



Terms of Reference (TOR) for Consultancy Services

Scoping study: Evaluating the Structure and Opportunities of VDVks in Strengthening the NTFP Value Chain

Title	Evaluate the structure, gaps, and opportunities of Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) in strengthening the Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) value chain.
Timeline	02 months
Expected area of expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Research and Analysis, Data Collection and Synthesizing, Analytics based recommendation, Sustainability and Climate/ Livelihoods, NTFP
Apply Link	https://forms.gle/QzmuGdTh57SG3ifm7 (Contact Procurement for Form Link)
Last Date for Apply	17th May, 2025

Overview

Call for proposal: Research and Documentation - Researchers and Agencies can apply for focus and analysis

Focused Geography: Maharashtra.

About SELCO Foundation:

SELCO Foundation's mission is to create a platform of solutions that uses sustainable energy as a catalyst to bridge environmental sustainability and poverty alleviation. With holistic development as the primary focus, the organization strives to create equitable societies, where services are accessed by all communities. The interventions of SELCO lead to a sustainable delivery model of essential services like livelihoods, education, and health till the last mile. (Read more about SELCO here: <http://www.selcofoundation.org/>)

1. Background:

SELCO Foundation is actively exploring opportunities within the NTFP value chain. The aim is to develop climate smart solutions and build an ecosystem that enhances localized processing, diversifies household incomes, reduces drudgery, and ensures accessibility for forest-dependent communities. VDVks have been identified as a pivotal structure supporting NTFP-based livelihoods and tribal communities. This scoping study will analyse their current operations, identify challenges, and explore opportunities to strengthen their role in the NTFP value chain. These insights will guide SELCO Foundation's interventions in the sector.

Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) are a critical source of livelihood for over 300 million forest-dependent individuals in India, particularly tribal communities. NTFPs contribute nearly 70% of forest product income for tribal households. The **Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY)**, launched in

2018, aims to strengthen tribal micro-enterprises by establishing VDVks. To date, over 50,000 VDVks have been set up across 27 states, engaging 300,000 tribal gatherers.

2. Goal and Objective:

Goal:

VDVks function as community-managed centres facilitating the collection, processing, and marketing of NTFPs. Despite their potential, they face several challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, limited technology adoption, financial constraints, and weak market linkages. This study aims to evaluate the structure and functioning of VDVks and identify ways SELCO Foundation's climate smart solutions can integrate with these centres to enhance their operational capacity and impact on PVTGs and other tribal/ forest dwelling communities.

Objective:

- Map all VDVks in the study geography, their activities, and alignment with NTFP development
- Understand the current structure, governance, and operational strategies, of VDVks, and interministerial processes.
- Identify and prioritize key NTFP value chains managed by VDVks based on geography, village, or community.
- Conduct stakeholder mapping, including government bodies, NGOs, CBOs, MFIs, and FIs, and their ongoing interventions linked to NTFP activities with VDVks.
- Analyse the gaps, challenges, and opportunities within the VDVk ecosystem, focusing on operational efficiency and value chain development.
- Provide actionable recommendations for integrating SELCO's goals into VDVk priorities and activities.
- Analyse the PMVDY policy and its implementation impact

3. Scope of the study

Focused Geography: Maharashtra

For each focused state required following activities

a. Identification and prioritizing the Production Clusters & VDVks:

- Develop a comprehensive list of VDVks and Common Facility Centers (CFCs) under each cluster.
- Document NTFPs collected, processed, and marketed by these centers.
- Grade VDVks based on potential and relevance to NTFP value chain activities.
- Map governance structures and implementation agencies.
- Evaluate supply chain processes, key players, and bottlenecks.

b. Analysis:

- Examine existing business models, profit margins, and market accessibility of VDVks.
- Compare incomes with and without value addition.

- Evaluate the role of nodal agencies in implementation.
- Analyse seasonality patterns and develop strategies for year-round production.
- Document case studies of champion VDKs.
- Explore the feasibility of Decentralized Renewable Energy (DRE) and technology requirements and gaps in champion VDK sites.

4. List of Activities:

- **Data Collection and Analysis:**

Conduct primary and secondary research to assess VDK structures, governance, and operational strategies and collect data on NTFP activities, including collection, processing, and marketing mechanisms practiced under VDKs.

- **Mapping and Prioritization:**

Map all VDKs in the study geographies, categorizing them by their activities, stakeholder networks, resource availability etc. and identify priority NTFP value chains they are working with. Analyse them for gaps, challenges, and potential for value addition.

- **Stakeholder Engagement:**

Engage with government bodies, NGOs, SHGs, CBOs, and FIs to map their roles and contributions to VDK operations. Assess ongoing government and institutional programs that can strengthen the VDK framework.

- **Gap and Opportunity Assessment:**

Identify critical challenges faced by VDKs, including infrastructure, capacity, technology adoption, and market connectivity. Highlight opportunities to integrate sustainable, energy-efficient technologies and other activities to strengthen VDK operations.

- **Strategic Recommendations:**

Develop a roadmap to align VDK activities with SELCO Foundation's goals and provide recommendations for scaling up NTFP-based livelihoods through innovative technologies and ecosystem collaborations.

5. Deliverables:

1. **Inception Report:** Secondary review and work plan.
2. **Comprehensive Report:**
 - a. Analysis of VDKs' structure, operations, and stakeholder mapping.
 - b. Assessment of gaps, challenges, and opportunities.
 - c. Recommendations for technology integration and market development.
 - d. A prioritization framework for NTFP value chains and VDKs.
 - e. Strategic roadmap for SELCO Foundation's interventions.
3. **Crop Calendars:** Year-round income sustainability plans.
4. **Business Model Evaluation:** Profitability assessment and improvement suggestions.
5. **Presentation Deck:** Summarizing key findings and recommendations for stakeholders.
6. **Raw Data Compilation:** Surveys, interviews, and field observations for future reference.

6. Timeline: 2 months

- **Preparation (Week 1): Criteria for Selecting VDVks**

Selection criteria for VDVks should balance representativeness, operational diversity, and geographic spread. Suggested criteria include:

- **Geographic Diversity:** Cover the VDVks, at least two from the priority areas of Maharashtra to ensure representation from major NTFP-producing regions.
- **Operational Maturity:** Include a mix of high-performing (best practices) and underperforming (areas for intervention) VDVks.
- **Diversity of NTFPs:** Ensure inclusion of VDVks specializing in different types of NTFPs (e.g., honey, medicinal plants, tamarind).
- **Market Access:** Select VDVks with varied market access levels (local, regional, or national markets).
- Identify VDVks with potential for renewable energy integration to assess technology fit.

Develop detailed research tools (questionnaires, interview guides), Conduct a secondary review of existing data on VDVks through TRIFED, government reports, and NGOs. Finalize the list of VDVks based on secondary data and discussions with stakeholders like TRIFED and local NGOs.

- **Field Research (Weeks 2–5): Site Visits and Stakeholder Interactions**

Site Visits: Target **10–12 VDVks** from focused state ensuring diversity in size, maturity, and NTFP focus. Interim findings to be presented to SF team post site visits

- **Analysis and Reporting (Weeks 6–8)**

Proposed milestone duration:

Task	Duration	Key Milestones
Week 1: Preparation	1 week	Finalize VDVk selection and field tools
Weeks 2–5: Field Research	4 weeks	Conduct site visits across Maharashtra to meet stakeholders, collect data
Weeks 6–7: Data Analysis	2 weeks	Analyse data, identify gaps, and draft findings
Week 8: Reporting	1 week	Finalize reports, recommendations, and deliverables

7. Eligibility Criteria

1. Expertise and relevant experience in tribal livelihoods, NTFP value chains, community-based enterprise development.
2. Prior experience in conducting scoping studies, stakeholder mapping and program design.
3. Knowledge of renewable energy solutions and their application in rural contexts.
4. Strong analytical, research, and reporting skills.
5. Expertise and familiarity with the selected geography and its socio-economic and ecological context is preferred.

8. Submission Requirements

1. A detailed proposal outlining Program Plan, approach, methodology, and timelines for each focus area.
2. A financial quote with a breakdown of costs.
3. Profiles and relevant experience of the team.
4. Examples of similar past projects.

Note: Applicants are required to submit applications for specific the state. Each application should detail the research plan, methodology, and deliverables specific to the chosen state.

9. Payment Terms:

Fixed as per the agreement between consultant and SELCO Foundation. Please provide your proposal and quotation for the above-mentioned program requirements. Capture Timelines and Split cost wherever possible.

10. Application Process

If your enterprise meets the eligibility criteria and is interested in collaborating with the SELCO Foundation, please complete the application form linked below with the required information. Enterprises are requested to upload their proposals and quotations directly into the application form.

Provide split costs as per deliverables based:

Please provide your proposal and quotation as per deliverables based and mentioned program requirements. Capture Timelines and Split cost wherever possible.

11. To apply

Interested consultants / organisations, with relevant experience (please include samples and/or references of the previous similar work as proof of experience) and based out of India are requested to reach out with a detailed proposal giving a brief on the methodology and the process they will uptake for this project, including budgets (with break-ups and explanation), timelines and milestones and submit the same to google form <https://forms.gle/QzmuGdTh57SG3ifm7> on before **17th May, 2025**.

Any further queries please write to procurement@selcofoundation.org with a subject line: **“Research and Documentation in Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) in strengthening the Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) value chain”** (Name of Project)

Refer Terms and Condition:

1. Sub-contracting:

In the event that the Consultant requires the services of subcontractors to perform any obligations under the Contract, the Consultant shall obtain the prior written approval of the Foundation. Any rejection or non-performance of the subcontractor shall not, in and of itself, entitle the Consultant to claim any delays in the performance, or to assert any excuses for the non-performance, of any of its obligations under the Contract, and the Consultant shall be solely responsible for all services, obligations and deliverables performed by its subcontractors

2. Quality Assurance

The data submitted to Selco Foundation should be accurate, complete, reliable and relevant. Consulting agency shall establish additional layers for data cleaning and submission.

3. Financials & Reporting

TDS will be deducted on the fixed amount as per Income Tax Act and Rate of Percentage. In accordance with the Central Board of Direct Taxes circular No. 7 of 2022 dated 30th March, 2022 in relation to the clarifications with respect to Section 114AAA of the Income-tax Rules, 1962, failure to link Aadhar number to the PAN card and/or failure by any person, who falls within the income tax bracket or otherwise, to file tax returns in relation to payment of TDS for any service (in accordance with Section 206AB and 206AA) and/or an inoperative PAN card will result in a 20% tax deduction.

4. Indemnification

Both parties shall indemnify and hold its Trustees, Directors and representative officers, employees, agents harmless from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, losses, liabilities, charges, damages, costs and expenses (including but not limited to reasonable attorney's fees) arising out of or resulting from (1) any claims arising in connection with activities undertaken by both parties in connection with the project or (2) Consultant's gross negligence or willful misconduct or breach of any undertaking, covenant, representation or warranty contained in this agreement and/ or the actual infringement of any patent, trademark, copyrights, trade secret or any other intellectual property right of the third party.

5. Patent, Copyright and other Proprietary Rights

- i. Except as is otherwise expressly provided in writing in the Contract, the Foundation shall be entitled to all intellectual property and other proprietary rights including, but not limited to, patents, copyrights, and trademarks, with regard to products, processes, inventions, ideas, know-how, or documents and other materials which the Consultant has developed for the Foundation under the Contract and which bear a direct relation to or are produced or prepared or collected in consequence of, or during the course of, the performance of the Contract. The Contractor acknowledges and agrees that such products, documents and other materials constitute works made for hire for the Foundation.
- ii. Subject to the foregoing provisions, all documents, reports, recommendations, documents, and all other data compiled by or received by the Consultant under the Contract shall be the property of the Foundation, shall be made available for use or inspection by the Foundation at reasonable times and in

reasonable places, shall be treated as confidential, and shall be delivered only to the Foundation's authorized officials on completion of work under the Contract

- iii. The Consultant will treat all information given to him/her as information with proprietary value and will not disclose the same to competitors or any outsiders. The Consultant will not at any time, except under legal process, divulge any trade or business secret relating to the Foundation or any customer or agent of the Foundation, which may become known to him by virtue of his position as consultant, save in so far as such disclosure shall be necessary in the interest and for the benefit of the said Foundation and will be true and faithful to the Foundation in all dealings and transactions whatsoever relating to the said Foundation.
- iv. Reports or other data that are developed specifically for the performance of this Contract shall be the property of the Foundation and the Consultant shall deliver reports and data to the Foundation as per the milestones. Dissemination of the reports and any information from the said contracts shall be done with written approval from the Foundation.

6. Publicity, use of name & Logo of the Foundation:

The Consultant shall not advertise or otherwise make public for purposes of commercial advantage or goodwill that it has a contractual relationship with the Foundation, nor shall the Consultant, in any manner whatsoever use the name, emblem, logo or official seal of the Foundation or that of SELCO in connection with its business or otherwise without the written permission of the Foundation.

7. Observance of Law:

Compliance with Laws and Regulations: The Consultant will comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and statutory requirements and amendments thereof, in the manufacture and distribution of products and supplies and in providing services to the SELCO and during the term of this Agreement.

Child Labor: The Consultant will, its parent entities, partners or subcontractors nor any of its subsidiary or affiliated entities (if any) is engaged in any practice inconsistent with the rights set forth in the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986, which, inter alia, requires that a child shall be protected from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development.

Forced Labor: The Consultant will not engage in any activity that will result in forced or compulsory labor under applicable laws including the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976,

Abuse of Labor: Consultant will act in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and will not violate the rights of labourers as stated in The Factories Act, 1948 and similar legislations.

Working Hours, Overtime, Wages and Other Benefits-Working hours, wages and benefits shall be provided by the Consultant to its staff and employees in accordance with applicable laws including the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.

Declaration of blacklisting: Consultant represents and warrants to SELCO that, as on the date of signing of this Purchase Order, it is neither blacklisted/ debarred nor it is under a declaration of ineligibility by Central / State or Semi-Government Organization/Department or Institutions and Public

Sector Undertakings in India and abroad. The Consultant further undertakes to duly inform SELCO in the event it is blacklisted subsequent to execution of this Purchase Order.

Compliance with Anti-bribery Laws: Consultant and each of its directors, officers, employees, agents or other (collectively referred to as "Consultant") represent and warrant that it shall not either directly or on behalf of SELCO Foundation give, offer, promise to offer, or authorize the offer, directly or indirectly (proxy bribing), anything of value (such as money, shares, goods or service, gifts or entertainment) to government officials, government customers, potential government customers or foreign government officials including officials of any public international organizations or officials of any political party either in India or abroad ("Officials") with an Intent to influence any act or decision in his or her official capacity Induce the Official to do or omit to do any act in violation of his or her lawful duty to obtain any improper advantage, or Induce to use such Official 's influence improperly to affect or influence an act or decision.

The Consultant shall not provide any offering, promising, giving or receive, solicit or accept a financial or other advantage, or any other thing of value, with the intention of influencing or rewarding the behaviour of a person in a position of trust to perform a public, commercial or legal function to obtain or retain a commercial advantage.

The Consultant understands and acknowledges that any non- adherence to the warranty as stated herein above will be violation of the provisions of the Indian Prevention of Corruption Act,1988 and other applicable laws and legislations ("Anti-bribery Laws").

In addition, Consultant agrees to promptly report to SELCO Foundation of any incident of breach or potential breach of this section.

Compliance with Sexual Harassment of Women (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act, 2013 (PoSH): The Consultant shall agree to adhere to the mandates prescribed under the Sexual Harassment of Women (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act, 2013, which requires all workplaces to have a Policy and Internal Committee to address complaints of sexual harassment that women may face at the workplace.

8. Termination:

Either party may terminate this contract by giving a notice in writing to the other party stating their intention to terminate the same on the expiration of Seven (7) days from the date of such notice. In addition, the Foundation may also terminate this contract forthwith in the event of any fraud, misconduct or neglect of duties on the part of the Consultant. Any notice to be given hereunder shall be sufficiently given to the Consultant if forwarded by registered post or by Courier Service to the last known postal address of the Consultant and shall be sufficiently given to the Foundation if similarly forwarded to the registered office. Upon the termination of this contract and payment of the said fees due up to such termination, and payment of all disbursements and out-of-pocket expenses incurred up to the date thereof (provided the same have been incurred after obtaining prior approval), the Consultant shall deliver all deeds, documents and paper in his possession relating to the business of the Foundation or as the Foundation shall direct, and shall continue to afford him all reasonable assistance for concluding pending matters at the date of such termination without making any charge thereof.

9. Force Majeure:

- i. *Force majeure* as used herein means any unforeseeable and irresistible act of nature, any act of war (whether declared or not), invasion, revolution, insurrection, terrorism, or any other acts of a similar nature or force, *provided that* such acts arise from causes beyond the control and without the fault or negligence of the Consultant
- ii. In the event of and as soon as possible after the occurrence of any cause constituting *force majeure*, the affected Party shall give notice and full particulars in writing to the other Party, of such occurrence or cause if the affected Party is thereby rendered unable, wholly or in part, to perform its obligations and meet its responsibilities under the Contract. The affected Party shall also notify the other Party of any other changes in condition or the occurrence of any event which interferes or threatens to interfere with its performance of the Contract. Not more than fifteen (15) days following the provision of such notice of *force majeure* or other changes in condition or occurrence, the affected Party shall also submit a statement to the other Party of estimated expenditures that will likely be incurred for the duration of the change in condition or the event of *force majeure*.
- iii. On receipt of the notice or notices required hereunder, the Party not affected by the occurrence of a cause constituting *force majeure* shall take such action as it reasonably considers to be appropriate or necessary in the circumstances, including the granting to the affected Party of a reasonable extension of time in which to perform any obligations under the Contract.
- iv. If the Consultant is rendered unable, wholly or in part, by reason of *force majeure* to perform its obligations and meet its responsibilities under the Contract, the Foundation shall have the right to suspend or terminate the Contract on the same terms and conditions as are provided for in this Contract.
- v. Both the Foundation and the Consultant fully and freely intend to create an independent Contractor relationship under this Contract. Nothing herein shall be deemed to establish a partnership, joint venture, association or employment relationship between the parties. Both parties agree that the consultant has the right to sole and exclusive control over the manner and means employed in performing their activities under this Contract.

10. Settlement of disputes:

- i. The Parties shall use their best efforts to amicably settle any dispute, controversy, or claim arising out of the Contract or the breach, termination, or invalidity thereof.

Any dispute, controversy, or claim between the Parties arising out of the Contract or the breach, termination, or invalidity thereof, unless settled amicably, within sixty (60) days after receipt by one Party of the other Party's written request for such amicable settlement, the matter shall be referred by either Party to arbitration in accordance with the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. The venue of the arbitration shall be at Bangalore. Likewise, the jurisdiction will vest with courts in Bangalore.
