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| Programme Title: | Strengthening Women’s Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO) |
| Country: | Bangladesh |

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II. Programme summary

Programme title:

Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO)

Sectorial area of intervention and policy objectives

Inclusive economic growth for poverty eradication

 Create opportunities for decent jobs and secure livelihoods.

 Create better government policies and fair and accountable public institutions.

 Promote inclusive and sustainable business practices.

Joint programme summary:

Drawing on the successful experiences of an earlier UNDP assisted promotional social safety net project and other innovative public works programmes aiming at permanently lifting extreme poor people out of poverty, this Joint Programme will assist women of ultra poor and most vulnerable households to move out of poverty.

The programme, titled Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO), will promote employment, and most importantly future employability of ultra-poor rural women. Creating productive employment opportunities is generally considered the most efficient way to secure poverty reduction and inclusive growth.

Strategies of the joint programme will focus on building human capital, knowledge, skills and confidence of extremely poor women for future employability. The women will be engaged for an 18-month employment tenure, mainly in maintaining or rehabilitating important community assets but also in public works and community service beyond infrastructure. The programme will provide assistance to smooth the transition from safety net employment to market-driven employment by vocational skills training, job placement and diversified climate change resilient livelihoods options, ensuring market linkages and access to essential public services and by social and economic inclusion for these women.

A strong human capacity building component, including life skills training, confidence building and training in livelihoods skills within the employment tenure, will ensure that the programme serves purposes of both protection and promotion, and makes use of the transformative potential of social protection in reversing social exclusion and economic marginalization.

o Saving a portion of wages has been found to be a powerful design feature in assisting poor households to move out of poverty. Such savings will be cast as a graduation bonus - a one-off transfer providing seed capital for self-employment, basic household needs (linked to resilience) or further training and educational development. Women will be intensively counselled and supported to invest these savings in productive assets.

o In addition to assisting women to start and operate self-employment micro-enterprises, the joint programme will focus on facilitating linkages with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). Local SMEs in the rural non-farm and off-farm sector will be encouraged to absorb women trained by the programme, with training to be designed based on the private sector's demand for skilled workers, following ILO's Community Based Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (CB-TREE) concept.

o In line with UNDAF guidance and agreed with Government of Bangladesh, the programme will geographically target pockets of poverty and entrenched vulnerabilities where the need is greatest. Such areas, with the highest incidence of extreme poverty, include Northern districts affected by seasonal hunger and Southern coastal districts affected by natural disasters and climate change.

o Bangladesh is already facing the realities of climate change, manifested by increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters, and the joint programme will be guided by integration of Social Protection, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation, including for the selection of primary beneficiaries, livelihood opportunities and public works.

o Recognizing the central role of local government in accountable, pro-poor and gender sensitive service delivery, the programme will enhance good local governance and develop capacity of local government institutions.

o The joint programme provides opportunities for downstream application of a host of innovative delivery approaches at local level, which will catalyze improvements in delivery capacity and inform social protection strategy and policy through field based evidence. Innovative approaches to be field tested include building employment skills via PPP arrangements like apprenticeships and mapping local demand for skills, relating to both private sector demand and opportunities of own account business; IT based channels of social cash transfers (electronic payments); micro-insurance delivery and climate adaptive measures.

o The approaches of this joint programme have already proven successful in an earlier UNDP project, which enabled widowed, divorced and abandoned women to protect their livelihoods and family welfare long after project support ended. This proposed joint programme will enable UNDP, ILO and the government to scale up proven successful approaches and also feed these in the new policy framework (National Social Protection Strategy) and the next Five-Year Plan, which are policy and planning instruments currently being developed by the Government of Bangladesh.

o Crucially, micro-macro linkages will be ensured by embedding the Joint Programme in a Social Protection Policy Support Programme through which UNDP will assist the Government to roll out and implement the adopted National Social Protection Strategy. The Joint Programme will enable UNDP and ILO to be at the forefront in informing social protection strategy and policy through testing and learning and providing field based evidence.

Duration:

Monday, December 1, 2014 to Friday, March 31, 2017

UN Lead Agency:

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UN Participating Organizations:

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Local Partners:

Local Government Division, Union Councils (lowest tier of local government), Sub-district Councils, Partner NGOs (yet to be selected), local Small and Medium Enterprises, National Institute of Local Government

III. Programme budget

Total amount requested from the SDG-F:
1 500 000.00**Total contribution through matching funds:**
3 113 000.00

Aggregate amount requested and broken down by Agency:

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|---|--------------------------------|
| Name of Agency: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) | Amount: 1 450 000.00 |
| Name of Agency: International Labour Organization (ILO) | Amount: 50 000.00 |

Aggregate matching funds amounts and broken down by source:

Short explanation of strategy:

The programme has already secured government co-financing commitment of 25%, ILO contribution (through its ongoing projects), and contribution from UNDP TRAC resources

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| Name of source: UNDP | Amount: 1 917 900.00 |
| Name of source: Government of Bangladesh | Amount: 1 101 100.00 |
| Name of source: ILO | Amount: 94 000.00 |

Aggregate amount requested and broken down by UNDG Harmonized Budget Category

| | SDG-F Budget | Matching Funds |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| Staff and other personnel costs | 259 400.00 | 212 100.00 |
| Supplies, Commodities, Materials | 0.00 | 295 000.00 |
| Equipment, Vehicles and Furniture including Depreciation | 0.00 | 100 000.00 |
| Contractual services | 650 200.00 | 78 000.00 |
| Travel | 0.00 | 22 000.00 |
| Transfers and Grants Counterparts | 483 000.00 | 2 309 900.00 |
| General Operating and Other Direct Costs | 0.00 | 96 000.00 |
| Total Programme Costs | 1 392 600.00 | 3 113 000.00 |

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|--|--------------|--------------|
| Indirect support costs (not to exceed 7%) | 107 400.00 | 0.00 |
| Grand TOTAL | 1 500 000.00 | 3 113 000.00 |

IV. Programme description

Background and rationale:

Income poverty in Bangladesh has been reduced from 59% in 1991 to 49.8% in 2000 to 40% in 2005 to 31.5% in 2010. Corresponding reduction of extreme poverty is 42.7% in 1991, 33.7% in 2000, 25.1% in 2005 and 17.6% in 2010. This means the country is on track in achieving MDG 1 of halving poverty. However, there are still around 25 million people living in abject poverty. Bangladesh aspires to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 – a target that is also drawing very broad international consensus in ongoing consultations to establish the forthcoming SDGs – but many, if not most, of the remaining poor in Bangladesh are caught in poverty traps, which will make further poverty reduction more challenging.

There is a spatial poverty dimension, with the North-western part of the country, Rangpur Division where the district Kurigram selected for this UNDP-ILO Joint Programme is situated, having an extreme poverty rate as high as 27.7% in 2010. This region of the country has historically experienced seasonal deprivation of food during lean months of the year. Deprived of employment and income opportunities, poor households have been selling labour and crops in advance on unfavourable terms. While this has fended off starvation in the short term, it is an erosive coping strategy that has only led to an exacerbated poverty trap in the longer term.

It is noteworthy that the plight of women-headed households was recognized already in the first study on poverty ever made in what is modern-day Bangladesh (J.C. Jack, 1910): “With few exceptions, those families which will be found in chronic need in any Eastern Bengal village will on enquiry prove to be widows left with a family of young children.” This observation of a 100-year old report is still echoed in a 2002 report on poverty in Bangladesh: “Among female-headed households, those that are widowed, divorced or separated have a considerably higher incidence of poverty relative to others” and by a 2013 study finding an extreme poverty rate of 24.9% in households headed by widowed, divorced or abandoned women. These households are the primary beneficiaries of the joint programme.

Labour force participation of rural women in Bangladesh is only 36.4%, as against 83.3% for men. Women are also most often employed at the lower end of the productivity scale. The secondary status of women in political, economic and social lives leads to entrenched gender inequalities in society and economy, and raises barriers for women’s participation in economic activities. Women find it harder than men to get access to productive assets, skills development and labour markets. There is also often a mismatch between labour market demands and the (lack of) skills of women.

Creating employment and income generating opportunities for women and enhancing women’s access to social protection are identified as key intervention measures to reduce gender inequality and women’s poverty and vulnerability. Skills development has proven to be very effective as an intervention to increase employability and income of poor women, with documented evidence of sustainable benefits from programmes in Bangladesh. Further, the positive impact on economic empowerment from women’s participation in public works programmes is also well documented, in Bangladesh and globally, not the least in countries where infrastructure public works are largely regarded as a male domain.

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) is aware of the importance of unemployment in driving poverty and the main objective of its employment policy is the generation of productive employment by transforming

unskilled people into semi-skilled and skilled. A National Skills Development Policy has been adopted by the Government to that effect; the ILO TVET Reform Project was instrumental in formulation of the policy.

The Government has laid special emphasis on making social protection programmes more effective in accelerating the poverty eradication process. This is reflected in ongoing development of a National Social Protection Strategy, which will give special focus on the extreme poor and the most vulnerable. A strong Government stance of women's empowerment is reflected by policies to ensure women's rights and safety and promotion of women's economic participation, and a recently (2013) adopted broad Women Development Policy.

The national development plan of Bangladesh, the Sixth Five-Year Plan (2011-2015), specifically includes social protection programmes for disadvantaged women. In outlining its social protection strategy, the five-year plan commits that "efforts will be made to make the existing and new programs much better focused on reaching the intended beneficiaries and serving the needs of long term poverty reduction strategy".

The National Food Policy and its Plan of Action realise that women represent both a significant share of the food insecure population while they are at the same time primary agents of household food security. It calls for a set of actions focused on women's participation, skill development and access to productive assets, and backing up poor women's income generating activities through micro-entrepreneurship development.

The programme (SWAPNO) is well aligned with such national planning and policy instruments related to employment, poverty reduction, social protection, food security and women's empowerment. There are a number of programmes implemented that respond to the needs of extreme poor women. In the SWAPNO programme area of Kurigram district these include a World Bank assisted Conditional Cash Transfer programme and the Employment Generation Project for the Poor project, the DFID financed Chars Livelihoods Programme and the USAID supported Shouhardo project. However, none of these projects offer a delivery mechanism that combines government ownership with future employability of beneficiaries. Even in a country with some of the world's most effective non-governmental development organisations, the depth of poverty and vulnerability can only be comprehensively and sustainably addressed through coordinated public action - led and owned by the Government of Bangladesh - and SWAPNO offers a Government owned model aiming at beneficiaries' sustainable exit from poverty. The programme is, therefore, complementary to other ongoing initiatives, and brings in a number of innovative approaches in its delivery. However, the programme will strive to coordinate and cooperate with ongoing interventions in the programme area, to avoid duplication and to share its experiences.

The programme is aligned with core strategies underpinning UNDAF 2012-2016 for Bangladesh, such as targeting interventions on geographic regions based on districts lagging behind on MDG achievement and vulnerability mapping, capacity development that empowers the poor, modelling effective service delivery systems with the aim of taking them to scale, evidence-based advocacy to address upstream focus and partnership-building.

The programme contributes directly to UNDAF Pillar Two - Pro-poor Economic Growth with Equity - and its Output 1.1: "The vulnerable and poor are provided with decent and productive employment opportunities", as well as Output 1.2: "Poor families are less vulnerable to external shocks through greater access to financial and insurance services, social safety nets with clear graduation strategies". Under UNDAF Pillar Seven - Gender Equality and Women's Advancement - SWAPNO addresses Output 1.1: "Marginalized and disadvantaged women in selected districts ... have increased skills and knowledge, leading to improved employability and entrepreneurship".

UNDAF places UNDP as lead agency for Pillar Two, with direct work to be carried out with key national partners to secure inclusive growth and greater equity within the economy by boosting labour market opportunities, by reducing risks and vulnerabilities, by building capacity for policy development. ILO has a role within the UN system interventions to, inter alia, assist the Government through technical and vocational training and institutional support to informal apprenticeships.

Mainstreaming of gender and women's empowerment:

The joint programme is designed to specifically reach out to women beneficiaries, with a mission to enhance social and economic empowerment of marginalized women. The ILO Technical & Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Reform Project and its Community Based Training for Rural Economic Empowerment, which will be the basis for the ILO engagement in the Joint Programme, is designed to be gender mainstreamed. The gender mainstreaming of the TVET reform includes designing training courses to promote the strategic interests of women and increasing gender responsiveness of training institutions, as well as guidance of instructors and the use of women instructors.

The M&E Plan of the joint programme has a list of key indicators, a few of them, related to gender and women's empowerment, reproduced here:

- o % of women beneficiaries in public works engaged in activities generating income at least equal to public works wages 18 months after end of programme employment tenure
- o % of graduated women with improved resilience to cope with crises and lean seasons
- o % of graduated women employed or self-employed six months after cash transfer completion
- o # of women participants exiting cash transfers into waged or self employment
- o # of women beneficiaries trained in income generating activities
- o % of beneficiary women with improved health status (self-reported) as against baseline status
- o % of beneficiary women with Body Mass Index \geq 18.5
- o % of beneficiary women having a say in household decision making
- o # of reported cases of beneficiary women being victims of violence and/or sexual oppression
- o % of women participants demonstrating understanding or passing skill tests at the end of each training
- o % of beneficiary households having access to a menu of public services (agriculture, livestock, fisheries, health services, etc.)
- o # of contacts established between service providing agencies and disadvantaged women
- o % of primary beneficiary women with NGO affiliation

24.9% of households headed by widowed, divorced or abandoned women fall below the extreme poverty line, as against 17.6% average nation-wide. Specific baseline data on current socio-economic status of poor women in Kurigram district are not available. Such data, for a sampled treatment group and a control group, will be collected in a baseline survey during the programme's inception phase.

Following principles of Human Development, the agency of individuals will take centre stage and the SWAPNO women will be considered agents of their own change rather than being passive project beneficiaries, or recipients. The role of the programme is seen as setting up the preconditions enabling graduation out of extreme poverty; then it is up to the participating women to grasp their opportunities as they arise. This includes women choosing their future livelihood options, but being guided by the programme's market advice and supported by skills development and linkages with the private sector and public service providers and so forth.

As the programme is targeted to reach women beneficiaries, all funding is considered allocated to gender equity. Primary beneficiaries will represent women-headed households, where adult male members are uncommon. However, the programme will as feasible target male members of extended families in gender

awareness. Their support is seen as essential for protection of and contributions to the livelihood activities to be taken up by beneficiary women, for example in accepting women's decision-making, protecting women against gender abuse in the public space and assisting marketing activities for which women's mobility might be challenged by cultural norms.

It is also well understood that there is often a backlash when the frontiers of what women can be and do are expanded. Women may actually become vulnerable to abuse and even violence by participating in programmes set up to assist them as these programmes often expose them and can challenge deeply entrenched community norms on women's roles. To counter this, the programme will cooperate with a parallel project on Accelerating Efforts to Protect, Prevent and Respond to Sexual and Gender Based Violence, aiming at improved redress for VAW victims and reduced social vulnerabilities for women. This project will also work with social leaders and other male members of local communities to promote their role as social agents protecting women from violence in the domestic and public spheres. The project works through the same Union Council Standing Committee - on Women and Children Welfare - that will be responsible for local implementation of SWAPNO. This project is a follow-on sequel to an earlier Joint Violence Against Women Programme funded through MDG-F.

Further, the programme will strive to induce a gender sensitive mindset in its capacity development of participating Local Government Institutions. In its capacity development of Union Councils, the programme will pay special attention to women representatives of the Councils. Each Union Council has three elected women representatives and they will be trained and motivated to extend their support to SWAPNO beneficiary women and their households.

UNDP has given SWAPNO the highest rating in its gender marker, with gender equality being a principal objective of the programme. This rating takes the following aspects into account:

- women's access to resources
- women's control over resources
- women's mobility
- women's decision making authority
- women's access to information
- women's social networking
- women's dignity and respect

Sustainability:

The effect of climate change is already evident in many parts of Bangladesh. Rising sea level, intrusion of salinity, increased frequency and intensity of cyclonic storms, flooding and water logging have increased disaster related vulnerabilities. With climate change negatively impacting rural livelihoods, migration from the worst affected areas is already taking place, often resulting in social unrest. The coastal belt is very vulnerable to tidal bore, cyclones and water logging, while the north-western seasonal hunger affected region is victim of recurrent flood, riverbank erosion and tornados. Social protection could become one of the priorities in climate change adaptation in developing countries. The concept 'adaptive social protection' has been coined but is yet to be carried out in a systematic manner. SWAPNO aims to reduce disaster related vulnerabilities emerging due to climate change, representing an adaptive social protection response in several ways:

- By targeting areas and beneficiaries based on their vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters and other hazards;
- By identifying infrastructure schemes that aim to reduce natural disaster risk or facilitate recovery after disasters;

□ By providing livelihoods opportunities that both improve resilience to climate change and are inherently more “climate-proof”.

By applying such an approach, the programme will in its very design address vulnerabilities and risks arising from climate change. No inadvertent maladaptation is expected; the programme’s Operational Manual will also include environmental impact screening for the selection of public works to be undertaken. The joint programme will contribute to improved environmental conditions by tree plantation being part of the public works and by enabling the primary beneficiaries of the programme to set up safe water and sanitation facilities. As the whole programme design is informed by the principles of adaptive social protection, the entire budget can be considered responsive to climate change.

SWAPNO offers a nationally-owned model intervention aimed at guiding and influencing Government social protection schemes. The Local Government Division is dedicated to scaling up the two-year programme to another 20 districts, being informed by the outcome of implementation in two districts, and has committed 25% co-funding of both a two-year initial pilot phase and subsequent roll-out of the SWAPNO model.

It is not feasible to expect financial contributions from local governments to the programme, since Union Councils in Bangladesh, with very low tax collection at local level, do not have scope to finance even their most basic local development needs. Sustainability at local government level will instead be promoted by the Union Council’s Standing Committee on Women and Children Welfare being responsible for local planning, implementation and participatory monitoring of the programme. Union Councils will be trained in aspects of accountability and transparency, pro-poor planning, gender sensitiveness and participatory M&E. Changes of local government practices will include consultative selection of public assets to be maintained and the introduction of public hearings. Arrangements of Union Councils for future upkeep of selected public assets will be promoted; this will, however, need to consider current budget constraints. Support from Union and sub-district local government institutions will be rallied for assistance of women’s livelihood activities and for overseeing the welfare of beneficiary households beyond the programme duration.

Bottom-up planning of the programme will further enhance sustainability prospects. Public works will to a large extent be selected from Community Risk Assessments (CRAs) and Risk Reduction Action Plans (RRAPs) already prepared by Union Councils under the UNDP assisted Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme. These CRAs and RRAPs have been developed by Union Council Disaster Management Committees, with NGO support, and reflect what has been locally identified as required interventions to reduce disaster risks and adapt to emerging climate change, in consultation with local communities affected.

Public-private partnerships:

The private sector will be involved through local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that can offer contract employment for SWAPNO beneficiaries trained by the programme. Linkages will be created with local SMEs for both vocational training and subsequent job placement.

The interventions will be twofold depending on the number and type of SMEs in the locality. Local SMEs which have the capacity to take on a couple of informal apprentices would be incentivised to do so using existing or to be developed competency skills logbooks as a learning/training guide. These provide not only the list of competencies to be developed by the apprentice, but also a code of practice to make sure both the apprentice and the master craftsperson/owner adhere to their responsibilities. Incentives for the SME owner/master craftsperson would be skills upgrading at a local training establishment, and/or a formal certificate recognition of the company/person as an accredited training provider under the scheme, and/or a fee for providing the training to the apprentices. Another approach available is Community Based

Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (CB-TREE) which has been piloted by ILO in Bangladesh. The model combines a community based survey of skills demand and development of training to fill the identified skills gaps. Individuals are trained with the in-demand skills for subsequent work in either established SMEs or in their own micro-enterprises.

Field application of the CB-TREE model includes the following steps:

1. Select a village, mobilize target group
2. Apply TREE planning tools and process
3. Implement approved training proposals
(3 types: i. skills training alone, ii. skills with enterprise training, and iii. enterprise training alone)
4. Beneficiaries access finance, establish common facilities, organize enterprise (value) chains
5. Beneficiaries trade with other communities or adjacent urban centres
6. When ready and willing-the individual, group or community enterprises can be linked with the formal financial and market systems

The ILO has had excellent success in the use of informal apprenticeship to provide skills to young persons. This has included the development of Competency Skills Log Books (CSLB) that not only provide a list of competencies to be learned during the apprenticeship but also a code of practice for the master crafts person and the apprentice to ensure that apprentices are not taken advantage of. This code of practice includes, inter alia, the following:

- 6 hours work day; 5 working days a week
- Leave during national holidays
- All work must be completed under the guidance of a master crafts person or nominated skilled worker/supervisor
- All workplace practises must be safe at all times
- The employer should provide or maintain the following in the workplace: identify hazard, eliminate hazard, provide personal protective equipment; first aid kit; fire extinguishers; safe electric wiring; proper air ventilation & good lighting; clear water & sanitation facilities
- All workplace practises must be ethical and provide equal opportunity for workers in terms of gender, or disability
- Workers must learn skills appropriate to the tasks they are required to perform
- Workers must get recognition for the skills that they develop
- Apprentices should be provided with the opportunity & sufficient time to practice the skills listed in the CSLB in order to become skilled workers
- Apprentices will be allowed sufficient time each day to complete CSLB requirements
- In case of breaches, negotiation with employer to resolve the breach should be first option; the learner may be withdrawn from the workplace and relocated to another agreed workplace to continue the apprenticeship

Further, in accordance with the code of practice, an employer or instructor

- shall train the apprentice or nominate a skilled tradesperson to train the apprentice to the best of their ability;
- should provide apprentices with the opportunity to learn all the skills of the trade as listed in the CSLB;
- should provide the apprentices with the opportunity & sufficient time to practice the skills listed in the CSLB in order to become skilled workers;
- shall complete the employer/instructor section of the CSLB as required in an honest & accurate manner;
- shall provide ongoing feedback and encouragement to the apprentice;

- shall treat the apprentice fairly and as an important member of the workplace;
- shall provide a safe work/learning environment.

The project will work with the existing national level Industry Skills Council (ISC) for the informal sector to establish a local chapter of the ISC for the Kurigram district, but one which also includes representatives from nearby districts in the Rangpur Division as well as local urban areas such as Rangpur and Rajshahi. The ISC (non-formal sector) is made up of members including NGOs and business representatives. These NGOs already have on-going activities in Kurigram and nearby districts and are well placed to identify local businesses and Chambers of Commerce and Industry with which to engage. Rangpur is the closest urban area and has many businesses which could engage apprentices or provide a market for partially processed products further down the value chain (under CB-TREE). The ISC local chapter would assist in surveying skills demand and identify priorities; identify credible businesses to host apprentices; and identify local training providers – private, Government, and NGO which can provide reasonably priced and effective training; provide training oversight and monitoring; and generally promote local business engagement.

Civil society participation:

The programme will involve selected NGOs for information dissemination and campaigns, capacity building and community mobilization, social audit and monitoring activities. Scope of work for participating NGOs includes:

- (a) To assist Union Councils and local communities in correct selection of beneficiary women based on set criteria;
- (b) To assist Union Councils in selection of priority community assets and other public works through community consultation;
- (c) To impart on-the-job training in related public works employment to beneficiary women;
- (d) To monitor the quality of maintenance work performed;
- (e) To organize and deliver relevant life skills development training programmes to beneficiary women, aiming at awareness on issues like nutrition, primary health, sanitation, gender equity, rights and entitlements;
- (f) To support group organisation and leadership development;
- (g) To arrange for micro-enterprise training by specialised organisations and apprenticeship training with job placement opportunities;
- (h) To counsel and monitor graduated women engaged in micro-enterprises;
- (i) To facilitate linkages between service providers and beneficiary households;
- (j) To report incidents of violence against and abuse of women for further action.

It is to be noted that different kinds of NGOs will be contracted to partner with the programme to implement this broad menu of activities. It is foreseen that an NGO with social competencies will be engaged in life skills training, assistance to Union Councils in correct selection, monitoring of public works and incidents of violence against women and other social aspects of the programme. NGOs with experience in vocational training will, along with selected local SMEs, be engaged in vocational skills training, labour market assessments, job placement and related activities.

Partnership with locally present NGOs in the implementation of local government projects is, based on previous experience, perceived as good value for money. Civil society engagement is regarded an essential part of good local governance. Not only do civil society organisations provide necessary check-and-balance to thwart leakage and power abuse; they also provide the required extra hands for government institutions tremendously short of manpower. It should be noted that only one civil servant is posted at Union Council level, with an excessive work load of upwards of 20 projects implemented through each council. Elected representatives are unpaid with a limit to how much time they can devote to each

individual project. The SWAPNO Partner NGO will engage a Union Worker, being resident of the union, for each union, with preference given to Union Facilitators trained under a UNDP assisted Local Government Support Project and to local women with an aptitude to work with the beneficiary women. These Union Workers will be developed into a cadre of development workers that will be valuable assets for future development projects in their respective unions. Value for money will also be ensured through a 7% curb on NGO overhead administrative cost.

Justification of the Joint Programme modality:

A joint UNDP-ILO programme will harness comparative advantages of both organizations. UNDP Bangladesh has the experience of working with the Local Government Division (LGD) on implementation of a public works cash transfer project targeting extreme poor women for more than four years. There is a long-standing extensive partnership between UNDP and LGD, spanning a number of governance and poverty reduction projects. UNDP has a long history of involvement in social protection, both in delivery and policy development, and UNDP Bangladesh is the lead agency providing support to the Government in developing the country's first National Social Protection Strategy. UNDP Bangladesh is also the lead agency for Pillar 2 of the UNDAF; Pro-poor Growth with Equity.

The ILO country office in Bangladesh has a number of skills projects which have components for underprivileged groups, including a strategy called Community Based Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (CB-TREE). The ILO will facilitate incorporation of more substantial vocational training than what is now offered in social safety net programmes. ILO has also assisted Bangladesh in the development of a Code of Practice of Informal Apprenticeship and a national strategy for gender equality in vocational training that are useful supporting instruments in private sector engagement in vocational training of women. Demonstrating effective human development and private sector partnerships within a social protection programme will contribute to a cross-sectoral approach that integrates social protection policies and practices with other sectoral policies for greater impact on pro-poor and inclusive economic growth.

UNDP has previous experience in Joint UN Programmes from the Violence Against Women (VAW) Programme, in which nine UN agencies in Bangladesh and 11 ministries were engaged. The UNDP engagement in the VAW programme was implemented in partnership with the large Bangladesh NGO BRAC, building on the earlier social safety net project with involvement of Local Government Institutions and women beneficiaries now running micro-enterprises or being otherwise employed. Both the Local Government Division and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs were engaged in implementation.

ILO has previous experience in Joint UN Programmes including participation in the VAW programme mentioned above, as well as with UNICEF in an informal apprenticeship scheme piloted through BRAC. The informal apprenticeship model in the first pilot placed a couple of apprentices from a pool of 1000 to work and learn in each of some 500 micro-enterprises. The assessment of the first trial revealed most apprentices were employed after their training by the SME where they apprenticed, or in other similar shops in the local area. Some set up their own business, while others engaged in different wage employment. A second pilot had similar positive results and BRAC is now replicating the model on its own. The ILO provided technical advice on establishing the scheme, and provided competency standards and log books for the trainees and master craftsperson in more than a dozen occupations in the informal economy.

For the purpose of this Joint Programme, it is perceived that the combined comparative advantages of UNDP and ILO will yield optimal results. UNDP has a long experience of working with disadvantaged women, with social protection and with the Local Government Division, but has less experience in vocational skills training. ILO brings in this missing vocational skills training experience, including training of disadvantaged women from the CB-TREE strategy of the TVET Reform Project. It is also perceived that

partnering with additional UN agencies in Bangladesh, including UN Women, whilst making coordination arrangements more complex would not result in corresponding enhanced results achievement. While UN Women is still to achieve depth and breadth of its involvement in Bangladesh, UNDP possesses adequate country-wide grassroots experience of working with extreme poor women in public works and livelihoods support from, inter alia, the predecessor project on which this Joint Programme is modelled.

Regions of intervention:

The intervention area for the joint programme has been selected taking into account poverty incidence, vulnerability to natural disasters, vulnerability inflicted due to climate change and geographical remoteness. Kurigram district in the Northwest, in an area affected by seasonal hunger due to entrenched local-specific poverty drivers and at the same time suffering from recurrent floods and riverbank erosion, and Satkhira district in the coastal belt, an area affected by natural disasters and climate change and with high incidence of extreme poverty, are representative of two types of poor and vulnerable areas in Bangladesh. Keeping in mind that the SWAPNO model will be scalable and can be followed by a cascading expansion following from the experience of initial piloting, these two districts have initially been selected by the Government. However, as the main feature of the Joint Programme with ILO – to bring vocational training with strong private sector partnership into a social protection programme – is an innovation not earlier attempted in Bangladesh, this proposal includes only Kurigram district for initial piloting, where such vocational training will be an integral part of the SWAPNO model. Successful piloting in Kurigram would expand the vocational training model to Satkhira district.

Kurigram district, with a population of around 1.8 million, stands out as the poorest district in Bangladesh in the poverty mapping for both 2005 and 2010. Around 68% of its population was found poor and 52% extreme poor in the 2005 poverty mapping. Poverty reduction 2005-2010 has been lower in Kurigram than for Bangladesh in general, and the 2010 poverty mapping records around 64% of the population below the poverty line and 44% – around 800,000 people – living in extreme poverty.

UNDP will establish a programme office in Kurigram district, staffed with a District Manager and a Financial Monitoring Associate. The programme will partner with an NGO with a minimum of 10 years' implementation presence in the district, including offices and training facilities. The NGO will be required to recruit around 80 staff members for programme implementation in Kurigram district. In addition, specialized NGOs present in the district will be contracted to conduct vocational skills training.

The local government social infrastructure already exists through the Union Council Standing Committee on Women and Children Welfare in the 72 Unions to be covered. These committees will be trained and assisted by the programme to take the responsibility for local implementation. The National Institute of Local Government, which will be engaged in training of the Standing Committees and Union Councils, has established permanent resource teams of trainers in each of the nine sub-districts to be covered.

Targeted groups:

2,600 destitute women in 72 Unions of Kurigram district are the primary beneficiaries. Women will be selected by the Union Councils with the support of participating NGOs and informed by the registry of extreme poor currently being developed by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Selection criteria include: preference for divorced, widowed and abandoned women, age (18-50 years, with children), food security status (unable to provide their families with three balanced meals daily), economic status (little or no assets, forced to beg or employed at low wages). The entire households of these women – an estimated 10,000 family members in 2,600 households – will benefit from the programme through protected livelihoods, improved food security and nutrition, improved health and sanitation, having access to a menu of public services, financial inclusion, children being enrolled in and completing primary & secondary school, and so forth.

With evidence of successful progress and outcome demonstrated in Kurigram district for the vocational training approach including private sector partnership, the modalities proved successful in Kurigram will be replicated in Satkhira district, benefiting additionally 1,900 women.

Specific baseline data of the targeted beneficiaries are not yet available, but will be collected through a baseline survey during the inception phase of the programme. Indicators for measuring programme results are provided in the section on “Mainstreaming of gender and women’s empowerment” above and in the attached Performance Monitoring Framework.

In addition to some 10,000 members of direct beneficiary households, local communities with a population of around 1.1 million living below the poverty line will be indirect beneficiaries of public works undertaken in the SWAPNO programme. Moreover, local SMEs will reap business advancement benefits from their future employment of women trained under the programme in response to their needs.

Design, multisectorial strategy, results and implementation plan:

The approach of SWAPNO recognizes the multidimensional nature of poverty, with a need to work across sectors. The multi-sectoral approach of SWAPNO includes simultaneous work streams to empower poor women and develop their skills, to create decent and secure livelihood opportunities for marginalized women, to promote public works for multiple benefits of poor communities, including those of adapting to a changing climate, and to develop local government capacity to deliver gender sensitive and pro-poor services in an accountable and transparent manner.

Lack of skills amongst poor women is a main constraint to more gainful and lasting employment. One of the lessons learned from an earlier project is that training of participants should not be treated as a fringe benefit or add-on; it is essential that beneficiaries receive solid training for future self- or waged employment. In the design of cash transfer public works programmes, individuals selected as beneficiaries should not be perceived primarily as workers to maintain or rehabilitate public assets. Adequate investment should be made in developing their skills for post-project employability and ‘time out’ for up-scaled training events should be allowed during the employment tenure. Especially for those who do not have the traits that make an entrepreneur and are better fitted for employment in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) than own account business, employment in on and off-farm rural SMEs has to be arranged.

Therefore, SWAPNO will give emphasis on future employability by enhanced human capital and job placement in local SMEs in addition to self-employment. ILO, and its experiences from its skills development projects, brings in the experience required for such a blend of social protection outcomes and enhanced vocational skills. ILO’s first experience in Bangladesh in piloting CB-TREE had a similar target group as that of SWAPNO – disadvantaged women, poor, divorced or separated, low literacy, etc. The ILO identified partner NGOs and local training providers to support implementation that ultimately proved successful. When a sample of these target women were visited some years after their training, most were still engaged in the small business they set up after the training; their housing had gone from dismal to acceptable; their children were going to school, and some had even hired their husbands to work for them. Others had set up a small cooperative operation while a few had taken up local employment in factories established in their districts. With a combination of skills development; confidence building; micro-finance and post-training support, these women demonstrated that such interventions work.

Please refer to Annex XII for "Theory of Change".

SWAPNO will apply a sustained intervention model combining social protection and livelihood promotion agendas, and specifically building up a more secure household asset base, prominently human capital in

the form of enhanced vocational skills. The independent Assessment of Development Results (ADR) of the predecessor project based on which SWAPNO is modelled observed that "breaking the cycle of poverty one needs a big push; breaking the cycle of extreme poverty one needs an even bigger push. This is because those who experience the constant pressures of extreme poverty simulate the conditions of multiple equilibria and poverty traps." The ADR went on to conclude that the project assessed – and in extension what is being proposed for SWAPNO – "provides just the right kind of amount for breaking the poverty traps". The ADR argues that "none of the ultra-poor programs practiced so far in rural or urban Bangladesh has this built-in feature of threshold-level investment-orientation". Hence, rather than reducing the unit cost by spreading the programme to additional beneficiaries in a "tokenism" approach that in all likelihood will make little dent on poverty reduction, SWAPNO aims at that bigger push necessary for the programme to effectively serve as a springboard for a trajectory out of poverty. It is also to be noted that 60% of the budgeted programme cost represents direct monetary benefits taken home by participating households.

Promotional social transfer programmes thus tend to be more expensive, since the ambition is a one-off treatment to enable destitute households to permanently move out of poverty. However, graduation out of extreme poverty is, even in a medium term perspective, more cost-efficient as the increased cost is offset against future savings – the alternative of perpetual dependence on social protection for non-graduated recipients is even costlier. Graduated social transfer participants will also be able to participate in, benefit from and contribute to the process of economic growth.

The public asset model to be applied in SWAPNO achieves efficiency through two channels: (i) directly supporting livelihoods of participating households, and (ii) creating pro-poor public goods (assets) that benefit the larger community and contribute to inclusive economic growth. This yields multiplier benefits that improve the efficiency of the investment. The longer term effectiveness in terms of strengthening developmental impact – by not only employing the previously un-utilised labour power of the household but also improving its productivity – provides a sustainable contribution to cost-effectiveness and real value-for-money. There is also an interface of public works employment and future market employment; the engagement in public works during a sufficiently long tenure gives socially excluded women both inward self-confidence and outward social acceptance, which provides a robust platform for future livelihood activities. SWAPNO's integrated developmental model – linking financial inclusion, human capital development, gender equity and other comprehensive elements – strengthens economic and social impacts and generates sustainable and deepening impacts.

ILO will nominate a professional familiar with CB-TREE and informal apprenticeship to be a member of the UNDP SWAPNO staff team, to provide continuous technical advice in these areas to SWAPNO. Additionally, the ILO will bring in an international consultant to organise and co-deliver a series of train-the-trainer workshops on CB-TREE. Participants in this training will be from NGOs in Kurigram district, which would be identified by the CB-TREE and informal apprenticeship professional as having the capacity to deliver the programme. Among topics in the training would be the use of skills demand survey instruments already tested and available in Bangla. ILO will also give assistance to establish a local chapter of the Industry Skills Council (ISC) for Kurigram district and facilitate that the ISC local chapter provides monitoring of CB-TREE training and informal apprenticeship activities to ensure they are being delivered as per requirements. This will be supported by the CB-TREE and informal apprenticeship professional and by groundwork in Dhaka with the national ISC. Concerning informal apprenticeships, the ILO would provide technical and advisory support in the selection of local NGO training providers and provide criteria in selecting companies to host apprentices; advise on local market analysis, and use its business association contacts to support adoption of training schemes by local SMEs.

Programme delivery is expected to attain the following outputs/results:

1. Beneficiary households are able to protect their post-programme food security and livelihoods.

Activities include:

- Selection of 2,600 extreme poor women in Kurigram district as primary beneficiaries
- Employment of 2,600 extreme poor women in public works for an 18-month tenure
- Skills training of 2,600 extreme poor women in Kurigram district for economic opportunities and post-programme employability (the JP vocational training model will subsequently be rolled out to 1,900 women in Satkhira district based on demonstrated effectiveness in Kurigram district)
- Promotion of expanded household asset base for sustainable livelihoods development
- Deposit of end-of-employment bonus
- Promotion of savings habits amongst beneficiary households
- Counselling of graduated women in selection and operation of a sufficiently large and diversified business portfolio that can protect future livelihoods
- Job placement arrangements with local SMEs (which would also include Satkhira district, subject to demonstrated effectiveness of the model in Kurigram district)
- Creation of social capital in support of graduated women and their post-programme livelihood activities

The purpose of these activities is that primary beneficiary households will be able to permanently move out of poverty. Beneficiaries will be assisted to cross critical thresholds so that they can avail of opportunities and participate in markets they previously had no access to. Participating workers will earn predictable income during a social safety net employment period, with an end-of-employment bonus set aside as a development fund/account. This fund, together with financial and livelihoods-oriented awareness and capacity building, will enable participants to finance acquisition of productive assets at the end of the employment-based programme phase.

Each woman will be assisted in selecting viable micro-enterprises based on aptitude and market considerations and beneficiaries will before, during and after graduation be counselled in building up and operating a sufficiently large and diversified business portfolio that can protect their future livelihoods. Women will in this be guided by a menu of more climate change resilient livelihood options. Training on skills needed for micro-enterprises selected will be provided, along with general entrepreneurship training, training in market literacy and financial education for own accounts business. Entrepreneurship & micro-enterprise training will be imparted by specialized trainers, facilitated through the joint UNDP-ILO programme. Apprenticeship training, along with SME job placement opportunities, will be an innovation in social protection programmes, enabled by the programme being implemented jointly with ILO. Budget provision: USD 1,458,000

2. Beneficiaries and their dependents have improved their human capital in terms of nutrition, health, education and voice.

Activities include:

- Life skills training of 2,600 extreme poor women
- Nutrition awareness campaigns
- Reporting and redressing violence against and abuse of women

The purpose of these activities is to develop human capital that builds confidence and awareness, boosts resilience to shocks and adverse trends, reverts previous social exclusion and thwarts inter-generational transmission of poverty. Training will enable disadvantaged women who are employed for maintenance works to graduate from the programme as confident individuals capable of managing their own lives, so that they do not return to their previous destitute condition. The training programme will address issues and topics related to nutrition, primary health, sanitation, gender equity, rights and entitlements. This life skills training of disadvantaged women will be done by NGOs.

In view of prevalent malnutrition amongst women and children in Bangladesh, the programme will pay special attention to awareness about nutrition and encourage the use of beneficiaries' increased income for a balanced diet with acceptable calorie, protein and micronutrient intakes.

Women may actually become vulnerable to abuse and even violence by participating in programmes set up to assist them as these programmes often expose them and can challenge deeply entrenched community norms on women's roles. The programme will devise a system for reporting and redressing violence against and abuse of women.

Budget provision: USD 100,500 (NB This includes only the direct cost of life skills training. NGO contract costs are included under Output 1 above; programme staff costs and advocacy costs are included under Output 5 below.)

3. Beneficiary households have access to public services essential for their livelihood activities and family wellbeing.

These will include services to directly promote livelihoods like agricultural extension, veterinary services, fisheries services, services to cottage industries, etc., but also health and education services for the entire household. Strengthened cooperation between Union Councils and service delivery departments will have positive impacts not only for the primary beneficiaries but also for overall socio-economic development. Financial inclusion will be given prominence. Financial institutions will not merely be a channel for the transfer of funds; they also have an important role to play in the graduation process, by opening entry to safe savings deposits and easy, low-cost access to credit. It is, however, to be noted that it is UNDP's experience that promotion of savings is more effective than micro-credits in fostering sustainable income enhancement. Like in the SWAPNO predecessor project, savings combined with productive investments will be promoted by both inter-lending of voluntary savings through Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) and the mandatory saving paid out as end-of-employment bonus. Financial services to be provided through Microfinance Institutions will instead give emphasis on a delivery model for micro-insurance. Insurance is a powerful risk management instrument almost totally inaccessible to the extreme poor, and Bangladesh has South Asia's lowest insurance penetration.

Activities include:

- Participatory identification of needs for services
- Establishment of linkages between service providers, in particular Upazila service providing departments, and SWAPNO beneficiary households and other poor households in participating local communities
- Enhancing cooperation between the Union Councils and service delivery departments
- Provision of saving deposit facilities with participating banks/bank agents or post offices
- Provision of special funds to 72 Union Councils for priority basic services requested by beneficiary households and other poor households
- Affiliation with local NGOs
- Provision of micro-insurance through Microfinance Institutions

Budget provision: USD 46,500 (NB This includes only the direct cost of special funds for priority basic services. NGO contract costs are included under Output 1 above; programme staff costs and advocacy costs are included under Output 5 below; micro-insurance costs are included under the budget of the parallel Social Protection Policy Support Programme.)

4. Public assets promoting local economic regeneration, improving social conditions, enhancing environmental conditions are maintained and developed for the benefit of the poor of participating rural communities.

Activities include:

- Selection of priority public assets and other public works through community consultations
- Maintenance/creation/rehabilitation of public assets selected
- On-the-job training to women crew groups on techniques of quality maintenance work
- Payment of wages
- Provision of supplies for public works (tools, work uniforms, tree saplings, cell phones, etc.)
- Monitoring and supervision of work and its quality

The purpose of these activities is to undertake public works that are central for the economic and social life of local communities, and are of special relevance for the rural poor. With the main purpose of providing social transfer employment, public works safety net programmes need necessarily to create or maintain public assets that are useful for the local community and can promote inclusive growth. A rigorous mechanism of community involvement in selection of priority assets and other public works will be applied. Selection of the different works to be undertaken will be done through a participatory process at the level of the three greater wards that each Union consists of. The Union Council will be involved in the decision making after consultation with pro-poor representatives.

The public works to be undertaken will benefit poor communities of 72 Unions in Kurigram district. A population of around 1.1 million remains poor and will be beneficiaries of public works undertaken in the SWAPNO programme.

Public works may include roads, embankments and barrages, canals, ponds, tree plantation, ground raising works to mitigate the effects of floods and water logging, works to improve drainage, protection of ecosystems, and so forth. Rehabilitation of assets damaged by natural disasters will be given priority, and work in a broader sense, like community service, will also be considered.

The public works employment offered in SWAPNO requires semi-skilled labour. Women need to be trained on-the job in for instance correct compaction of earth, maintaining correct slope angles, grass turving, tree plantation and after-care of tree seedlings. Such hands-on training will go along with day-to-day supervision of women crew groups.

SWAPNO recognizes women's double burdens, with a work day limited to 6 hours (8 AM - 2 PM) when children in school age attend school, leaving most of the afternoon free for family care and other activities. As the majority of beneficiary women are widowed, divorced or being abandoned by the husband, the need for child-care facilities for infant children is not expected to be very high. Previous experience is also that informal networks exist in the locality for the care of children and the project will not attempt to remove such traditional support mechanisms. However, in case of need, a well-functioning existing system of crèches will be applied - women of the crew group will in rotation take care of the children as their assigned work duty for the day.

The public works will be carried out in 6-day work weeks, with a paid weekly holiday and Government holidays with full pay. Full wages will be paid during days of training. In case of sickness or absence from work for other reasons, a woman can send a substitute of her own choice for work during these days. Women will establish a Women Crew Group as a self-managed group with individual contractual agreements with the Union Council. The group will develop an internal group management system to solve internal problems. The crew members will nominate a Group Leader from amongst themselves to look after group discipline and entitlements. The contracted partner NGO will monitor that women beneficiaries receive their wages, in full and timely, on fortnightly basis and will also act as whistleblower in case of infringement of labour and women's rights. All these arrangements will be specified in the Operational Manual of the programme.

Budget provision: USD 2,126,000

5. Local government has the capacity to implement social transfer programmes in an accountable and transparent manner, following a gender sensitive and pro-poor approach.

Activities include:

- Development of an Operational Manual
- Development of Internal Control Framework
- Training needs assessment
- In-country and cross-country training for 72 Union Councils and 9 Sub-district councils, engaging National Institute of Local Government
- On-the-job coaching
- Peer training by best practitioners / horizontal learning
- Financial monitoring with parallel knowledge transfer of good practices
- District workshops
- Advocacy, knowledge management and visibility activities
- Baseline and endline surveys
- Monitoring of the development of Union Council capacities

Budget provision: USD 882,000

Capacities of Union Councils are of central importance for successful programme implementation as they will be responsible for local delivery of the project. The capacity of Union Councils will be developed so that they can perform the following key tasks:

- (a) Arrange for selection of primary beneficiary women and guide formation of crew groups;
- (b) Assist in selection of roads and other public works;
- (c) Monitor task assignment and performance of crews through a Standing Committee; solve critical problems; prepare reports; ensure management, supervision and payment;
- (d) Facilitate cooperation between the Union Council and service delivery departments for effective service delivery to programme beneficiaries; establish contact between women and service providers;
- (e) Identify priority service needs and manage service delivery block grants for essential needs;
- (f) Facilitate cooperation from participating banks and other payment agents and assist in account opening for primary beneficiary women;
- (g) Provide graduated women with follow-up and counselling for sustainable livelihoods;
- (h) Maintain all records, registers, accounts, etc. prescribed.

Capabilities of local government institutions will be developed in terms of accountability, transparency, pro-poor planning, gender sensitiveness and participatory M&E. To enhance sustainability prospects, capacity development training will be imparted through National Institute of Local Government (NILG), with technical assistance from the programme in the development of training modules, training of trainers and so forth. This will at the same time develop NILG capacity to impart similar capacity development training in other Unions of the country. Strengthening local government capacity not only supports effective programme implementation but also strengthens a range of service delivery mechanisms. Effective capacity for pro-poor and gender sensitive service delivery requires both capability and commitment, and the programme will work on both. The level of capacities developed by local government for sustainable results will be measured by indicators such as:

o % of beneficiary households perceiving local government institutions having transparency, capacity and responsiveness

o % of local governments sensitive to inclusiveness (including gender aspects) and able to make pro-poor plans

o % of Union Council programme committees with improved management skills in planning, supervision, monitoring, record keeping, reporting and conflict resolution for public works schemes

- o # of disadvantaged women provided with follow-up and counselling for sustainable livelihoods
- o # of participatory meetings and exercises organized by local government institutions

The independent ex-post evaluation of the earlier UNDP project on which this joint programme is modelled found that “the benefits produced by the project continue to flow as external funding has ended”. The same mechanisms – training, counselling, asset building, a diversified livelihoods portfolio, market linkages, access to basic public services and building of social capital for inclusion in the society – with documented evidence of leading to sustainable results will remain in place, and more will be added – most notably the incorporation of more substantial vocational training and introduction of private sector partnership that the Joint Programme with ILO will enable.

Coordination and governance arrangements:

A National Steering Committee (NSC) has already been set up, with Secretary Economic Resources Division and the UN Resident Coordinator in the role of Co-Chair and a representative of the Spanish Embassy. The role of the NSC is to provide oversight and strategic leadership of the Joint Programme at the national level.

Oversight of the programme will be provided by a Project Management Committee (PMC), with Secretary, Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives and the UN Resident Coordinator in the role of Co-Chair. The PMC will oversee programme implementation and take technical/operational decisions required to appropriately manage the Joint Programme. It will comprise standing members representing LGD and Government bodies concerned, including Finance Division, Economic Resources Division, Planning Commission, Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Statistics and Informatics Division, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, and representatives of the Spanish Embassy, UNDP and ILO. A National Project Director will be ex-officio member secretary.

There will be regular meetings between UNDP and ILO to oversee and advance the programme’s vocational skills training activities. UNDP-ILO coordination will also be ensured through the ILO nominated CB-TREE and informal apprenticeship professional to be a member of the UNDP project team.

National to local coordination will be ensured through the engagement of LGD, which has representation from Ministry to Divisional to District to Sub-district to Union level. The Union Council Standing Committee on Women and Children Welfare will be responsible for local implementation. Each Union is divided into three greater wards with their own committees and public works will be selected based on need as reflected through consultations with ward committees and local communities. Programme committees to be set up at sub-district level will coordinate programme activities in Unions of the sub-district. Deputy Commissioners are having regular meetings with NGOs and projects in a district, where this joint programme will also be represented for enhanced coordination.

Information and reporting will, on monthly/quarterly/annual basis, flow from union level committees and partner NGOs to be engaged to sub-district committees to district level, where consolidated quarterly district reports will be compiled. Sub-district and district reports will be submitted to programme headquarters in Dhaka. The Dhaka SWAPNO office will prepare quarterly and annual reports for the PMC and donors (SDG-F, GoB, UNDP and ILO). Parallel to this, an information feedback system from the PMC and donors to district, sub-district and union level will be set up. The programme will also organize workshops at national and district level for sharing of information, experiences and lessons learned.

Please refer to Annex XV for "Key programme stakeholders and accountability" matrix.

The Joint Programme technical assistance staff team will comprise the following members:

Project Manager
Training Specialist
M&E Specialist
International Consultant/Trainer on CB-TREE (short-term, provided by ILO)
CB-TREE and informal apprenticeship professional (nominated by ILO to be a member of the UNDP SWAPNO staff team)
Social Development Specialist (with special responsibility for gender issues)
MIS Associate
Finance and Administrative Officer
District Manager
Financial Monitoring Associate
Drivers (2)

The CB-TREE and informal apprenticeship professional, the Kurigram District Manager and Financial Monitoring Associate will dedicate all their time to the Joint Programme. The international consultant/trainer is short-term, but will dedicate all assignment time for the Joint Programme. The rest of the technical assistance team will dedicate at least 50% of their time to the Joint Programme (as the SWAPNO project will at the same time be implemented also in Satkhira district, with subsequent introduction of the Joint Programme vocational training approach in that district based on Kurigram piloting experience and lessons learned).

Risk analysis:

Achievement of Joint Programme results:

Risk: Political instability/unrest

Mitigation strategy: The programme will develop a contingency plan to deal with such situations, with cautious observation of the political situation

Effective interagency and inter-institutional coordination:

No potential risks foreseen for the UNDP-ILO coordination

Risk: Establishing partnerships between Government and NGOs could be challenging

Mitigation strategy: Guideline of NGO selection will incorporate key relevant issues that will ensure an open flow of communication between different counterparts. Lessons learned from previous ILO experience with CB-TREE and informal apprenticeship will be applied.

Multi-sectoral approach:

Risk: Co-ordination and co-operation between different Govt. departments do not function effectively

Mitigation strategy: The Project Management Committee, with relevant departments attending, will give policy guidance and resolve stalemates.

A full risk analysis is presented in the Risk Analysis Matrix attached- Annex XIV.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E):

Please refer to Annex XIII for "A sample of key M&E indicators".

A complete list of performance indicators is given in the Annex- VIII "Performance Monitoring Framework". M&E activities to be carried out are presented in the Integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Framework attached.

Baseline data are at present not available, but will be crucial for the analysis of programme impact. Pre-programme baselines for critical indicators will be established during the inception phase. Survey methodologies will include the use of control groups for impact analysis related to the treatment group of

primary beneficiaries. The impact assessment will adopt a rigorous experimental design, linked with appropriate quasi-experimental approaches as necessary. One option is a randomised control trial using a rolling baseline with pipeline controls, combined with propensity score matching approaches to correct for potential selection bias. Alternatively, another option not requiring a quasi-experimental component is a pure randomised control trial, with a lottery employed to select participants from a pre-qualified list, and the resulting non-participants serving in the control group. There are advantages and disadvantages to alternative approaches, which will be analysed during the inception phase in order to finalise the methodological approach. An end-of-programme appraisal will compare programme outcomes with baselines for both treatment and control groups and current control group status for difference-in-differences analysis to ascertain programme attribution. Both the baseline survey report and the endline survey report will be shared with the PMC and the SDG-F Secretariat.

While the impact assessment referred to above concerns the socio-economic development of beneficiary households, the progress of the capacity development of participating Union Councils will be assessed separately, with reports to be shared with the PMC and the SDG-F Secretariat.

Feedback from monitoring and evaluation will be fed into knowledge management as documented evidence, into communication for best practices and into advocacy related to both best practices for replication and challenges that require improvements into a more enabling environment and inter-sectoral solutions.

While most monitoring will be mainstreamed through MIS reporting from union committees to sub-district committees to district to programme headquarters, specific monitoring and evaluation of vocational skills training and job placement activities will be overseen by the CB-TREE and informal apprenticeship professional. The Kurigram chapter of the Industry Skills Council, which will also include local NGOs, will be engaged in such monitoring. Though it will be too early to ascertain impact within the programme period, a special survey will study employment outcomes after vocational training received.

The Union Council Standing Committee responsible for local implementation in each Union will receive training on Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation and be engaged in monitoring of public works, incidents of violence against women and public service delivery. The parallel UNDP supported Social Protection Policy Support (SPPS) Programme will under one of its work streams build capacities of Local Government Institutions to monitor social protection programmes, and the SWAPNO programme will take benefit from this. Community involvement in monitoring will be ensured by each Standing Committee having three non-elected community representatives. The contracted SWAPNO partner NGO will assist the Standing Committee in its monitoring and reporting duties and, in a whistleblower role, closely monitor and report any untoward incident, including short payment of wages and violence against and abuse of women.

Reporting will, on monthly/quarterly/annual basis, flow from union level committees and partner NGOs to be engaged to sub-district committees to district level, where consolidated quarterly district reports will be compiled. Sub-district and district reports will be submitted to programme headquarters in Dhaka. The SWAPNO Dhaka office will prepare quarterly and annual reports for the NSC, PMC and donors (SDG-F, GoB, UNDP and ILO).

A Financial Monitoring Associate will continuously monitor financial management of programme funds received by Union Councils, in line with the programme's internal control framework.

Various M&E activities are specified in the annexed Integrated Monitoring Evaluation and Research Framework. Activities can be broadly grouped under the following three categories:

Progress monitoring

MIS on quantitative progress against set time bound targets for all kinds of programme implementation.

Process monitoring

Vocational skills training compliance with competency skills logbooks; public works implementation compliance with Operational Manual; whistleblower monitoring of incidents of infringement of entitlements, violence and abuse; internal financial monitoring.

Results monitoring

Household endline survey (versus baseline); food security/nutrition survey; results appraisal of CB-TREE and apprenticeship training; Union Council capacity development assessment; outcome of micro-insurance piloting.

Estimated allocation of resources for M&E: USD 50,000

Communication and advocacy (C&A):

The programme will have a designated page within the UNDP Bangladesh Country Office web site, which will be continuously updated with progress reports, survey and assessment reports, knowledge products, training modules, the Operational Manual, case stories, advocacy materials and visibility materials. The ILO Bangladesh Country Office web site will carry similar updated materials related to the vocational training component of the programme.

Local and national media will be used to cover major programme milestones and achievements. Programme activities, for example women learning non-traditional trades, are visual and lend themselves to interesting stories in printed media, radio and television. Visual and written case studies of individual women successes will be prepared. Press releases, regular fact sheets and a quartile news bulletin will also be used. Women will be interviewed for local radio and newspapers during their training and afterwards when hired by SMEs or operating their own micro-enterprises.

SWAPNO is embedded in the UNDP supported Social Protection Policy Support (SPPS) Programme as a component to catalyse improvements in social protection delivery capacity and innovation, enable testing and learning and inform social protection strategy and policy through field based evidence. This provides a communication objective of informing the Government on successful practices and lessons learned on how social protection can be designed to shape trajectories for beneficiaries to move out of poverty, so that successful approaches can be adopted and replicated for better use of the potential of the country's social protection system. The Government audience is primarily represented by the inter-ministerial Central Coordination Committee on Social Safety Nets under the Cabinet Division, the General Economics Division of the Planning Commission and the Local Government Division.

Objectives of communication and advocacy on vocational skills training are:

- To inform local Government officials on the goals and processes and importance of the programme and their engagement with it.
- To inform local partners including NGOs, training providers, and SMEs about the programme and persuade sufficient numbers to engage.
- To find suitable candidates for the programme and begin induction training.
- To share information about the challenges and successes of the programme so lessons learned are applied and stakeholders are convinced of the merits of scaling up the programme.
- To keep stakeholders informed of progress during programme operation.

For those women who take part in the apprenticeship scheme, the competency skills logbook will be an

essential tool for both the apprentice and master craftsperson/SME owner on what is to be learned and progress over the term of the apprenticeship. Views and suggestions from master craft persons and employers will be collected to enhance programme success.

ILO will provide technical support and advice to the programme on communication and advocacy related to vocational skills training conducted in SWAPNO. UNDP will bear responsibility for feeding programme experience into social protection strategy, via the parallel SPPS programme. These two work streams of communication and advocacy will be coordinated between UNDP and ILO.

Information required for communication & advocacy purposes will largely be generated through the programme's monitoring & evaluation activities. Knowledge products in the form of reports will be published and disseminated as part of communication & advocacy activities.

Apart from advocacy purposes, communication activities will aim to give visibility to the programme and its financial contributors; SDG-F, LGD, UNDP and ILO. Communication events include programme inception workshops and endline workshops in Dhaka and Kurigram and media briefings arranged for programme landmark events, as well as local rallies on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Outreach of communication will be followed by media monitoring and participation in communication and visibility events.

Estimated allocation of resources for C&A: USD 50,000

Knowledge management (KM):

SWAPNO provides opportunities for downstream application of a host of innovative delivery approaches at local level, which are also scalable and replicable throughout Bangladesh. Being implemented in tandem with the UNDP supported Social Protection Policy Support (SPPS) Programme, SWAPNO will act as a catalyst for delivery improvements elsewhere in the social protection system, offering a means of promoting and testing innovations of the two SPPS components of improved Social Protection Governance and Strengthened Social Protection Delivery Systems. The knowledge obtained through SWAPNO implementation will directly feed into upstream policy application through the parallel SPPS Programme. Like for C&A activities, the Government audience is primarily the inter-ministerial Central Coordination Committee on Social Safety Nets under the Cabinet Division, the General Economics Division of the Planning Commission and the Local Government Division.

The ILO is a learning organization and its TVET Reform Project has developed a set of mixed media communication products for information sharing on best practices, including resources for donors who may wish in future to support skills development in Bangladesh. Similar documents will be prepared by SWAPNO. The existing ILO CB-TREE manual for Bangladesh will be updated and enhanced from SWAPNO feedback. Challenges and opportunities in scaling up modalities such as CB-TREE and informal apprenticeships will be documented with particular reference to their links to social protection delivery programmes.

Envisaged knowledge products include:

- A household endline survey report analysing how beneficiary households have improved their socio-economic conditions against baseline as a result of the programme
- A vocational training result assessment analysing employment outcomes after vocational training received, with recommendations on replication and improvements in training delivery and job placement arrangements

- A food security/nutrition report analysing outcomes in beneficiary households
- A Union Council capacity development report analysing the effect of programme training and other capacity development measures
- A micro-insurance appraisal report analysing findings of the pilot intervention, with recommendations on scaling up
- Training modules – for vocational skills training, life skills training and capacity development of Union Councils – in updated edition based on lessons learned from programme implementation
- The programme’s Operational Manual – in updated edition based on lessons learned from programme implementation

Information for these knowledge products will be generated through the programme’s monitoring & evaluation activities. Publishing of reports will be linked to communication & advocacy activities.

Contribution to the post 2015 development Agenda:

The Government of Bangladesh has made good progress in achieving many of the MDGs, not the least MDG 1 of halving poverty. In its outlook towards a post 2015 development agenda, the Government has set out many goals that are relevant for this programme:

- o Eliminate extreme poverty by 2030
- o Reduce national head count poverty between 2015 and 2030 by two thirds
- o Ensure equitable growth
- o Ensure equal opportunity and benefit for women in the economy
- o Ensure role of women in decision making process
- o Integrate Technical & Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and skills education in post primary curriculum
- o Ensure decent and productive employment for all
- o Promote equitable access to services
- o Reduce the vulnerability and exposure of the communities to disasters

The United Nations Country Team in its Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda for Bangladesh by and large shares the visions set out by the Government and has proposed goals and targets such as “Secure economic growth that is inclusive, reduces poverty and inequality, creates sufficient numbers of decent jobs, and is environmentally sustainable”, “Substantially reduce income and multi-dimensional poverty by 50 percent of the 2015 value” and “Ensure full employment and rapid growth in decent work”.

The report notes that striving toward greater employment protection and decent work is a major challenge for Bangladesh. Social protection is seen as important not only in addressing vulnerabilities, but also for tackling entrenched poverty and marginalization as well as persistent undernutrition. This includes a social protection approach that encompasses gender equality concerns.

The report identifies a need for social safety nets to be strengthened, “since they offer a means of equalizing income/consumption differences, re-channelling the benefits of growth, and reducing poverty”. Especially for socially marginalized groups, improved social protection is becoming an imperative. Such marginalized groups are often denied equitable access to social support networks and formal services, as a result of stigma, making it far more difficult for them to break out of poverty.

In response to these observations, the Joint Programme is specifically targeting marginalized groups with gender equality concerns and its experiences and lessons learned over a two-year period will contribute to subjects recognized as crucial in the national discussion on transition from MDGs to SDGs, with Bangladesh in turn contributing to the global discussion. The programme experiences can specifically provide insights

into a priority identified in the UNCT report – the need to develop a better understanding of the drivers out of poverty, and thus the ‘graduation’ from imminent need of social protection, and how programmes to achieve this can be meaningfully designed and sustainably scaled up.

Whilst the SDGs remain to be set, the current consultation process is moving towards consensus on targets that are relevant for the proposed joint programme. The UN Open Working Group on the SDGs has in July 2014 completed its report on the shape of the post 2015 agenda, identifying targets such as eradication of extreme poverty by 2030, social protection focusing on coverage of the most marginalized, building resilience of the poor, equal employment opportunities for women and increased vocational training coverage as possible for consensus traction. SWAPNO field experience can provide valuable information on how to make targets such as these achievable.

V. SDG-F - Joint Programme Management Arrangement

Coordination and Oversight Mechanisms

The Fund will rely on UN Resident Coordinators (RC) to facilitate collaboration between Participating UN Organizations to ensure that the programme is on track and that promised results are being delivered. The Resident Coordinator will exercise his/her authority over the programme by being entrusted with leadership of the overall programme design, ongoing programmatic oversight of the Fund’s activities by co-chairing the National Steering Committee meetings.

To ensure proper checks and balances of programme activities the RC is called upon to establish committees at two levels:

- A National Steering Committee (NSC), and
- Programme Management Committee(s) (PMC).

The NSC consists of the Resident Coordinator, a representative of the national Government in the role of Co-Chair and a representative of the AECID or in its absence from the Embassy of Spain and/or other sponsoring partner entity, according to the SDGF ToR.

The responsibilities of the PMC will include:

1. ensuring operational coordination
2. appointing a Programme Manager or equivalent thereof;
3. managing programme resources to achieve the outcomes and output defined in the programme;
4. establishing adequate reporting mechanisms in the programme;
5. integrating work plans, budgets, reports and other programme related documents; and ensures that budget overlaps or gaps are addressed;
6. providing technical and substantive leadership regarding the activities envisaged in the Annual Work Plan;
7. agreeing on re-allocations and budget revisions and make recommendations to the NSC as appropriate;
8. addressing management and implementation problems;
9. identifying emerging lessons learned; and
10. Establishing communication and public information plans.

Fund Management Arrangements

The Joint Programme will be using a pass-through fund management modality where UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office will act as the Administrative Agent (AA) under which the funds will be channeled for the Joint Programme through the AA. Each Participating UN Organization receiving funds through the pass-

through has signed a standard Memorandum of Understanding with the AA.

The Administrative Agent will:

- Establish a separate ledger account under its financial regulations and rules for the receipt and administration of the funds received from the donor(s) pursuant the Administrative Arrangement. This Joint Programme Account will be administered by the Administrative Agent in accordance with the regulations, rules, directives and procedures applicable to it, including those relating to interest;
- Make disbursements to Participating UN Organizations from the Joint Programme Account based on instructions from the Steering Committee, in line with the budget set forth in the Joint Programme Document.

The Participating UN Organizations will:

- Assume full programmatic and financial responsibility and accountability for the funds disbursed by the AA.
- Establish a separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent.
- Each UN organization is entitled to deduct their indirect costs on contributions received according to their own regulation and rules, taking into account the size and complexity of the programme. Each UN organization will deduct 7% as overhead costs of the total allocation received for the agency.

The Joint Programme team will consolidate narrative reports provided by the Participating United Nations Organizations and provide them to the AA no later than 31 March per the MOU Participating UN Organizations will submit financial reports no later than one year after the completion of operational activities

The MPTF Office will:

- Prepare consolidated narrative and financial progress reports, based on the narrative consolidated report prepared by the Joint Programme Team and the financial statements/ reports submitted by each of the Participating UN Organizations in accordance with the timetable established in the MoU;
- Provide those consolidated reports to each donor that has contributed to the SDGF, as well as the Steering Committee, in accordance with the timetable established in the Administrative Arrangement.
- Provide the donors, Steering Committee and Participating Organizations with:
 - Certified annual financial statement (“Source and Use of Funds” as defined by UNDG guidelines) to be provided no later than five months (31 May) after the end of the calendar year;
 - Certified final financial statement (“Source and Use of Funds”) to be provided no later than seven months (31 July) of the year following the financial closing of the Joint Programme.

Consolidated information will be available on the MPTF Office GATEWAY

(<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/SDG00>)

BudgetPreparation - The Programme Coordinator will prepare an aggregated/consolidated budget, showing the budget components of each participating UN organization.

Fund Transfer - The initial transfer will be made based on the approved and signed Joint Programme document. The subsequent instalment will be released in accordance with Annual Work Plans approved by the NSC and always based on the SDGF ToRs and Guidance for JP Formulation. The release of funds is subject to meeting a minimum expenditure threshold of 50% of the previous fund release to the Participating UN Organizations combined. If the 50% threshold is not met for the programme as a whole, funds will not be released to any organization, regardless of the individual organization’s performance. On the other hand, the following year’s advance can be requested at any point after the combined

disbursement against the current advance has exceeded 50% and the work plan requirements have been met. If the overall expenditure of the programme reaches 50 before the end of the twelve-month period, the participating UN Organizations may upon endorsement by the NSC request the MPTF Office to release the next instalment ahead of schedule. The RC will make the request to the MPTF Office on NSC's behalf. Any fund transfer is subject to submission of an approved Annual Work Plan and Budget to the MDTF Office.

Interest on funds - Interest will be administered in accordance with the financial regulations and rules of each UN organization and as documented in the Standard Administrative Arrangement signed with the donor.

Balance of Funds - The disposition of any balance of funds remaining at the end of programme implementation will be in accordance with the agreements between the Participating UN Organizations and the implementing partners as well as donors where applicable.

Accountability, Monitoring, Mid-Term Review and Evaluation

Joint programmes are required to provide narrative reports on results achieved, lessons learned and the contributions made by the Joint Programme. Monitoring reports are prepared and presented to the JP SC twice a year and include updated work and monitoring plans.

JPs will produce annual monitoring reports plus a final evaluation report. Evaluations quality will be according with UNEG and OECD-DAC rules. Ongoing monitoring and results management will take place in line with UN standards and SDGF ToRs and Guidance for JPs Formulation.

All communication materials developed as part of a JP should acknowledge its several partners. The SDGF and Spanish Cooperation's logos should always be used jointly in all JP's communications.

Audit - The Administrative Agent and Participating UN Organizations will be audited in accordance with their own Financial Regulations and Rules and, in case of MDTFs, in accordance with the Framework for auditing multi-donor trust funds which has been agreed to by the Internal Audit Services of participating UN organizations and endorsed by the UNDG in September 2007.

Legal Context or Basis of Relationship

The following governing cooperation or assistance agreements between the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh

and the UN participating organisations will be the legal basis for the relationships for conducting activities: For each UN Agency please indicate the title and date of the agreement between the Agency and the National Government:

| Agency name | Standard Basic Assistance Agreement | Date agreement was signed |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| UNDP | Standard Basic Assistance Agreement | 25 November 1986 |
| ILO | Agreement between ILO and GoB | 25 May 1973 |
| | | |
| | | |

VI. Annexes

Letter signed by Resident Coordinator:

 [Annex A -RC Letter to Director SDG-F \(15 Sep 2014\).pdf](#)

CN Endorsement of National Steering Committee:

 [Annex B NSC SDG-F_SWAPNO.pdf](#)

Commitment of matching funds:

 [Annex I- Government commitment of matching funds_SWAPNO.pdf](#)

Results Framework:

 [Annex II RRF_SWAPNO_JP.pdf](#)

Budget break-down per outcomes, outputs and activities:

 [Annex III- Workplan and Budget_SWAPNO_JP.pdf](#)

Budget break-down per UN Agency *:

 [Annex IV- Budget break-down per UN Agency.pdf](#)

Submission letter signed by JP partners *:

 [Annex V- ERD endorsement letter - SWAPNO.pdf](#)

Joint programme monitoring plan *:

 [Annex VI-Joint Programme Monitoring Plan - SWAPNO.pdf](#)

Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Research Framework *:

 [Annex VII- Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Research Framework - SWAPNO.pdf](#)

Performance Monitoring Framework *:

 [Annex VIII- Performance Monitoring Framework - SWAPNO.pdf](#)

Minutes of formulation meetings and events *:

 [Annex XI - Consultation meeting with LGD.pdf](#)

Participants list of consultation meetings and events *:

 [Annex XVI- Participants list in consultation meetings.pdf](#)

Risk analysis *:

 [Annex XIV- Risk Analysis Matrix - SWAPNO.pdf](#)

Joint Budget Plan:

 [Joint Programme Work Plan and Budget -Bangladesh.xlsx](#)

Additional documentation:

 [Annex XII- Theory of change_SWAPNO.pdf](#)

Additional documentation:

 [Annex XIII sample of key M n E indicators_SWAPNO.pdf](#)

Additional documentation:

 [Annex XV - Key prog stakeholders and acctblility_SWAPNO.pdf](#)

Additional documentation:

 [Annex IX - Consultation meeting UNDP-ILO \(1\).pdf](#)

Additional documentation:

 [Annex X - Consultation meeting UNDP-ILO \(2\).pdf](#)

