

Terms of Reference

Knowledge and Learning Partner

Engagement Period: 2026–2029 (3 years) | Document Date: September 2026

1. Background and Context

India's agricultural sector employs nearly half the national workforce, yet farm income growth has averaged only 3% annually over the past two decades. Smallholder farmers, who make up 86% of the farming population, capture as little as 25% of the final retail price of what they produce, and remain constrained by fragmented access to advisory services, limited means to verify crop quality, and weak linkages to markets that reward quality. These constraints are especially acute for women, who comprise 42% of the agricultural labour force but hold only 14% of formal land-asset ownership and remain under-represented in extension systems.

Building on the proven results of Project E-Mircha, which combined digital advisory, partner-led market access, and quality assurance services for over 500,000 smallholder farmers across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Digital Green India (DGI) has established the AgriNext Alliance, a multi-partner initiative to scale a FarmerChat-led advisory and service model to 5 million smallholder farmers across Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and at least one additional state over a three-year period (2026–2029).

The Initiative is governed by a Core Council comprising DGI, and key co-funders, and brings together funding partners, implementation partners, technical institutions, and government departments around a shared theory of change: that aligning reliable digital advisory with verified service and market pathways creates a reinforcing cycle of improved farming practices, resilience, and income.

As the Initiative scales, effective coordination across this diverse partner base, systematic capture and dissemination of learning and deliberate management of the implementation partner network are essential to the program's success. DGI is therefore seeking to engage a partner to support these functions on behalf of the Core Council and the Alliance secretariat. The Partner will, in effect, staff and operate this secretariat function on DGI's behalf.

2. Purpose and Objectives of the Assignment

The AgriNext Alliance is a partnership initiative led by Digital Green India to scale a FarmerChat-led digital advisory and service model to 5 million Indian smallholder farmers, spanning Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and one additional state (subject to partner alignment), across high-value crops including horticulture, cereals, and pulses. The Initiative targets onboarding 5 million farmers (at least 45% women), with 30% of active users accessing at least one priority service pathway, 60% adopting at least one recommended agricultural practice, and an average 20% increase in farmer income over three years for those adopting practices alongside a service pathway.

DGI invites the engagement of a Knowledge and Learning Partner to support the AgriNext Alliance, working closely with the DGI core team, the Core Council, and initiative partners to ensure coordinated delivery, high-quality knowledge outputs and an actively managed partner ecosystem.

The specific objectives of the assignment are to:

- Provide secretariat support to the Alliance Core Council, ensuring timely, reliable reporting and follow-through on Council decisions;
- Develop knowledge products and convenings that build the visibility, thought leadership, and credibility of the initiative and its outcomes
- Support the expansion and active management of a network of implementation partners (government, technical institutions, and service providers) that enable service delivery in each state

3. Scope of work

The Knowledge and Learning Partner will deliver against four core workstreams over the engagement period, as set out below.

Workstream	Objectives	Deliverables	Results
Workstream 1: Programme Coordination, Learning and Performance Support	• Facilitate coordination across programme partners and workstreams to support timely implementation of AgriNext programme activities and resolution of implementation issues • Ensure Core Council decisions are implemented and followed through on in a timely manner. • Collate program metrics for the initiative based on inputs from MEL function • Maintain a programme knowledge repository capturing implementation learnings, evidence, tools, partner contributions,	• Alliance-wide reporting dashboards, with tailored views built for individual funders as needed • Monthly / Quarterly / Annual reports • Prepare briefing notes and presentation decks ahead of each Core Council meeting • Decision log / action tracker circulated after each Core Council meeting • Quarterly risk register • Annual work plan and budget package for Core Council endorsement • Actionable advise to align the programs pathways towards desired goals	• Timely, dependable visibility into programme performance • Well-prepared, decision-ready inputs for the Council • Reduced coordination lag and faster resolution of cross-partner issues • Clear audit trail of Council decisions and follow-through • Half yearly reviews with experts geared to identify areas of concerns and corresponding actions for the program

Workstream	Objectives	Deliverables	Results
	programme decisions and actions relevant to delivery and scale-up • Program pathways to be periodically reviewed by experts in the sector • Identify, log, and escalate programmatic and partnership risks to the Core Council • Support programme planning and review processes to ensure alignment of activities, partner contributions and resources with agreed programme outcomes and implementation priorities •		
Workstream 2: Building Visibility: Knowledge Products & Convenings	• Develop knowledge products that document the Alliance's progress and impact over time • Profile key achievements and provide content and logistical support for initiative convenings • Facilitate the initiatives's participation and representation at relevant national and international platforms. • Build and maintain a searchable knowledge repository/hub for the initiative. • Facilitate structured cross-geography learning exchanges between state teams and partners.	A minimum of the following for three years: • 20+ in-depth case studies, spanning themes such as women farmers' livelihoods and household income gains, supported by professional photography and video testimonials. • Organizing 3 to 4 stakeholder convenings held over the engagement period • Support the Alliance in showcasing its work by facilitating its participation and representation as speakers at relevant national and international platforms. • A total of 5-6 op-eds and thought-leadership articles placed in relevant sector publications • 3 to 4 podcast features on established channels, alongside 3 short-form video stories capturing farmer	• Elevated public and sector-wide visibility for the initiative. • Enhanced credibility and thought-leadership positioning around the Alliance's results • Improved cross-geography learning and adaptive course-correction • A balanced, credible external narrative covering both successes and lessons learned

Workstream	Objectives	Deliverables	Results
	Capture challenges and course-corrections alongside success stories, for balanced learning.	- impact 3 annual synthesis/learning reports (one per year) with a final report due in the third year, for external publishing. - An online knowledge hub for initiative content, updated quarterly - A replicable model toolkit/playbook by Year 3, to support scale-up beyond the initiative	
Workstream 3: Expanding Reach: Implementation Partner Network	- Drive the growth and ongoing management of the implementation partner network - Lead partner onboarding processes and help strengthen on-ground service delivery across states	- State government partnerships to enable programme delivery <i>Collaborations with technical bodies, including Krishi Vigyan Kendras and State Agricultural Universities</i> <i>Onboarding and coordination of public and private service providers across soil testing, quality assaying, climate-smart technologies, and market-linkage services</i> - Private sector partnerships for farmers to expand their markets.	- A functioning, well-coordinated partner network supporting service delivery - Clear line of sight between partner contributions and programme results

4. Desired experience and qualifications

The Knowledge and Learning Partner is expected to bring:

- **Proven delivery experience:** A demonstrated track record of successfully delivering comparable secretariat, knowledge management, or partnership-development mandates for multi-stakeholder programs or alliances, ideally within agriculture, rural livelihoods, or international development.
- **Established ecosystem and partner relationships:** Existing relationships with, or credible access to, government departments, technical institutions (e.g. Krishi Vigyan Kendras, State Agricultural Universities), and service providers relevant to the initiative's implementation geographies.
- **A well-connected funder network:** Demonstrated relationships with domestic and international philanthropic, catalytic, and institutional funders.

- **Working proficiency in project-state languages:** Fluency in English is required; working proficiency in Telugu, Marathi, and/or Hindi will be an added advantage given the initiative's operating geographies.

Additional desirable capabilities include experience producing donor-facing knowledge products (case studies, opinion pieces, multimedia impact stories), and experience organising and facilitating multi-stakeholder convenings and governance meetings.

Eligibility Criteria

- **Legal status:** The bidder must be a for-profit commercial entity duly incorporated/registered under applicable Indian laws. The bidder must hold all applicable statutory registrations, licences and tax registrations required for carrying out the activities under this TOR
- **Consortium bids:** Consortium bids shall not be permitted where any consortium member is an NGO, society, charitable trust, Section 8 company or other not-for-profit entity. All consortium members must meet the legal-status requirements above and the consortium arrangement must not result in any transfer of foreign contribution by DGI to another association/person in contravention of applicable FCRA provision.
- **Conflict of interest:** Bidders must disclose any existing financial, governance, or advisory relationship with Core Council members or competing alliances that could constitute a conflict of interest.
- **Exclusions:** As this engagement will be funded from foreign contribution and is structured as a procurement of professional/programme services, the engagement is not intended to constitute a grant, sub-grant, sub-award or transfer of foreign contribution. Accordingly, entities established or operating as non-profit organisations, including NGOs, societies, charitable trusts, Section 8 companies or other not-for-profit entities, will not be eligible to participate as bidders.

5. Engagement Structure and Reporting

The Knowledge and Learning Partner will report to DGI as the lead implementing organisation of the AgriNext Alliance, and will work in close coordination with:

The **Alliance Core Council**, comprising DGI, and the key co-funders, which the Partner will support through secretariat services and biannual meeting preparation

- The **DGI central project team** and **state-level field teams**, for coordination on knowledge products, partner onboarding, and reporting.
- **Government, technical, and implementation partners**, for the development and management of the partner network.

The Partner will designate a lead point of contact for the engagement and provide sufficient staffing to deliver against all four workstreams concurrently.

6. Duration and Indicative Timeline

The engagement is for a period of three years, aligned to the AgriNext Alliance implementation timeline (2026–2029). An indicative year-wise breakdown of activities is provided below; detailed quarterly workplans will be agreed with DGI at the start of each year.

Period	Key Activities and Deliverables
Year 1	- Establishing of Core Council secretariat processes and reporting templates - Supporting launch of partnerships with Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra state governments - Producing case studies and planning convening targeted for year 1. - Finalizing 3-year Resource Mobilization Strategy - Synthesize insights from the baseline for the Council
Year 2	- Sustaining Council reporting cadence - Synthesize midline insights for Council review - Expanding implementation partner network across geographies - Delivery of Month 12 convening, opinion pieces, and impact storytelling - Significantly expand mobilisation and donor portfolio - Implement structured management for active donors
Year 3	- Support endline evaluation and final learning report dissemination - Deliver Month 24 convening and remaining knowledge products - Finalise partner network handover/continuity plan - Leverage demonstrated results and evidence to position AgriNext for larger, longer-term and potentially catalytic investments.

7. Governance, Monitoring and Reporting

The Partner will submit a **monthly report** to DGI and relevant funders, and will prepare pre-read and presentation materials ahead of each biannual Core Council meeting. Performance against the deliverables in Section 3 will be reviewed by DGI on a quarterly basis, with a formal review at each Core Council meeting.

The Partner's outputs will feed into the initiative's broader Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework, which combines real-time FarmerChat analytics with independent baseline, midline, and endline evaluations.

8. Submission Requirements

Interested parties are requested to submit:

- A technical proposal describing the proposed approach to each of the four workstreams, staffing plan, and relevant prior experience;

- A financial proposal covering the three-year engagement period, with an indicative annual breakdown;
- CVs of key personnel proposed for the engagement;
- References or examples of comparable prior engagements.
- A statement of proposed team composition, base location, and language capabilities relevant to the initiative geographies.

DGI will evaluate submissions against the required experience and qualifications set out in Section 4, and against the overall fit of the proposed approach with the initiative's objectives and workstreams.

Proposal submission deadline: September 23rd 2026.

Email ID for proposal submission: dgtindiaprourement@digitalgreentrust.org

Budget ceiling: The budget is not being disclosed at this stage. Bidders are requested to submit a detailed financial proposal based on the scope of work, deliverables, timelines, and requirements specified in this RFP

PS: Bidders should be asked to hold their financial proposal valid for fifteen (15) days from the submission deadline.