

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Market Assessment to Identify Viable Vocational Skills to Empower Vulnerable and War-torn Women in Afghanistan

General Information	
Activity	Market Assessment to Identify Viable Vocational Skills to Empower Vulnerable and War-torn Women in Afghanistan
Hiring Office	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
Location	Kabul, Afghanistan
Duration	35 working days
Nationality	Afghanistan

Organization Background

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network, established by and comprised of member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 192 countries. Alongside National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the IFRC is a key component of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The overarching aim of the IFRC is "to inspire, encourage, facilitate, and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world." The organization works to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people before, during, and after disasters, health emergencies, and other crises.

Headquartered in Geneva, the IFRC is supported by a Secretariat that includes regional and country cluster teams, as well as country offices worldwide. The Secretariat, led by the IFRC Secretary General, provides essential capacity to serve, connect, and represent National Societies. Its focus encompasses supporting governance mechanisms, setting norms and standards, providing guidance, ensuring consistency, coordination, and accountability for performance, facilitating knowledge sharing, promoting collaboration within the Movement, and expanding engagement with partners.

Established in 1990, the IFRC Country Delegation in Afghanistan operates as a platform to enhance the capacity, organizational development, and auxiliary role of the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS). The IFRC also facilitates collaboration with both Movement and non-Movement actors to expand resilience outcomes across Afghanistan.

In alignment with IFRC strategic priorities derived from its Strategy 2030, the organization's technical support spans various areas, including climate action, disaster and crisis management, health and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), migration and displacement, and empowerment and inclusion activities. A particular focus is placed on readiness for emergency response, livelihoods and cash programming, immunization, and community health.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the IFRC Country Delegation has expanded its support to the ARCS, addressing both the health and socio-economic impacts of the crisis. This includes supporting the immediate and longer-term needs of the most affected communities. The IFRC is also aiding the ARCS through the Humanitarian Crises Emergency Appeal and other emergency operations, while implementing yearly country development programs. These initiatives focus on multi-sectoral interventions, including shelter, health and care, WASH, livelihoods and basic needs, disaster risk reduction (DRR), protection, gender and inclusion (PGI), and enhancing the capacity of the ARCS.

Livelihoods represent a critical program area requiring investment to address humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. Efforts include supporting the provision, replacement, and protection of vulnerable livelihoods while ensuring sustainability in programming. Cash-based interventions have become essential for emergency operations as well as recovery and development programs. The IFRC and ARCS are collaborating to enhance the livelihoods of the most vulnerable individuals and communities, with particular emphasis on pilot programs aimed at empowering underprivileged women living in Marastoons or impoverished communities.

ABOUT MARASTOONS

The Marastoon is an institution within the Afghan Red Crescent Society which aims to support and provide humanitarian services and protect women and families affected by wars and disasters in Afghanistan. The first Marastoon was established in 1931 with the aim of providing humanitarian support to the vulnerable women and orphans in communities. During the same period, ARCS was given the duty by the government of Afghanistan to take care of homeless people and women who live alone as well as people with disability. Families who have lost their home and children who have lost their parents can find a place in a Marastoon. They stay for some time, receive an education (children) and a professional training (youth and adults), and leave the Marastoon to resettle within a community. Currently, the Afghan Red Crescent Society operates shelters in six zones, namely Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Nangarhar, Balkh, Kunduz, Paktia and Parwan. These shelters provide assistance to various vulnerable groups, including mentally ill individuals, the elderly, the blind, and other needy families living both within and outside the shelter premises.

Project Background

The International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and in partnership with Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) supported by the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) aims to enhance the economic resilience of vulnerable women in Afghanistan, particularly those living in and outside of Marastoons. These women face significant barriers to accessing viable livelihood opportunities. To address these challenges, a market assessment will be conducted to inform the

design and implementation of vocational training and income-generating activities (IGAs) tailored to the specific needs of these women.

To improve women's economic status, IFRC and FCDO will implement projects focused on economic empowerment, targeting provinces such as Kabul, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Herat, Balkh, and Prawan. The initiative aims to provide vocational training for 600 women and facilitate income-generating activities for 5,000 households. This effort is part of a broader commitment to support women's self-reliance and empower them to enhance their livelihoods.

IFRC, in collaboration with FCDO and ARCS Marastoon, plans to offer vocational training skills across various trades. This initiative includes providing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (technical and vocational education and training) to women and girls to improve their self-sufficiency and economic empowerment.

To ensure that the vocational training programs are market-oriented, the assessment will identify viable vocational skills that will enable graduates to access job opportunities or create their own income-generating activities. The market assessment is essential for tailoring training offerings to meet the demands of the job market in Kabul City, ultimately empowering vulnerable women and enhancing their economic resilience

Overall Objective of the assessment

The primary objective of this assessment is:

- To identify viable, marketable, and portable vocational skills based on the current market situation and the existing skill set of the targeted beneficiaries.

The findings of assessment will establish a foundation for identifying potential skill sectors for vocational training, thereby empowering beneficiaries to enhance their self-reliance and improve their livelihoods.

Specific Objectives

Sector Analysis: Analyze various business sectors and vocational opportunities in the target regions/provinces to identify a diverse range of viable vocational skills that can be offered to women participants enrolled in the IFRC signature programmes in Afghanistan. This analysis will include a review of existing vocational tracks to assess their performance and determine which programmes should be continued or discontinued.

Key Questions

The assessment will address the following key questions, among others:

Existing Market Engagement: What are the existing value chains or market systems that women are currently working in or aspire to enter, and what are the reasons for their choices?

- What is the current level of engagement among female entrepreneurs in various vocational sectors in Afghanistan?
- How do existing vocational training programmes reach and motivate women to participate, and what has been their success rate?
- Are there networks or associations of female entrepreneurs that facilitate collaboration and support among women in vocational fields?

Market Viability: Does the market context provide sufficient viable opportunities for women to diversify their businesses? Is there unmet demand for specific products or services, and how significant is this demand? Is there potential to develop new markets for these products and services?

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Competitive Analysis: Who are the main competitors in the relevant markets? What factors drive customer purchasing decisions in favor of these competitors? What strategies can be implemented to attract and retain new customers?

- Who are the main competitors providing services or products similar to those offered by female vocational trainees?
- How do existing vocational training providers differentiate themselves in terms of curriculum, accessibility, and outcomes for women?
- What market gaps exist that female entrepreneurs can fill, and how can vocational training support these opportunities?

Support Needs for Implementation: What support is necessary for women to translate their training into actual business activities? What specific skills or knowledge do they require to produce or supply products at competitive prices, with the right quality, and in the necessary quantities and timing as demanded by customers?

- What specific training and resources do women need to effectively start and manage a small business following vocational training?
- What types of vocational tools and equipment are essential for women to succeed in their chosen trades, and how accessible are these tools?
- Are there financial support options (grants) available for women seeking to launch or expand their vocational businesses?

Market Enablers: What resources or structures currently exist within the market systems that could help women capitalize on the identified market opportunities?

- What socio-economic factors are currently enabling women's participation in vocational training and small businesses in Afghanistan?
- Are there successful case studies of female small business owners who have benefited from vocational training, and what lessons can be learned from their experiences?
- How do community acceptance and support for women in entrepreneurship contribute to market engagement and success?

Challenges and Risks: What challenges and risks (inhibitors) could impede their success, and what strategies can be employed to address these challenges?

- What are the key barriers that women face in accessing vocational training and starting small businesses in Afghanistan?
- How do cultural attitudes and societal norms impact female entrepreneurship and market participation?
- What risks do female entrepreneurs encounter in terms of safety, economic instability, or legal barriers, and what measures can be taken to mitigate these risks?
- What are the key barriers that women face in accessing vocational training and starting small businesses in Afghanistan?
- How do cultural attitudes and societal norms impact female entrepreneurship and market participation?
- What risks do female entrepreneurs encounter in terms of safety, economic instability, or legal barriers, and what measures can be taken to mitigate these risks?
- What are the primary challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan today, and how can they be addressed to promote business sustainability?
- How do traditional Afghan cultural norms influence women's entrepreneurship, and what are the best practices for navigating these norms while ensuring business growth and sustainability?
- What financial tools or microfinance opportunities exist for women in Afghanistan, and how can they be improved to better support women's business sustainability?
- What legal protections or reforms are needed to ensure women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan can safely operate and grow their businesses?
- What are the most effective ways for Afghan women entrepreneurs to collaborate with male counterparts or form business networks that support mutual growth and sustainability?
- What are some successful examples of Afghan women entrepreneurs who have overcome adversity to build sustainable businesses, and what lessons can be learned from their experiences?

SCOPE

The study will be conducted over a period of 45 days and will focus on the following target provinces to assess viable vocational skills for women:

1. Kabul
2. Nangarhar
3. Pawan
4. Kandahar
5. Balkh
6. Herat
7. Kunduz
8. Paktia

Key Objectives

Market Assessment: Conduct a comprehensive market assessment in 8 provinces required more than 30 days to identify tailored vocational skills that are relevant for female project beneficiaries within the specified provinces.

Location Focus: The assessment will primarily focus on Marastoon and Provinces, specifically targeting locations where women's products are commonly marketed.

Key Activities

Surveys and Focus Groups: Conduct surveys and focus group discussions with target beneficiaries and local stakeholders to gather qualitative and quantitative data.

Market Analysis: Analyze existing market reports and data relevant to livelihood opportunities for women, providing context for the assessment.

Model Identification: Identify successful models of vocational training and income-generating activities (IGAs) within the region and similar contexts.

Recommendations Development: Develop actionable recommendations for vocational training programs and support mechanisms based on the assessment findings.

Specific Tasks:

Desk Research: Conduct desk research referencing recent studies on market assessments relevant to women's vocational skills.

Assessment Tools: Develop specific assessment tools, including Focus Group Discussion guides and interview templates.

Chamber of Commerce Interviews: Interview representatives from the women's chamber of commerce to gain insights into market dynamics and support systems.

Stakeholder Engagement: Conduct interviews with key stakeholders such as international NGOs (INGOs) and national NGOs (NNGOs) involved in similar interventions women led organizations specially those they have VT and selling market for products.

Beneficiary Interviews: Interview selected project beneficiaries to fully understand their needs and the types of skills they are interested in acquiring.

Report Development: Compile the findings into a market assessment report, limited to a maximum of 15 pages.

Expected Deliverables

The study is expected to yield the following deliverables:

- ✓ Inception Report
- ✓ Assessment Report: A comprehensive report detailing findings, analyses, and recommendations for vocational training and IGAs.
- ✓ Presentation: A presentation summarizing key findings and recommendations for stakeholders.
- ✓ Action Plan: An actionable plan outlining the next steps for implementing vocational training and IGAs based on the assessment results.
- ✓ A clear understanding of the demand for handmade products and/or the demand for specific skill sectors and employment opportunities for women in the Marastoon project area.
- ✓ Identification of highly demanded vocational skills and products aligned with local market needs.
- ✓ An analysis of key constraints perceived by target groups regarding access to income and employment opportunities.

Methodology

Desk Review: Review existing literature, reports, and data on market conditions, vocational training, and income-generating activities in the targeted provinces.

Field Research: Conduct qualitative and quantitative research through surveys/questionnaires, FGDS and interviews with stakeholders, including beneficiaries, customers/consumers, local businesses, and vocational training providers.

Stakeholder Engagement: Collaborate with local NGOs, government agencies, and community leaders to gather insights and validate findings.

The Final Report should include:

- ✓ All the answers to the research questions as stated in the research objectives and expected deliverables.
- ✓ An adequate quantitative and qualitative substantiation of the findings

- ✓ List of viable skill sectors for vocational training and support in the project area (Marastoons).

Timeline

The assessment is expected to take place over a period of 35 days, 1-5 weeks, with the following milestones:

Week 1: Desk review and planning.

Week 2: Inception report (Data collection tool.

Week 3: Field research and data collection.

Week 4: Data analysis and report drafting.

Week 5: Final report and presentation to IFRC & ARCS.

Overview

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is seeking applications for a market assessment aimed at identifying viable vocational skills to empower vulnerable and war-torn women in Afghanistan.

Eligibility

- Nationality: Applicants must be Afghan nationals.
- Experience: Relevant experience in market assessments, vocational training, or women's empowerment initiatives is preferred.

Selection Criteria

Consultancy will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant experience and qualifications.
- Understanding of the project objectives.
- Proposed methodology and timeline.
- Financial proposal.

Requirements for Consultancy.

- Market assessment curriculum.
- Clear Market assessment materials
- Market assessment report should be submitted by selected consultancy after completion, location wise. Also, a general report.

- Provide a final narrative report based on IFRC standard reporting requirements.
- The trainers of Service provider should be expert related to those market assessment on type of vocational training selection in target locations.
- The BNFs will be female and data collector from the Service provider should be female to collect the real info.
- The market assessment materials should be designed based on capacity of participants.
- The Service provider should have 3 work experiences in terms conducting market assessment in selection of type of IGA 7 vocational training.
- The Service provider be flexible for any changes when draw from IFRC project focal point.
- Payment will do according to work progress and IFRC finance threshold, Service provider should be committed for those procedures.