

Terms of Reference (TOR) for engaging External Agency to undertake Baseline Study on Farmer Producer Organisations in Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka

About Us

S M Sehgal Foundation is a rural, grassroots implementing NGO that operates across 12 states of India, reaching over 4.2 million people and counting. The organization's mission is to achieve positive social, economic, and environmental change across rural India. It addresses critical issues concerning food security, water security, and local participation, with a focus on empowering women and children. The foundation brings together a dedicated team of experts who create sustainable programs and work directly alongside rural communities to better manage their water resources, increase their agricultural productivity, strengthen and articulate their vision for village development, and transform the lives of youth and schoolchildren. S M Sehgal Foundation has four main program areas: Agricultural Development, Water Management, Local participation and Sustainability, and Transform Lives *one school at a time*.

As part of “Bolstering Farmer Producer Organisations” project, operational in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh and Kolar, Karnataka, SMSF seeks to hire an agency to conduct a baseline study for the selected FPOs.

Project Details

Organizing small and marginal farmers into farmer producer organizations (FPOs) has emerged as an effective strategy in empowering farmers and enhancing their competitiveness in emerging markets. FPOs when managed effectively, mitigate challenges such as low market price, high input costs, limited access to technologies and markets, among others. A collective approach can empower farming communities gain improved access to technology, affordable inputs prices, social capital, and markets.

Additionally, FPO members consisting of small and marginal farmers continue to follow traditional agricultural practices. Limited access to information prevents farmers from accessing advanced agriculture knowledge and technologies. Women producers are also most often excluded or have limited participation.

With a background in agriculture development, S M Sehgal Foundation embarked on a two-year project in 2021 to empower smallholder farmers, particularly women farmers across FPOs in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, and Kolar, Karnataka. The project focused on strengthening local participation, building capacities, improving livelihood opportunities, enhancing crop productivity through advanced agricultural knowledge and technologies, and establishing backward and forward linkages for quality inputs and improved market access.

However, there remains a need to address the challenge of growth among the FPOs, particularly in the areas of business development, including planning, value addition, and marketing.

To this end, SMSF has expanded the scope of the project by adding more FPOs to the mix, with a continued emphasis on women's empowerment. The project aims to strengthen the FPOs to boost their capacity and reach, invest in sustainable agriculture, and develop infrastructure for value addition, for their growth and sustainability.

Objective of the Study

SMSF seeks to engage an agency to undertake a baseline study on assessing the current social, legal and financial status of the Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs). The study aims to ascertain the current scale of business, identify potential business opportunities, analyse product-specific market channels, both existing and new, and explore the scope of value addition in the given commodity. The study will cover a total of 15 FPOs selected from both districts in each state.

Geography

Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka (2 districts, Prayagraj and Kolar)

This study is expected to provide information on vital indicators like:

- Current community social and demographic variables such as; gender characteristics, literacy levels, caste & religion, educational levels etc.
- Current economic variables like income levels and sources, land holding pattern in the community, number of small and marginal farmers, and current agricultural practices
- Current status of legal/statutory compliances, existing business volume; including any existing value addition practices, challenges, and their business potential.
- Current financial status and status of access to finance/capital, government schemes/ services available and availed by the FPO members.
- Current status and potential on use of any digital platform for business/market and other information
- Identify product specific market opportunities, value addition and channels for long-term business sustainability and scaling over time.
- Provide information and recommendations to enhance market accessibility of FPOs.

Scope of Work:

- Attend brainstorming and review meetings to discuss methodology and sampling design with team members of SMSF (biweekly)
- Provide raw data and interview transcripts, along with audio-visual attachments and/or photographs as necessary
- Finalise and submit the report

Duration of the study:

Three-months from the date of signing the agreement.

Estimated Costs:

The costs allowable will be limited to reasonable, allocable, and necessary costs.

The agency should have relevant thematic experience of working in the social sector (at least 5-6 years), specifically on Farmer Producer Organisations. Experience of working with non-profit organisations, international donors is desirable.

Interested organisations are requested to submit a proposal.

Submission Criterion:

- Proposal for the study – to include objectives, methodology, timeline, team credentials and budget
- Credentials of the organisation and projects handled.

Interested agency should submit the proposal by **September 5th, 2023** to sh.singh@smsfoundation.org