

Request For Applications (RFA)

Women Entrepreneurs Digital Upskilling Project – ATR Program In collaboration with Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), NITI Aayog & Nasscom Foundation

Target Location: Pan-Karnataka

Program Duration: June 2025 – March 2026

About the Program

The *Award to Reward (ATR)* program is a flagship initiative under the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) by NITI Aayog, and is being implemented in partnership with nasscom foundation. The project aims to empower 30 women entrepreneurs from rural and peri-urban parts of Karnataka'. The project is aiming to engage with women entrepreneurs from handicraft sector through intensive digital upskilling, entrepreneurial development, and business enablement over a period of 9 months.

Program Components

The participants will benefit from:

1. **Skill Development:** Training sessions led by industry experts to strengthen technical and entrepreneurial skills
2. **Business Development Services:** Digital capacity building through customised content, delivered via virtual and residential formats
3. **Mentorship & Handholding:** One-on-one mentoring through the WEP platform, supported by sector experts during residential sessions.
4. **Access to Finance:** Guidance on available loan schemes, due diligence, and facilitation of credit linkages through partner institutions.
5. **Market Linkages:** Training and exposure to e-commerce platforms and social commerce tools to enhance product visibility and sales.
6. **Legal & Compliance Training:** Orientation on enterprise formalisation, including registration, licensing, taxation, and financial management practices.
7. **Recognition and Reward:** 1-3 out of 30 women will benefit from a reward at the end of the programme

Training Format & Participation Expectations:

Participants are expected to commit to the full 9-month engagement. The programme includes:

1. **Three 4-day Residential Workshops:** Interactive, in-person sessions focused on technical skills, digital adoption, and entrepreneurial development.
2. **Five Monthly Virtual Sessions:** 2–3 hour sessions held online between September and January to deepen learning and track progress.
3. **Mentorship Support:** Ongoing mentoring via the WEP platform and during in-person sessions.

(Full attendance is **mandatory** to remain eligible for the final reward component)

Who Can Apply?

This call invites **rural women entrepreneurs from Karnataka** who meet the following eligibility criteria, either the woman can apply herself, or an organisation can nominate her (which has to be validated by the organisation), and fill in the details on her behalf. Whether she is self-nominated or nominated by an organisation, both are considered equally, and the application will be evaluated solely on its merit.

1. **The applicant should be a woman entrepreneur from handicraft sector in rural or peri-urban India**
2. **The enterprise of the applicant must be at least 3 years old**
3. **The applicant should have a bank account in the name of the entrepreneur or the enterprise (documentary evidence required to be added at the end of the application form – such as the first page of their passbook)**
4. **The applicant should have her personal/business account on at least one digital platform such as communication applications, digital payment, social media etc. and there are screenshots or online links to substantiate this (evidence to be part of the application form)**
5. **The type of enterprise should fall under either of the two categories viz., Individual and group enterprises**
 - i. **Individual Enterprise: A business owned and run by a woman, with or without any registrations; wherein she is the primary decision maker**
 - ii. **Group Enterprise: A business owned and run by multiple women who share profits and losses**
6. **The annual turnover of the enterprise must be in the following range for the respective entities and can be validated by some documentary evidence:**
 - a. **Individual Enterprise: (Rs. 5,00,000 to Rs. 10,00,000 per annum)**
 - b. **Group Enterprise: (Rs. 5,00,000 to Rs. 25,00,000 per annum)**

Please note that information on the above has to be validated by nominating organization or has to be validated by the woman herself after the selection – so kindly fill correct details that can be validated later.

Application Process & Timeline

1. Applications will be accepted through an online form – find the link here: [Link to the application form](#)
2. Interested applicants are required to provide details about their business background, current enterprise status, business growth journey, and a brief explanation of why they wish to participate in the ATR initiative.
3. Applications will be assessed based on eligibility, business maturity, digital readiness, clarity of intent, and potential for growth.

4. Selected applicants will undergo a structured needs assessment in August to tailor the curriculum to their skill level and business challenges. This will help ensure the workshops and virtual sessions are context-specific and relevant.
5. Selection process, all applications will be reviewed by a panel of evaluators. The selection process will include:
 - i. **Eligibility Screening: Applications will be assessed for completeness and eligibility against the listed criteria.**
 - ii. **Scoring and Evaluation: Applicants will be evaluated on: (1) social impact on rural women (validated by the nominating organisation or mentioned by the woman in the application form); (2) clarity of business vision and growth potential; (3) past access to business loans from SHGs or financial institutions; (4) regular use of digital tools for business (with proof); (5) commitment to attend the full 9-month programme; and. Priority will be given to complete, well-documented applications.**
 - iii. **Final Selection: 30 participants will be selected and informed by 18th August 2025.**
6. The following timeline will be followed (there might be minor changes):
 - i. **Call for Applications Launch: 21st July 2025**
 - ii. **Application Deadline: 8th August 2025**
 - iii. **Shortlisting & Final Selection: 18th August 2025**
 - iv. **Needs Assessment and Pre-Workshop Engagement: 19th Aug – 5th Sep 2025**
 - v. **First Residential Workshop: 8th to 12th September 2025**
 - vi. **Monthly Virtual Sessions: September 2025 – January 2026 (2–3 hours each – 5 sessions in total)**
 - vii. **Second Residential Workshop: 10th – 13th November 2025**
 - viii. **Third Residential Workshop: 5th – 8th January 2026**
 - ix. **Pitch Event and Final Rewards Ceremony: February 2026 (TBD)**

7. Contact Information

For queries, reach out to: rfp@nasscomfoundation.org or Call +91 9218021408.