The World Bank
Governance Global Practice (GGP)

Terms of Reference for a Short-Term Consultant (STC)

Field Coordinator for Impact Evaluation on E-procurement in Bangladesh

May 2017

I. Summary

The World Bank’s Governance Global Practice’s ieGovern Initiative seeks a Field Coordinator (Short-Term Consultant, STC) to manage activities related to a recently launched Impact Evaluation (IE) that explores the impact of Bangladesh’s electronic procurement system on barriers to entry, economic and administrative efficiency of public infrastructure purchases. This is a high-profile research project. Bangladesh has one of the world’s most sophisticated e-procurement systems, setting an example for other countries. This will be the first rigorous IE to systematically explore the mechanisms through which e-procurement takes effect, building on (Lewis-Faupel et al. 2016)’s study. The research team is looking to recruit a field coordinator to be based in Dhaka, Bangladesh, with outstanding ability to liaise with senior government counterparts, excellent econometrics skills and the enthusiasm and ability to manage a complex research project with limited oversight. The FC will be responsible for coordinating and supervising all aspects of the IE implementation.

Applicants should submit their application to Jurgen Blum, Senior Public Sector Specialist, (jblum@worldbank.org), at the latest by Wednesday, May 24th, midnight EST. The application should include (i) a motivation letter, (ii) CV, (iii) academic transcripts and (iv) a sole-authored (if possible quantitative) writing sample. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for a phone interview.

The FC will initially be hired for a period of about 60 days between June and August 2017. Conditional on performance, the contract will be extended for up to three years, until the completion of the IE. The research team is looking to recruit a dedicated FC, who can commit to the position for at least one year, ideally longer.

The ieGovern Initiative is a joint program administered by the Governance Global Practice and the DIME unit of the World Bank’s Research Group. Started in 2013, it capitalizes on the World Bank’s unique access to governments to generate rigorous evidence that contributes to the improvement of development results and to increase knowledge on what works and why in public sector reform. ieGovern research projects are
implemented jointly with leading academic researchers and government counterparts. Currently, over 15 ieGovern IEs are in the field.

II. Background

Increasing access and efficiency in public procurement has huge savings potential for the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and other developing countries. In fiscal year 2014, the GoB’s public procurement spending was approximately $6.5 billion, 70 percent of its annual development budget. In Bangladesh, e-procurement is expected to drastically reduce barriers to entry and the provision of selective favors to some bidders. Switching from manual to electronic tendering alters the de facto discretion of public officials and the cost and quality of information on tenders available to firms, supervisors, auditors, and citizens and thus their ability to monitor the auctioning process. The IE will focus on three major distinct causal mechanisms that affect results: (i) an expected reduction of unintentional barriers to entry for firms (transaction costs of submitting bids), (ii) a decline of intentional barriers to access and/or substitution effects between different strategies for limiting access, and (iii) an increase in demand-side accountability, due to the publication of auction information.

This IE is part of a long-standing engagement of the World Bank with the GoB on procurement reform. The GoB has steadily been improving the procurement environment since 2002 through two consecutive World Bank–funded projects (Public Procurement Reform Project I and II). In 2002, the government established the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU), a nodal procurement policy unit. The GoB enacted a Public Procurement Law in 2006 and associated Procurement Rules in 2008, simplifying procurement procedures and making them more transparent. On this basis, in 2009, the GoB commissioned the design of a custom-made e-procurement system, intended to improve access to public tenders and to speed up contract awards and began its gradual rollout in 2012. Until 2016, the rollout focused primarily on the largest government organizations (based on the number and value of contracts), including the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) and the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB). Uptake of e-GP has skyrocketed since 2012. As one indicator, the number of firms registered in the e-GP system has grown exponentially—from only 294 in June 2012, to 1,000 in June 2013, to 26,000 in 2016.

Bangladesh’s e-procurement (e-GP) system is one of the world’s most advanced and comprehensive: e-GP digitizes the entire contracting process, from advertisement to award. By contrast, many e-procurement systems, including in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, are limited to only electronic advertisement and, possibly, bid submission. Bangladesh’s e-GP also
generates uniquely rich electronic administrative records on the procurement process, which permits the tracing of decision-making processes in detail, such as the composition of bid-evaluation committees and the choices made by individual committee members. An additional contract management module (e-CM), which is ready for roll out, will cover the contract supervision process from award to payment. Jointly, e-GP and e-CM will cover the full tendering cycle.

The IE will test different e-procurement design variants in three treatments. The first treatment (T1) will consist of rolling out the current e-procurement system (e-GP) to new agencies. The second treatment (T2) will add an electronic contract management module (e-CM), which enhances oversight of the entire contract execution process. In particular, it will make mandatory the uploading of geo-referenced construction site photos to document the progress of public works contracts. The third treatment (T3) will consist of publishing tender information for selected sub-districts on citizen-monitoring portals in an easily accessible format. The IE will exploit the heterogeneous effects across different product markets and local networks, to further unpack different mechanisms. The IE will combine an RCT design for these interventions, including a partial population design (Baird et al. 2016).

To evaluate the impact of e-procurement during its historical roll-out between 2012 and 2016, the IE will also comprise an observational matching identification. A first key task for the FC between June and August 2017 will be to support the GoB and a data collection firm in collecting data from paper-based procurement records for the retrospective study.

III. Tasks & Deliverables

The FC’s main responsibility will be to coordinate and supervise the day-to-day implementation of the Impact Evaluation in Dhaka. (S)he will work closely with the Government of Bangladesh’s (GoB) Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU), the main client counterpart, as well as other government agencies, including LGED, RHD and BWDB. (S)he will also work closely with the World Bank team in Dhaka that is leading the lending operation in support of Bangladesh’s procurement reform, the “Digitizing Implementation Monitoring and Public Procurement Project” (P160758). (S)he will work with and supervise data collection firms. The FC will report to the research team, comprising Jurgen Rene Blum (Senior Public Sector Specialist, WB), Ishtiak Siddique (Senior Public Sector Specialist, WB) and to Mihaly Fazekas (Postdoctoral Fellow at Cambridge University, UK).

The FC is expected to be able manage the IE with a high degree of autonomy and limited supervision. This includes establishing trust and strong working relationships with senior client counterparts, building buy-in among key stakeholders for a randomized roll-out of key interventions, supervising data collection firms.
and managing data quality, conducting field visits to procuring entities throughout Bangladesh, developing a deep understanding of the procurement system, performing fully professional level analysis and statistical analysis using STATA, supporting the research team with informed technical advice, and contributing major components to analytical reports. The work will be performed under limited supervision at many stages.

The FC’s responsibilities include, but will not be limited to:

A. **Effective Cooperation**
   - Frequently interact with the Government of Bangladesh, in particular the Central Procurement Technical Unit and line-ministries involved in the roll-out of e-procurement;
   - Provide daily coordination between the impact evaluation team and counterparts, ensuring that concerns are effectively communicated between parties, flagging emerging issues that may be of potential concern to one or both parties, and ensuring that effective and productive collaboration is maintained;
   - Help ensure that key stakeholders understand the benefits of a randomized design, that targets are met on time, and that all activities are carried out in accordance with the study design.

B. **Impact Evaluation Field Coordination and Supervision**
   - Work closely with the Bank’s project team, CPTU and other government agencies in defining the randomization strategy and embedding it in the roll-out plan for the e-procurement interventions. Closely supervise and support the implementation in the field;
   - Work closely with the implementing organization(s) to ensure compliance with randomization protocols and that treatment assignments are administered according to the agreed up-on protocols and plans;
   - Visit study sites as possible to ensure that they have the assigned program status and gather general information about the implementation process;
   - Monitor implementation activities so that the evaluation team understands and has documented the details of implementation across study areas. This includes supporting the implementation partners in setting up monitoring protocols for tracking progress.
C. Administrative Data collection and analysis

- Support and supervise the collection of data from paper-based tenders (June-August). This will include: (i) managing relationships with the data collection firm; (ii) contributing to the training of surveyors in using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing Software (CAPI), in handling the questionnaire and in extracting information from heterogeneous paper-based tenders; (iii) cross-checking the quality and completeness of tender-listing information gathered by the survey firm; (iv) defining the random sample of tenders for data collection (using STATA), based on stratification criteria provided by the research team; (v) spot-checking correctness of data entry during data collection; and (vi) programming and conduction statistical checks for data quality / red flags.

- Prepare written reports with feedback and analysis on the piloting and fielding of survey and other measurement instruments;

- Finalize data collection instruments, including questionnaires and field procedures;

- Monitor the entire data collection process, from training of enumerators, quality control during the field work to data entry, to ensure data quality;

- Assist in the analysis of the survey data, and the writing of project reports and policy memos;

- Build capacity for data collection, data management and data analysis within the implementing agency;

- Provide inputs to comparative summary policy note on digital technologies adoption risks and solutions.

IV. Skills Required

- Academic specialization: At least a Master’s degree in economics (or in progress), public policy or related field with strong quantitative research skills is essential, preferably with a concentration in development economics, impact evaluation and applied micro-econometrics.

- Experience: The candidate must have technical expertise in impact evaluation and econometric analysis (including proficiency in STATA). Experience in working with government clients is critical, ideally with the Government of Bangladesh.
- Capacity Building Skills: Demonstrated ability and experience in designing and delivering training and capacity building activities.

- Language: Strong written and verbal communication skills in English is required. Fluency in Bangla is a plus.

- Interpersonal skills: Demonstrated ability to work effectively and sensitively in teams and with government counterparts. A high degree of self-management and autonomy is required.

V. Intellectual Property

The World Bank shall, solely and exclusively, own all rights in and to any work created in connection with this agreement, including all data, documents, information, copyrights, patents, trademarks, trade secrets or other proprietary rights in and to the work. The FC is not allowed to post or publish (electronically or in print) any project-related information without the explicit permission of the Impact Evaluation Team.

VI. Conditions

The FC will initially be recruited as a short term consultant (STC) for about 60 days in total in the period of June 2016 to August 2017. An earlier starting date is desirable. This position is permanently based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The FC will work from the World Bank office in Dhaka.

The salary will be commensurate with World Bank standards and be based on the qualifications and the experience of the candidate. All payments and reimbursements will be based on submitted deliverables of the consultant. The consultant will use her/his personal cell phone and a laptop for the duration of the assignment. The consultant is also responsible for its own housing while based in Dhaka.

The World Bank Group is committed to achieving diversity in terms of gender, nationality, culture and educational background. All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence.

References
