



Request for Application (RFA)

Project – Accelerating 100 Women Micro Entrepreneurs of Northeastern States

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 a 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 PROGRAM

Project – Accelerating 100 Women Micro Entrepreneurs of Northeastern States

Target Location: Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim

Program Duration: July 2025 – June 2026

The Award to Reward (ATR) program is a flagship initiative under the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) by NITI Aayog. It is being implemented in partnership with Nasscom Foundation and supported by L&T Technology Services (LTTS). This year-long program (July 2025 – June 2026) aims to accelerate 100 women micro-entrepreneurs from Tier 2/3 cities across Northeast India. The initiative focuses on women entrepreneurs in the handicraft, handcrafted, and handloom sectors (creative economy) and supports them in areas such as digital enablement, market access, financial inclusion, and business growth.

The program is structured in three phases:

The program will be implemented in three phases. Phase 1 will focus on capacity building for all 100 selected women entrepreneurs. Phase 2 will provide targeted support to the top 50 participants based on their performance and engagement. Finally, Phase 3 will offer intensive acceleration support to the top 25 entrepreneurs, supporting them to scale their businesses further. Additionally, two pitch competitions will be organized during the program to offer mentoring, enhance visibility, and provide performance-based incentives to the participants

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Participants will benefit from:

1. Skill Development: Training by industry experts to build technical and entrepreneurial skills
2. Business Development Services: Digital capacity-building through customized content delivered both online and offline
3. Mentorship & Handholding: One-on-one support from domain experts during residential sessions
4. Access to Finance: Guidance on loan schemes, due diligence, and credit linkage facilitation
5. Market Linkages: Training on e-commerce and social commerce tools for improving market reach
6. Legal & Compliance Training: Orientation on enterprise formalization, registration, taxation, and financial management

TRAINING FORMAT & PARTICIPATION DETAILS:

Participants are expected to commit to the full 9-month program (October to December will focus on capacity building for all 100 women entrepreneurs, January to March will provide targeted support to the 50, and April to June will deliver intensive acceleration for the best 25 to scale their businesses), which includes:

1. Offline Workshops: In-person training sessions on technical skills, digital adoption, and entrepreneurship
2. Virtual Sessions: 2–3 hour online sessions (October 2025 to June 2026) for continued learning and tracking progress
3. Mentorship Support: Continuous mentoring, including in-person touchpoints

Note: Full attendance is mandatory. Sessions will be conducted in basic English.

WHO CAN APPLY?

This call invites rural women micro-entrepreneurs from the Northeast who meet the following eligibility criteria. Applications may be self-submitted or nominated by an organization (to be validated by the nominating agency).

1. The applicant must be a micro women entrepreneur in the handloom/handicraft/handcrafted sector (creative economy) based in Tier 2 or Tier 3 cities of Northeast India and must be between 18 – 45 years of age.
2. The business should be at least 2 years old, and the entrepreneur must have filed Income Tax Returns for the past two years.
3. The entrepreneur should have a bank account in her name or in the enterprise's name (proof such as the first page of the passbook will be required).
4. The applicant must use at least one digital platform (e.g., communication tools, digital payments, or social media) with supporting screenshots or links.
5. The business must be either:

- Individual Enterprise: Solely owned and operated by a woman (registered or unregistered), where she is the primary decision-maker
- Group Enterprise: Run by multiple women (profits/losses shared), though only one member from the group can be selected

6. The annual turnover must fall within INR 1 crore to 10 crore, as per the MSME 2025 classification for micro-enterprises.

Note: All information must be verifiable either by the nominating organization or by the applicant herself post-selection. Kindly ensure accurate data entry.

Application Process & Timeline: Applications will be accepted via an online form :

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScpTM5ojqepmbXbveeT3FDWTDYemnYNtLCT59_tb6cRufX4gQ/viewform

Applicants must provide: Business background, status of their enterprise (if any), their growth journey, brief on why they want to participate

Evaluation Criteria: Eligibility and business maturity, digital readiness, clarity of intent, potential for growth

A structured needs assessment will be conducted in September 2025 to tailor the curriculum to each entrepreneur's needs.

Scoring & Evaluation: Clarity of vision and growth potential, access to business loans (e.g., SHGs or financial institutions), use of digital tools (with proof), commitment to the 9-month program

Priority will be given to complete, well-documented applications.

TIMELINE

1. Call for Applications: 20th August 2025
2. Application Deadline: 15th September 2025
3. Shortlisting & Final Selection: 16th – 17th September 2025
4. Needs Assessment & Pre-engagement: 18th – 19th September 2025
5. Phase 1 Workshop: October – December 2025
6. Pitch Event 1: 1st Week of November 2025
7. Phase 2 Workshop: January – March 2026
8. Pitch Event 2: 1st Week of January 2026
9. Phase 3 Workshop: April – June 2026
10. Virtual Sessions: October 2025 – June 2026 (2–3 hrs; 8–9 sessions)

Contact Information

For any queries, please write to: rfp@nasscomfoundation.org

Or contact our team at +91 6002595262