

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy for Value Chain Assessment of the Women-led Handloom Sector in Assam

Organisation	Humana People to People India (HPPI)
Project	Sashakt – Strengthening CSOs as Catalysts of Livelihood Opportunities and Development (EU-funded)
Location	Kamrup, Dhubri and Chirang districts, Assam, India
Type	Individual Consultant or Consultancy Firm (short-term, output-based)
Duration	10 weeks from date of contract signing
Budget	INR 3,00,000 (all-inclusive of fees, travel, workshops and taxes)
Application Deadline	[Insert date], by 5:00 PM IST
How to Apply	Email technical and financial proposals to [insert email], subject line “VCA Consultancy – Project Sashakt”

1. Background

HPPI is implementing Project Sashakt, an EU-supported initiative strengthening 25 women-led handloom cooperatives and approximately 2,500 women artisans across Kamrup, Dhubri and Chirang districts of Assam. The local handloom ecosystem involves raw material suppliers, dyers, designers, weavers, traders, wholesalers and retailers, but structural gaps in this chain continue to limit production, income and market access for women weavers. HPPI is seeking a qualified consultant/agency to conduct a comprehensive, gender-responsive value chain assessment to inform evidence-based interventions for the remainder of the project.

2. Objective

To assess the handloom value chain in the three project districts — mapping actors, margins and market linkages from raw material to end sale — and deliver a practical, sequenced roadmap that strengthens women weavers' and cooperatives' position, efficiency and income within that chain.

3. Scope of Work

- Map the end-to-end value chain (raw material/yarn sourcing, dyeing, weaving, finishing, aggregation, branding, sale) across all three districts, including product, finance and information flows.
- Assess the current role, bargaining position and value capture of the 25 cooperatives and their members, disaggregated by gender and social category.
- Analyse production capacity, pricing and margins, technology/infrastructure gaps, and gender-specific barriers through field visits and consultations with weavers, cooperative leaders, traders, buyers, government departments and financial institutions.
- Benchmark backward linkages (raw material, credit) and forward linkages (aggregators, e-commerce, export/European-market channels).
- Identify operational, governance, skill and market gaps, and opportunities for value addition, product diversification and digital/e-commerce channels.
- Deliver sequenced, district- and cooperative-cluster-wise recommendations that feed directly into the project's remaining workplan for credit support, design support and market linkages.
- Develop a simple, reusable value chain assessment tool for periodic monitoring by HPPI field staff.

4. Methodology

A participatory, mixed-methods approach is expected: desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, market visits/observation, and a recognised value chain analysis framework (e.g., market systems/M4P or ValueLinks-type), adapted with a gender lens. Particular attention should be given to inclusion of women weavers and marginalised cooperatives; the consultant will receive on-field support from the project team.

5. Key Deliverables and Timeline

#	Deliverable	Timeline
1	Inception report with methodology and workplan	Week 2
2	Data collection tools and stakeholder mapping finalised	Week 3
3	District-wise field assessments completed	Week 6
4	Draft report: value chain maps, margin analysis, preliminary recommendations	Week 8
5	Stakeholder validation workshop	Week 9
6	Final report with recommendations, action roadmap and reusable assessment tool	Week 10

6. Required Qualifications and Experience

- Postgraduate degree in Rural Development, Development Economics, Rural Management, Textile/Design Management, Agribusiness or related field (lead consultant).
- Minimum 7 years' experience in value chain assessments, market systems analysis or livelihood studies, preferably in handloom/handicraft/textiles; firms require a minimum 5-year track record on comparable assignments for development-sector clients.
- Demonstrated experience working with women's cooperatives, SHGs or CSOs on livelihood and market linkages; prior work in North East India and familiarity with Assam's handloom sector is an advantage.
- Strong quantitative/qualitative research skills, including margin and cost-benefit analysis, and excellent English report-writing; working knowledge of Assamese/Bodo (directly or through field staff) is desirable.
- Firms must field a gender-balanced team with local language proficiency, and submit reference projects and sample reports from at least two comparable assignments.

7. Selection Criteria

Criteria	Weightage
Relevant experience	30%
Understanding of the handloom/MSME sector	20%
Technical approach and methodology	30%
Team expertise	10%
Financial proposal	10%

8. Proposal Submission Requirements

- Technical proposal with methodology, workplan and timeline
- Organisational profile / CV(s) of proposed team
- Evidence of relevant experience and sample assignments
- Financial proposal (all-inclusive, within the stated budget)
- Two references from previous clients

9. Ethics and Confidentiality

The consultant/agency must ensure ethical, consent-based data collection with cultural sensitivity, particularly when engaging women weavers. All data and reports remain the property of HPPI and must be kept strictly confidential, with no external use.

Interested agencies, consultants, or professionals should submit their proposals to info@humana-india.org
Shortlisted agencies will be contacted for further steps in the process