

Request for Proposal

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.

About the Project

The Empowering Growth and Development of Women Entrepreneurs initiative, supported by First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB), is designed to strengthen and scale 300 women-led micro and nano enterprises across selected districts of Maharashtra, namely Pune, Nashik, and Sambhaji Nagar (Aurangabad) .

The program focuses on women entrepreneurs from low-income and marginalized communities, particularly those engaged in small-scale enterprises and SHG-based businesses. It aims to transition these enterprises into sustainable, scalable, and revenue-generating ventures by enhancing their operational, financial, and digital capabilities.

Over the course of the project, the intervention will:

- Build entrepreneurial, digital, and financial capabilities of women entrepreneurs
- Strengthen enterprise management practices including pricing, costing, and bookkeeping
- Facilitate access to financial services, including bank linkages and credit
- Enable market readiness through branding, packaging, and customer engagement strategies
- Provide mentorship and handholding support for enterprise growth
- Contribute to enterprise growth and a targeted increase in income among participating women entrepreneurs through improved business practices, market

access, and digital and financial enablement.

- Promote sustainable business practices and long-term resilience

The program adopts a structured implementation approach involving mobilization, training, mentorship, and market linkage support, ensuring a comprehensive pathway for enterprise development and growth.

1. Project Details

- Project duration: January 2026 – December 2026.
- Geographical coverage:

State	District	No. of Blocks	No. of Villages	No. of Beneficiaries
Maharashtra	Pune	8	20-25	130
Maharashtra	Nashik	8	20-25	130
Maharashtra	Sambhaji Nagar	8	20-25	130
Total		24	60-75	390*

**300 is the proposed total sample size, of which 90 is kept as a buffer to account for attrition, dropouts, and non-response during fieldwork*

- Target group: 300 women-led micro and nano enterprises, including SHG-based enterprises from low-income and marginalized communities.

2. Progress till date (Jan – May)

- MoU signed with the donor
- Partner identified and onboarded
- Mobilisation of beneficiaries completed by MSRLM
- Training of Trainers completed
- Needs Assessment completed

Due to administrative delays, the baseline will be conducted in June 2026.

Program Implementation Model

1. Mobilization and Beneficiary Selection

The programme identifies and onboards 300 women entrepreneurs through ecosystem partnerships, including engagement with Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM) and district/block-level stakeholders.

2. Capacity Building and Training

Women entrepreneurs are expected to receive structured training through bootcamps and training sessions focused on entrepreneurship development, digital literacy, financial literacy, business planning, pricing, costing, bookkeeping, and business formalization.

3. Mentorship and Handholding Support

The implementation model includes continued handholding support to help entrepreneurs apply learning in their businesses. This includes expert support on product improvement, diversification, branding, marketing, financial planning, enterprise diagnostics, and access to registration or finance processes.

4. Access to Finance and Formalization

The project is expected to facilitate linkages with government schemes, and formal registration systems so that women entrepreneurs improve financial inclusion and business legitimacy. This includes support for business registration, improved credit readiness, and access to banking or credit services where relevant.

5. Market Linkage

The project supports enterprise growth through buyer-seller interactions, exposure opportunities, branding and packaging support, and access to digital and offline market platforms. A subset of higher-potential women entrepreneurs may also receive customized enterprise support to improve income and enterprise efficiency.

6. Monitoring, Learning, and Evidence Use

The programme design includes baseline and endline assessment, project MIS tracking, quarterly reporting, and donor-facing progress documentation. The selected agency is therefore expected not only to measure change, but also to generate practical implementation insights that can strengthen programme delivery during the project period and inform future replication.

Purpose of the RFP

Nasscom Foundation seeks to engage a qualified and experienced research agency, institution, or evaluation firm to undertake a comprehensive baseline and endline study

for the FAB-supported women entrepreneurship programme. The intent is to generate robust evidence on programme relevance, implementation quality, outcomes, and sustainability, while also producing actionable recommendations for programme improvement.

The study should help Nasscom Foundation, FAB, and implementation stakeholders understand what changes are occurring for women entrepreneurs, which components of the implementation model are most effective, what barriers persist, and what design refinements are required for stronger enterprise outcomes.

Scope of Work

The selected agency will conduct both baseline and endline assessments for the project. The assignment is expected to combine measurement of outcome indicators with a clear assessment of the programme implementation model so that agencies go beyond descriptive reporting and generate practical learning.

Specifically, the agency will be expected to:

- Establish the baseline status of 300 women entrepreneurs across key enterprise, digital, financial, and empowerment indicators.
- Assess programme implementation quality, including reach, relevance, participation, intensity of support, and beneficiary experience across training, mentoring, finance, and market-linkage components.
- Measure changes at endline in business practices, enterprise performance, financial inclusion, digital adoption, market engagement, and women's agency/decision-making.
- Generate actionable recommendations on model effectiveness, sustainability, and scope for future scale-up.

Evaluation Questions

The study should answer the following evaluation questions. Agencies may refine or expand them, but proposals should address all of the below as a minimum requirement. Evaluation questions are organized by thematic area with each question clearly marked as a baseline question (B) or an endline question (E).

1. Entrepreneurial, Digital, and Financial Capabilities

- (B): What is the current profile of women entrepreneurs in terms of enterprise stage, business type, turnover range, customer base, and prior exposure to entrepreneurship support?
- (B): What are the baseline levels of entrepreneurial knowledge, digital literacy, financial literacy, and business management capability among participating women entrepreneurs?
- (B): What is the current level of awareness and usage of business registration systems, banking services, credit products, and relevant government schemes?
- (E): To what extent has the programme improved women entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial, digital, and financial capabilities?
- (E): To what extent has the project improved women entrepreneurs' digital adoption for business operations, market outreach, and record-keeping?

2. Enterprise Practices and Performance

- (B): What are the baseline business practices related to pricing, costing, bookkeeping, customer management, and sales tracking?
- (B): What are the major enterprise growth constraints faced by women entrepreneurs, including market access, finance, digital capability, time poverty, and mobility restrictions?
- (E): What changes are observed in business practices, including record-keeping, pricing, costing, customer engagement, and use of financial tracking tools?
- (E): To what extent has the project contributed to changes in income, sales volume, profitability, customer base, and market reach?
- (E): What evidence demonstrates improved enterprise efficiency or performance due to the introduction of digital tools, mentoring, or market-linkage support?

3. Access to Finance, Formalization, and Markets

- (B): What is the baseline status of business formalization, access to financial services, and market participation among selected women entrepreneurs?
- (B): What barriers prevent women entrepreneurs from accessing registration systems, loans, banking, or larger market opportunities?
- (E): To what extent has the project improved access to bank linkages, credit, registration systems, and government schemes or services?
- (E): To what extent have women entrepreneurs participated in new market opportunities, improved branding/packaging, or expanded to new customer channels due to programme support?

4. Implementation Model Effectiveness

- (B): What beneficiary expectations, contextual factors, and implementation risks should inform programme delivery across the three districts?
- (E): Which implementation components—training, mentoring, digital tools, finance linkage, or market support—appear most influential in driving change, for whom, and under what conditions?
- (E): How effective was the sequencing and intensity of support provided under the implementation model?
- (E): What implementation approaches worked well, what challenges were faced, and what course corrections are recommended?

5. Women's Empowerment and Sustainability

- (B): What is the baseline level of women entrepreneurs' confidence, agency in business decisions, and aspiration for enterprise growth?
- (E): What changes are observed in confidence, decision-making power, social empowerment, and future business aspirations among participating women?
- (E): Are the observed changes in business practices and enterprise outcomes likely to sustain beyond the project period, and what conditions are required for sustainability?

- (E): What are the key learnings and recommendations for strengthening future programme design and scale-up of this women entrepreneurship model?

Suggested Research Design

The study is expected to adopt a **mixed-method baseline and endline design** with a strong quantitative component covering the project beneficiaries and a qualitative component to explain how and why change occurs. Since the project target is 300 women entrepreneurs, agencies should clearly state whether they propose a census/panel approach for all participants or a justified sampling strategy, and explain the implications for statistical robustness, feasibility, and budget.

At a minimum, the technical proposal should include:

- Overall evaluation approach and rationale.
- Sampling framework and proposed sample size for baseline and endline.
- Whether the same respondents will be tracked across both rounds and how attrition will be managed.
- Respondent categories, including women entrepreneurs and relevant stakeholders/partners for qualitative enquiry.
- Quantitative and qualitative tools proposed.
- Data quality assurance protocols, translation requirements, field monitoring, consent procedures, and back-checks.
- Analytical approach, including comparative analysis across baseline and endline and disaggregation by district, enterprise type, and relevant beneficiary characteristics.

Agencies are encouraged to propose a rigorous design feasible within the available budget, while ensuring the study remains practical, implementation-oriented, and useful for programme decision-making.

Key Deliverables

In due course of assignment, the agency is expected to deliver

- Inception report including methodology and draft tools
- Finalized data collection tools and translated versions
- Field operational plan, progress reports,
- Analysis framework and dummy tables
- Raw data set; both quantitative and qualitative
- Top-line presentations for baseline and endline
- Baseline report
- Endline report

Study Timelines

Activity	Baseline (June - July 2026)	Endline (November - December 2026)
Field activities	Tool finalization + Tool pretesting + Finalized translated tools + Baseline survey	Tool refinement based on program learnings + Tool pre-testing (endline) + Finalized translated / accessible tools + End-line survey with beneficiaries
Deliverables	Inception Report + Final Baseline Tools + Baseline Findings (Topline findings PPT) + Baseline Report	Final Endline Tools + Endline (Topline Findings PPT) + Endline Report

Budget

Agencies are requested to submit a detailed financial proposal covering:

- Professional fees
- Staffing costs
- Field operations
- Travel and logistics

- Data processing and analysis
- Taxes and applicable overheads

Provide a detailed breakdown of your estimated costs for the baseline and endline studies, including travel costs, and any additional fees.

Financial Proposal Format

	Cost Head	Particulars (indicative)	Cost (INR)	Cost (INR) + GST
1.				
2.				
	Total Study Cost (inclusive of all applicable taxes)			

Proposal Submission Guidelines

The competitive bids will be evaluated in terms of 70% technical and 30% financial weightage. Proposal costing more than 6 lakhs rupees for both Baseline and Endline, including GST, will not be considered for evaluation. The following criteria will be primarily used for proposal evaluation -

- The experience of the agency 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.

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, Some references of past work/case studies.

- Last Date for Proposal Submission: 05th May 2026.
- A 30-minute call can be scheduled for any clarification.

All proposals should be mailed to rfp@nasscomfoundation.org with the **subject line:** “<Baseline and Endline_FAB_WEP _ MEL>” in a single PDF file by 5:00pm. **Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.**