



Terms of Reference (ToR)

The status of green energy transition and respective implications on workers and the governance mechanisms in the RMG-textile and Traditional Rice-processing industries (Chatal) in Bangladesh

April 2025

1. Summary

This 'Terms of Reference' details working modalities of a research titled "The status of green energy transition and respective implications on workers and the governance mechanisms relevant to RMG and rice processing industries in Bangladesh". Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies - BILS is the implementing partner of this research. This research constitutes an essential part of a partnering project between BILS and Tara Climate Limited, in which Tara Climate Limited is the main funding partner.

2. Problem statement

RMG industry and traditional rice processing industry are two major labour intensive industries in Bangladesh, altogether employing directly around 4 million workers, and indirectly around 50 million. On top of that majority of the workforce are women.

Secondly, Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Climate change is impacting every now and then. Internal climate migration is ever-increasing. Bangladesh has set an ambitious target to cut 22% carbon emission by 2030 and 30% by 2041. The core emphasis is on producing and using renewable and green energy in place of traditional energy and efficient use of energy resources. The RMG industry is a champion target in this.

Thirdly, having a huge population size against only limited natural resources, we need increase production with efficient or less usage of natural resources. For this, protection of environmental resources bases like the land, water and air is a must. The reality is different. Degradation of natural resources bases for production processes is a regular practice. RMG and rice processing are two main contributors in this. In the industrial zones, a higher level of harmful chemical is reportedly common in the rivers, lakes, and tap water. Air pollution is one of the main risk factors for death and disability in industrial locations. Sound pollution is also too high in the industrial locations.

To comply with the national and international priority, a paradigm shift in the production processes is underway in both RMG and rice processing industry. Marked by green transition, automation, structural changes, technological advancements and factory shifting, the core focus of this shift is to transform to climate and environment friendly green and sustainable production processes.

While transitioning to a green economy and automation and structural improvements offer potential benefits, vulnerable groups such as women workers, climate migrants often lack necessary skills and protections. It is important to develop and implement policies and practices that can protect workers and their families affected by any changes.

Unfortunately, the government, factory owners, and international brands are consecutively failing to protect workers. Unhealthy working conditions, hazardous pollutants, and the negative environmental effects of manufacturing on workers and in the communities' surrounding factories are common. The workers are exposed to physical and mental hazards—emanating from yarn dust, excessive heat, use of chemicals, accidents, communicable diseases, lack of basic amenities and excessive workload. On top of that the ongoing transitions/shifts have failed miserably to ensure adequate social dialogue, and institutional collaborations.

The prevailing real status of these shifts particularly in the RMG and rice processing industries is yet to be documented-well. On the other hand, workers' legal representatives trade unions are either missing in most of the factories or they lack required education and skills, preventing them from participating and defending workers' rights in the transition processes.

Given these backdrops, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies – BILS partnering with the Tara Climate Limited, a Singapore based philanthropic foundation has initiated a project to equip trade unions in Bangladesh with appropriate knowledge and resources on climate change and green and just transition so that they can effectively advocate for a just and equitable green energy transition in the country's RMG and rice processing industry. As a first step of this project, this research has been thought of. The mainstay of this research is to generate trade union friendly firsthand knowledge and resources on climate change and green and just transition pertaining to the country's RMG industry and rice processing industry.

3. Overall Objective

To study and capture the pertaining real status of climate change and green and just transition and respective implications in the country's clothing and rice processing industry

More specifically, this research aims to

- **Assess/know the current status of awareness** of the main right bearer and right holder stakeholders of the clothing and chatal industry on climate change issues, implications, and consequences.
- **Assess/know the current status and trends of green energy transition in the clothing** and chatal industry sectors in Bangladesh.
- Assess/know the implications of green energy transition in the working conditions (job security, skilling and reskilling, wage and benefits etc) and life and livelihoods (health and living) of the workers **in the clothing** and chatal industry sectors in Bangladesh

- **Assess/know the current status and trend of just transition in the clothing and chatal industry sectors in Bangladesh.**
- **Assess/know the preparedness of trade unions** to effectively deal with green and just transition in the studied sectors and their real role and the gaps.
- **Review the policy and legal framework and to identify the gaps/loopholes to effectively address green and just transition in the clothing and chatal industry sectors in Bangladesh**

4. Expected Outputs

Research output shall consist of an edited detailed report including the following;

- Assessment of the current level of awareness, knowledge and understanding of the right bearer and right holder stakeholders of the clothing and chatal industry on climate change issues, implications, and consequences.
- Assessment of the current level and trends of green energy transition in the clothing and chatal industry in Bangladesh.
- Analysis of the implications of green energy transition on workers working conditions, and life and livelihoods
- Analysis of the current status and trend of just transition in the clothing and chatal industry in Bangladesh.
- Assessment of the preparedness of trade unions to address green and just transition in the studied sectors and their real role and the gaps.
- Review and identification of gaps/loopholes in the legal instruments to address green and just transition in the clothing and chatal industry
- Comprehensive set of recommendations for trade unions to address green and just transition in the Chatal and Clothing industryMG sector.

5. Scope of Work

- Literature collection and review
- Development of comprehensive research plan and submission and approval from respective authority
- Research methodology development and agreeing with BILS
- Team building, team members hiring and training
- Developing research tools and checklists and translating the interview schedule in Bangla.
- Administer a representative quantitative survey and data
- Program design, data entry, and data analysis
- Conduct representative number of interviews, FGD, case studies, meeting, workshop and consultations

- Audio recording of all qualitative interviews, FGD, case studies, meeting, workshop and consultations and transcript writing
- Coding and recoding of qualitatively collected data and analysis of findings
- Collection of literature including legal instruments and conduct a critical desk-based review and identification of gaps
- Triangulation among findings collected from various sources and research approaches and methods to establish accuracy and depth.
- Draft report writing, presentation, and sharing, and feedback taking
- Revisit and finalization of the research report

6. Methodology:

This research shall cover only the clothing industry and the rice processing industry from Bangladesh. Research area shall cover greater Dhaka, Gazipur, Mymensingh and Dinajpur administrative Districts. Target respondents shall among others cover workers, TU leaders & Members, employers & their associations, government Agencies, community peoples, NGO/CSO representatives, and academics/experts. Data needs to be collected both from primary and secondary sources.

Considering the nature of the research, it is expected to adopt a mixed research approach, both quantitative and qualitative and respective methodology and tools and techniques. As for methods, survey, interview, Focus Group Discussion, consultation, case study collection and desk review are highly preferred. It is suggested to pre-develop structured and semi-structured questionnaires, and a set of checklists targeting every data collection stakeholder.

Please note that this is only an indicative methodology. Lead/principal researcher is requested to develop a detailed methodology plan and a complete research plan and agree with the project authority the same before conducting the research.

7. Key Sources and Peoples to be Consulted

Primary sources:

Though not limited to, it is preferred to collect primary data at least from the following sources:

- Workers
- TU leaders & Members
- Employers & their associations
- Government Agencies
- Local government
- Community peoples
- NGO/CSO
- Allies/Network
- Academics/experts

Secondary Sources:

- Conventions & Recommendations
- Policy/legal documents
- Research papers (published and unpublished)
- Newspaper articles/report/editorial
- Journal report
- Internet

8. Audience of Research Report

- Workers
- TUs
- NGO/CSO
- Related Government Institutions
- Employers
- International and National Policy Makers
- Labour rights Organizations (LROs)
- BILS and Tara Climate Limited
- Academics/Experts
- Development agencies and Institutions
- Foreign embassies

9. Style and Length of Report

The lead consultant needs to prepare and submit both an electronic version and signed hard copy. The document should be very precise, and must answer each specific objective and research question. The main body of the study report shall be plus/minus a 40-45 pages document including a 4-5 pages executive summary. The executive summary is expected to develop in the form of a briefing paper for the purpose of dissemination immediately among the audiences. Necessary supplementary information (if any) like transcripts of consultations and interviews (if required) and references are to be attached as annexes.

10. Timeline

Starting from 1 May 2025, and ends on 30 September 2025.

11. Ethics and Risks

The research report must avoid any kind of plagiarism and provide due acknowledgement to the sources. Objectiveness is the key to mitigate the risks where researchers have to be strategic and analytic in arguments but not biased.

12. Documentation:

- Checklists, and interview notes should be submitted, signed and dated by the consultant or other interviewer (if needed).

- The final report must provide endnote references for all specific facts and statistics used. The report must also include a bibliography of the major references used.
- Primary sources must be used wherever possible over secondary sources. For example, the Consultant should reference a statistic to its original report, not where it is cited second hand by a newspaper or website.

13. Research Cost and Payment Procedures:

The payment shall be made in two (2) installments as per following plan;

Installments	Amount	Conditionality
1st Installment	70% 1st installment	On signing of the agreement
2nd Installment	30% final installment	On receipt of final report and necessary endorsement from the concerned person.

14. General Terms & Conditions:

- Any document, information or data entrusted to or produced by in connection with this assignment, shall be strictly confidential. After completion of this assignment only BILS shall be eligible to use them. However, in case of any emerging need to use it or any part of it by any academics or other users, prior informing and written endorsement from BILS is mandatory. The copyright of the final product will be endowed with the BILS.
- In the event of any emerging priorities and needs, concerned authority at BILS shall enjoy all authority to reschedule the operational framework of this research assignment.
- BILS 's Finance section shall follow the country's legal framework to deduct VAT & Tax as per requirements.