evaluation tools, and designing and establishing M&E frameworks and M&E systems for development projects/programmes in similar thematic areas (e.g., OECD-DAC Principles, and the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation)

Proficiency in both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, with a focus on participatory and inclusive approaches

Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to synthesize complex information into actionable recommendations and present findings clearly

Strong understanding of gender-responsive, diversity-friendly and inclusive programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Proven ability to produce high-quality, concise, and actionable evaluation reports and deliver compelling presentations to senior audiences

Proven ability to lead and manage multi-disciplinary teams in international and cross-cultural settings.

Strong leadership and team management skills, with a focus on delivering high-quality results under tight deadlines

Demonstrated experience in designing, organizing, and facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues, consultations, and participatory processes.

Deep understanding of socio-economic, political and institutional context of TVET, skills development and enterprise development, preferably in countries like Bangladesh

Strong track record of working with international organizations, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage effectively with diverse stakeholders.

Knowledge of the ILO and its normative mandate, tripartite structure and development cooperation activities is an advantage.

Good knowledge of the ILO's project evaluation framework and approaches, supplemented by professional certification in evaluations and/or project management (highly desirable).

Prior working experience in evaluation of UN entities is required, evaluation experience in Bangladesh or similar contexts and with the ILO is an advantage.

Fluency in English is required; proficiency in Bengali or other local languages is an asset.

Demonstrated commitment to gender equality, social inclusion, and sustainable development principles in evaluation practices.

Complete the self-induction programme at: "ILO Self-induction Module for Evaluation Consultants-Part-I (itcilo.org)" and include the attestation of completion of this training in your submission file; (optional, but strongly recommended)

National (local) consultant:

Advanced degree (Master's or equivalent) in Social Sciences, Economics, International Development, Development Studies, Gender Studies, Education, Public Policy, or a related field

A minimum of 5 years of proven experience in project evaluation, monitoring and research, preferably in the areas of TVET systems, skills development, enterprise development, gender equality and women's economic empowerment

Proven experience in supporting large-scale development project evaluations, including data collection, analysis, and reporting, with a focus on gender-responsive and inclusive approaches

Advanced familiarity with socio-economic, political and institutional context of Bangladesh, particularly in relation to TVET, skills development, and gender-sensitive evaluation practices

Demonstrated experience in organizing and facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues, consultations, and participatory processes to ensure inclusive and collaborative evaluation practices

Strong track record of working with international organizations, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Bangladesh or similar contexts.

Familiarity with evidence-based research methodologies, evaluation tools and frameworks (e.g., OECD-DAC Criteria, participatory rural appraisal, and gender-responsive evaluation techniques)

Good knowledge of the ILO's approach to project evaluation; professional certification in evaluations and/or project management is a strong asset.

Complete the self-induction programme at: "ILO Self-induction Module for Evaluation Consultants-Part-I (itcilo.org)" and include the attestation of completion of this training in your submission file; (optional)

Excellent analytical and problem-solving abilities, with the capacity to synthesize complex information into actionable recommendations

Proficient in participatory qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and approaches, with a focus on ensuring inclusivity and gender sensitivity

Strong communication, report writing, presentation and interpersonal skills, with the ability to convey findings clearly and effectively to diverse audiences

Proven ability to engage effectively with diverse stakeholders, including government officials, donors, civil society organizations and local communities

Advanced skills in data collection, analyses, and report writing, with experience in producing high-quality, concise, and actional evaluation reports

Fluency in English and Bengali (written and spoken) is required.

Demonstrated experience in using participatory approaches to ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly women and vulnerable populations, in evaluation processes.

Strong understanding of gender-responsive programming, including strategies to address gender-based violence and promote women's economic empowerment.

Experience in conducting field-based evaluations in challenging environments, such as economically underdeveloped regions or areas affected by crises (e.g., Rohingya refugee-affected areas)

Ability to work effectively under tight deadlines and deliver high-quality results in a collaborative team environment.

Legal and ethical matters

The United Nations developed accepted evaluation norms and standards inside and outside of its system, through United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). As member of UNEG, ILO adheres to its norms and standards, namely the four (4) guiding ethical principles for evaluation: integrity, Accountability, respect, and beneficence.

To perform an evaluation within ILO, consultant team should also adhere to the above four (4) UNEG guiding ethical principles. Besides these principles, Evaluation Consultant/Team is required to abide by and adhere themselves in writing to the attached code of conduct, and comply with specific following obligations: independence, Impartiality, conflict of interest, honesty and integrity, competence, etc.

Given the importance ILO places on evaluation, Evaluation Consultant/Team is required to denounce all conflict of interest that could interfere with evaluation work, including its independence. This involves disclosing the existing relationship between the Evaluation Consultant/Team and any party involved to the project.

ILO reserves the right to cancel the Evaluation Consultancy contract in case the team does not comply with ILO's code of conduct for evaluator and UNEG guiding ethical principles for evaluation.

Short call for expressions of interest

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the only United Nations tripartite agency which gathers Governments, employers, and workers representatives of 187 member states to set out labour standards, develop policies and design programs to promote decent work. To achieve this aim, the ILO has four strategic objectives: rights at work, decent employment, social protection, and social dialog.

The Organization is seeking expressions of interest from highly qualified and experienced consultants or firms to conduct an independent mid-term evaluation of its project titled *Promoting Gender Responsive*

Enterprise Development and TVET Systems (ProGRESS). The project, funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), Global Affairs Canada, aims to promote gender equality in Bangladesh's skills development and enterprise systems. It focuses on improving employment outcomes for women by addressing systemic barriers, enhancing access to skills training, and fostering inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The project operates at the policy, institutional, and community levels, with a strong emphasis on gender-responsive approaches, green jobs, and digital access. This project started in October 2022 and will end in October 2027.

This evaluation will take place between May-August 2025. To this end, the ILO is seeking a team of independent and qualified consultants, preferably two, who have complementary expertise in the evaluation of TVET/Skills Systems, Enterprise Development and Gender Marker-3 level programmes to assess this project. The team will consist of at least one international consultant (Team Leader) and a national/local consultant. The international team leader will be responsible for the entire assignment, while the national/local consultant will work under their leadership.

These consultants will be hired as external collaborators. The number of working days foreseen for the International and National Consultant is 25. For this assignment, the consultant team is required to submit the following deliverables: an inception report, a first draft report, and a final report.

ILO is launching this call of interest to seek interested evaluators. Details on the desired profile of the consultants can be found in the attached TORs. Interested candidates are required to refer to the attached Terms of reference and submit the items below:

An updated CV showing how their profiles fit the TOR requirements;

A copy of the highest degree (mandatory) and relevant training certificates (optional);

A brief (two-pager) Technical proposal describing a detail method to be used to conduct this evaluation;

A financial proposal stating all needed costs to carry out this evaluation;

A certificate indicating completion of the Self-induction programme (refer to the following link: ILO_Self-induction_Module_for_Evaluation_Consultants-Part-I (itcilo.org)").(optional)

The application deadline is 27 April 2025. Interested candidates are required to send an email with the above items to the project evaluation manager Ahmad Sina Sabawoon (sabawoon@ilo.org), with copy to Pringsulaka Pamornrat (pamornrat@ilo.org). Kindly note that this email will have the following subject header: "Mid-term Independent Evaluation of ProGRESS project".

Annexes

Annex 1: ILO Evaluation policy guidelines ,

Annex 2: Writing the inception report

Annex 3: Preparing the evaluation report

Annex 4: Filling in the evaluation title page

Annex 5: Rating the quality of evaluation reports

Annex 6: Writing the evaluation report summary

Templates for the evaluation lessons learned and good practices

ILO Code of Conduct: Agreement for Evaluators

Guidance Note 3.1. Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation of projects

Guidance Note 3.2: Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate