

# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

**For**

**Baseline and End-line Evaluation of the HSBC  
Neurodivergent Digital Annotator Skilling Program**

**Nasscom Foundation  
November 2025**

**Request for Proposal**

## **1. ABOUT NASSCOM FOUNDATION**

Established in 2001, Nasscom Foundation has been witness to the transformative power of technology for over two decades. Part of the Nasscom ecosystem, we are the only neutral not-for-profit organization representing the Indian tech industry. We remain rooted to our core philosophy of TechForGood, where our efforts are focused on unlocking the power of technology by creating access and opportunity for those who need it the most. We work on helping people and institutions transform the way they tackle social and economic challenges through technology. We have five key areas of intervention - Digital Literacy, Skilling and Employability, Women Entrepreneurship, Scaling Social Innovation and Empowering NGO Ecosystem.

## **2. ABOUT THE PROGRAM**

The Data Annotation Skill Enablement for Neurodivergent Adults is a 20-month national initiative supported by HSBC Software Development India (HSDI). The project aims to equip 100 neurodivergent adults with technical data annotation skills, Generative AI capabilities, soft skills, and workplace readiness to enable industry placements and long-term retention.

### **I. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION MODEL**

The program will follow a structured training-to-employment pathway over 20 months (July 2025 – February 2027) to skill and support 100 neurodivergent adults. Implementation begins with nationwide outreach, screening, and one-on-one sessions with applicants and caregivers, followed by aptitude assessments in communication and data annotation. Two cohorts of 50 learners each are then enrolled.

Training consists of 5 months of Data Annotation (Bounding Box, Key Point, Skeletal Annotation, Polygon, Image Segmentation), followed by 3 months of Generative AI and Soft Skills, covering prompting, text generation, CV building, communication, and interview readiness. Participants receive continuous feedback, individualized learning support, and caregiver engagement throughout the journey. Certification is awarded upon meeting industry benchmarks for speed, quality, and accuracy.

Post-training, the program facilitates structured placement support through industry linkages with tech companies, annotation providers, and AI startups. Learners receive onboarding support, workplace sensitization sessions, and a 6-month internship pathway with stipends where applicable. A dedicated buddy system and employer sensitization ensure smooth workplace integration. The program concludes with 6+ months of post-placement support to ensure retention, confidence building, and long-term inclusion, targeting 60% placement and 60% retention.

Robust monitoring, quarterly reporting, and a mandatory baseline and end-line evaluation anchor the implementation, ensuring evidence-driven insights and accountability throughout the project cycle.

## **II. Program Highlights**

- a) Total Program Duration: 1 July 2025 – 28 February 2027 (20 Months)
- b) Cohort Structure
  - Cohort 1: 50 learners
  - Cohort 2: 50 learners
  - A comprehensive training-to-placement model including:
    - Mobilization and screening
    - 5-month Data Annotation training
    - 3-month GenAI and Soft Skills training
    - Placement support
    - 6-month post-placement support
- c) Training Components
  - Data Annotation:
    - Bounding Box, Key Point, Skeletal Annotation, Polygon Annotation, Image Segmentation.
  - Generative AI:
    - Prompting, text generation & summarization, content enhancement, applied research, coding prompts
  - Soft Skills:
    - Self-advocacy, communication, CV building, LinkedIn profile development, workplace etiquette, interview readiness
- d) Placement Goals
  - 60% placement among trained participants
  - 60% retention after 6 months

## **3. GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE AND TARGET GROUP**

### **I. Geographical Coverage**

The program follows a virtual training model across pan India.

### **II. Training Group**

- Neurodivergent adults aged 16–35.
- Conditions include Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, and other learning/cognitive variations.
- Beneficiaries from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, including low-income households.

### **III. Total Beneficiaries**

- 100 learners across two cohorts

## 4. Scope of Work

### I. Research Questions

#### A. Skill Enhancement

- To what extent has the program strengthened neurodivergent learners' technical annotation skills—accuracy, consistency, and task completion speed—while accounting for individual learning styles, sensory needs, and processing differences?
- What specific components of the training (teaching methods, accommodations, pacing) most contributed to skill gains among neurodivergent learners?

#### B. Behavioral & Cognitive Development

- How has the program supported cognitive and executive functioning improvements among neurodivergent learners—such as sustained attention, pattern recognition, information processing, and ability to follow structured workflows?
- What changes are observed in the degree of independence—such as managing schedules, following structured tasks, and handling digital tools—after completing the training?
- Which program elements most influenced behavioral improvements and learner confidence?

#### C. Transition to Workplace (Remote / On-Site / Back-End)

- How effectively has the program prepared neurodivergent learners to transition into different workplace environments across different modes (remote, onsite, hybrid, backend processes)?
- What factors enable successful transition to work (employer sensitization, job-role matching, confidence, skills)?
- What barriers or challenges do participants face during initial workplace transition, and how effectively does the program support them?

### II. Process Evaluation

#### Disability-Inclusive and Neurodiversity-Affirming Framework<sup>1</sup>

This framework ensures that every stage of the project—from recruitment to placement—is accessible, supportive, and tailored to the diverse needs of neurodivergent adults. It promotes inclusive recruitment processes, individualized

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<sup>1</sup> Lerner, M. D., Gurba, A. N., & Gassner, D. L. (2023). A framework for neurodiversity-affirming interventions for autistic individuals. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 91(9), 503–504. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000839>

training accommodations, and teaching methods grounded in neurodiversity-affirming principles such as predictable routines, multi-sensory instruction, and task chunking. The framework also strengthens employer readiness through sensitization, structured workplace accommodations, and ongoing post-placement support. Safeguarding, accessible consent, and data protection remain central throughout the evaluation. By integrating continuous monitoring of inclusion, learner experience, and retention outcomes, the framework creates an enabling ecosystem that enhances skill acquisition, confidence, employability, and long-term workplace success for neurodivergent participants.

| Framework Component                       | Detailed Description  | Evaluation Questions (EQs)   |
|---|---|--|
| 1. Inclusive Recruitment & Screening      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible application and onboarding processes</li> <li>• Alternatives to traditional verbal interviews (typed, visual, asynchronous)</li> <li>• Strength-based screening (what the participant <i>can do</i>)</li> <li>• Caregiver involvement allowed if preferred by participant</li> <li>• Screening captures sensory, communication, and learning needs</li> </ul> | <p>EQ 1: Were recruitment and screening processes accessible, inclusive, and easy to navigate?</p> <p>EQ 2: Did the screening accurately identify learner strengths and accommodation needs?</p> <p>EQ 3: Did participants and caregivers feel supported during screening?</p>                   |
| 2. Individualized Training Accommodations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible pacing and adaptive timelines</li> <li>• Visual schedules, step-by-step task breakdowns</li> <li>• Modified assessments (extra time, breaks)</li> <li>• Quiet classrooms and sensory-friendly environments</li> </ul>   | <p>EQ 4: Were accommodations provided consistently and appropriately to all learners who needed them?</p> <p>EQ 5: Did individualized accommodations positively impact learner comprehension and skill progress?</p> <p>EQ 6: What proportion of learners received effective accommodations?</p> |

| Framework Component                             | Detailed Description   | Evaluation Questions (EQs)   |
|---|--|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one coaching for complex modules (e.g., segmentation)</li> </ul>   |  |
| 3. Neurodiversity-Affirming Teaching Methods    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-sensory teaching (visual + hands-on + simplified text)</li> <li>• Predictable routines and structured agendas</li> <li>• Chunking tasks into manageable steps</li> <li>• Positive reinforcement, specific feedback</li> <li>• Facilitators trained on ASD/ADHD characteristics</li> </ul> | <p>EQ 7: To what extent were ND-affirming teaching strategies implemented consistently?</p> <p>EQ 8: Did these methods enhance task comprehension, participation, and performance?</p> <p>EQ 9: Were trainers adequately sensitized and equipped to teach neurodivergent adults?</p> |
| 4. Workplace Sensitization & Employer Readiness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-placement workshops for HR, managers</li> <li>• Accommodation checklists adopted by companies</li> <li>• Awareness of sensory and communication needs</li> <li>• Supervisor training for inclusive onboarding</li> </ul>  | <p>EQ 10: Were employers adequately sensitized to ND inclusion and communication requirements?</p> <p>EQ 11: Did employers adopt recommended workplace accommodations and practices?</p> <p>EQ 12: Did employer readiness influence job placement quality and retention?</p>         |
| 5. Reasonable Accommodations in Placement       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible hours and gradual ramp-up</li> <li>• Noise-free workspace or headphones</li> </ul>   | <p>EQ 13: Were workplace accommodations provided and sustained during onboarding?</p> <p>EQ 14: How did accommodations affect</p>  |

| Framework Component                        | Detailed Description  | Evaluation Questions (EQs)  |
|--|---|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written instructions, SOPs, visual workflows</li> <li>• Buddy/mentor support in the workplace</li> <li>• Adjusted expectations during onboarding</li> </ul>  | <p>participants' performance and comfort at work?</p> <p>EQ 15: What gaps existed in accommodation provision across employers?</p>  |
| 6. Ongoing Support & Retention Pathway     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular check-ins at 1, 3, 6 months</li> <li>• Problem-solving support for workplace challenges</li> <li>• Optional caregiver engagement</li> <li>• Escalation pathways for employer concerns</li> </ul> | <p>EQ 16: Were follow-up mechanisms implemented consistently and effectively?</p> <p>EQ 17: Did ongoing support help participants overcome workplace challenges?</p> <p>EQ 18: Which factors most influenced retention among ND participants?</p>               |
| 7. Safeguarding, Consent & Data Protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plain-language consent with visual aids</li> <li>• Trauma-informed interactions</li> <li>• Confidential handling of disability information</li> <li>• Safe &amp; anonymous reporting channels</li> </ul> | <p>EQ 19: Were consent processes accessible and well-understood by participants?</p> <p>EQ 20: Did participants feel respected, safe, and free from discrimination?</p> <p>EQ 21: Were confidentiality and data protection protocols followed consistently?</p> |
| 8. Monitoring Inclusion                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracking accommodations, satisfaction, inclusion</li> <li>• Monitoring confidence, independence, and employability changes</li> </ul>  | <p>EQ 22: What % of participants received accommodations and found them effective?</p> <p>EQ 23: How satisfied were participants, caregivers, and</p>   |

| Framework Component | Detailed Description   | Evaluation Questions (EQs)   |
|---------------------|--|--|
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triangulating participant, caregiver, and employer views</li> </ul> | <p>employers with the program’s inclusivity?</p> <p>EQ 24: To what extent did the program improve confidence, independence, and employability among ND learners?</p> |

## 5. SUGGESTED RESEARCH DESIGN

The evaluation will adopt a mixed-method, pre–post (baseline–endline) design to assess changes in skills, inclusion, confidence, and employability among neurodivergent learners participating in the program. The study will measure improvements in technical data annotation skills, Generative AI competencies, soft skills, workplace readiness, and post-training employment outcomes.

The baseline qualitative component will focus on documenting learners’ starting point—strengths, learning preferences, sensory needs, communication styles, and existing barriers to digital skilling and employment. In contrast, the endline qualitative component will identify the key factors responsible for improved learning outcomes, successful placements, and retention, along with inclusion and accommodation effectiveness.

The evaluation agency will be required to develop and submit a conceptual framework that clearly outlines the pathway through which trained neurodivergent (ND) participants progress toward the program’s overall goal of empowering them for successful transition into the workforce. This framework should map how key program inputs—such as accessible recruitment, individualized accommodations, technical training in Data Annotation, Generative AI skilling, soft skills development, caregiver engagement, and employer sensitization—contribute to intermediate outcomes including enhanced competency, improved confidence, increased independence, workplace readiness, and job-role alignment. The model should depict how these changes ultimately lead to meaningful employment, onboarding, and sustained retention. Agencies are encouraged to propose a theory-driven pathway capturing the influence of program activities on learning, behavioral, and employment outcomes for ND participants, while integrating the disability-inclusive and neurodiversity-affirming principles central to this project.

An agency will conduct both baseline and endline assessments across two cohorts. The assessment will use quantitative methods (skill tests, surveys, performance rubrics, placement data) and qualitative methods (in-depth interviews with learners, caregivers, trainers, and employers) to capture learner-level outcomes, inclusion experiences, and transition-to-work pathways.

The evaluation will also document the transformational journeys of selected beneficiaries through detailed case studies, highlighting how individualized accommodations, neurodiversity-affirming teaching methods, and workplace support influenced their growth.

The evaluation agency is expected to weigh alternative methodological approaches and recommend the most credible, ethical, and neurodiversity-affirming design for addressing the key evaluation questions of the project.

## **7. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AGENCY**

The responsibilities of the agency include, but not limited to the followings

- Hiring, training and deploying quality field surveyors, supervisors, monitors and field executives for the baseline and end-line survey
- Develop an inception report, finalize multilingual research tools with NF, and submit an analysis plan.
- Establish robust data collection, monitoring, and reporting mechanisms to ensure accuracy and reliability.
- Submit a comprehensive final report and presentation with findings, survey statistics, and commentary on data quality.
- Coordinate with key stakeholders to clarify and present study findings for program improvement.

## **8. KEY DELIVERABLES**

### **1. Inception Report**

- Methodology
- Sampling
- Ethical considerations
- Draft tools + translations

### **2. Tool Pre-Test Report & Final Tools**

### **3. Baseline Deliverables**

- Baseline dataset
- Dummy tables
- Topline PPT

- Baseline Report (Batch-wise + overall)

#### 4. End-line Deliverables

- End-line dataset
- Comparative dummy tables
- Topline PPT
- Final Evaluation Report (with case studies & recommendations)
- Success stories (3–5)
- Short video documentation

### 9. STUDY TIMELINES

| Activity                | Baseline (July 2025)  | Endline (February 2027)  |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Field activities</b> | Tool finalization + Tool pre-testing + Finalized translated / accessible tools + Baseline survey with beneficiaries (before start of training for both cohorts) + Baseline qualitative interviews (learners + caregivers) | Tool refinement based on program learnings + Tool pre-testing (endline) + Finalized translated / accessible tools + End-line survey with beneficiaries + End-line qualitative interviews (learners + caregivers + employers) + Case study documentation (Cohort 1 & 2) |
| <b>Deliverables</b>     | Inception Report + Pre-testing Report + Final Baseline Tools + Baseline Findings (Topline PPT + Baseline Report)  | Final End-line Tools + End-line Topline Findings (PPT) + Comprehensive End-line Report (with baseline comparison, cohort comparison, inclusion analysis, placement & retention findings, and case studies) + Success Stories (3–5)                                     |

### 10. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The competitive bids will be evaluated in terms of 70% technical and 30% financial weightage., Proposals costing more than the donor budget amount (less than or equal to 13 lakhs rupees) will not be considered for evaluation. The following criteria will be primarily used for proposal evaluation -

- The experience of the consultant in undertaking similar assignments in the past.
- The proposal should detail the personnel and their credentials, demonstrating their capability to handle the assignment effectively.

- The consultant's understanding of the project objectives and requirements of the study.
- The proposed strategy for collecting data through surveys, including measures to ensure high data quality.
- Methodology and Study Plan: Including the study strategy, data collection plan, reporting framework, and research methods.
- Timeline: A detailed timeline with Gantt chart for the study, showcasing the feasibility and appropriateness of the proposed schedule.
- Financial Proposal: The financial proposal will be evaluated for its comprehensiveness and feasibility. It should provide a clear budget breakdown and demonstrate cost-effectiveness.

## 11. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Your proposal should include the following:

- A brief outline of the study framework
- A detailed breakdown of your proposed timeline.
- Your team's qualifications and experience.
- Cost breakdown for Baseline and Endline Study – overheads, staff costs, field operations costs, etc
- Your CV/ Work Profile

**Documents to be Submitted:** Work Profile, Financial Proposal, Technical Proposal including Key staff profiles and references of past work/case studies.

All proposals should be mailed to [rfp@nasscomfoundation.org](mailto:rfp@nasscomfoundation.org) with the Subject Line - Request for Proposal – “Baseline and Evaluation Study for ND-DA Skilling Program” in a single PDF file by **28<sup>th</sup> November 2025** Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.