

**Terms of Reference (TOR) for Consultancy Services**  
**Ecosystem Learnings from SELCO Foundation's Decentralised Cold Storage Program**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Ecosystem Learnings from SELCO Foundation's Decentralised Cold Storage Program</b>
<b>Timeline</b>	4 months
<b>Expected area of expertise</b>	Program Evaluation, Mixed-Methods Research, Data Collection and Analysis, Livelihoods
<b>Apply Link</b>	<a href="https://forms.gle/xDHL3Pw5jN8Wu8257">https://forms.gle/xDHL3Pw5jN8Wu8257</a>
<b>Last Date for Apply</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b>

### **Overview**

SELCO Foundation invites proposals from research agencies to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of its decentralised cold storage interventions implemented across multiple states in India.

The study will cover a total of 133 decentralised cold storage units deployed across diverse agro-climatic, commodity and institutional contexts.

Field data collection for 113 sites will be undertaken directly by the selected agency across the following states: Jharkhand, Odisha, Meghalaya, Telangana, Maharashtra and Karnataka. For the remaining 20 sites across other states, primary data collection will be undertaken by SELCO Foundation using tools and protocols finalised in consultation with the selected agency. However, the selected agency will be responsible for consolidating, validating, analysing and synthesising data across all 133 sites to generate unified findings and insights.

The study aims to generate practice-oriented learning on solution performance, ecosystem dynamics and programmatic processes. The study is expected to examine not only outcomes at the user level but also implementation processes, coordination mechanisms and adaptive processes that influence sustainability and scale.

### **Background**

Post-harvest losses remain a persistent challenge in Indian agriculture, particularly for small and marginal farmers engaged in agriculture and allied sectors. Decentralised cold storage solutions offer a critical intervention point enabling improved storage, price realisation and market access while reducing distress sales.

SELCO Foundation has supported the deployment of 133 cold storage units across multiple states, working with farmer groups, FPOs, SHGs, NGOs and government institutions. These interventions are embedded within broader ecosystem-building efforts that engage technology providers, financial institutions, market actors and local institutions.

As the portfolio has expanded across geographies and commodities, SELCO Foundation seeks a systematic evaluation to understand:

- How cold storage solutions are being used and sustained across contexts
- What ecosystem conditions enable or constrain their effectiveness
- What programmatic learnings can inform future scale-up and replication

## **Goal and Objectives**

### **Goal**

To generate ecosystem and implementation learnings that inform performance, sustainability and scale readiness.

### **Objectives**

1. To assess the functionality, utilisation and performance of the units.
2. To understand end-user pathways, including identification, onboarding, ownership and operational arrangements.
3. To examine how ecosystem components affect outcomes.
4. To assess the role of financing mechanisms, subsidies, grants and hybrid models in enabling adoption and sustainability.
5. To identify enabling and constraining factors across different geographies and value chains.
6. To generate actionable insights to strengthen SELCO Foundation's cold storage strategy and inform replication in other contexts.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study will cover 133 decentralised cold storage sites implemented across multiple states and districts in India.

Sites span diverse commodities, institutional models (individual, group-based, FPO-led, cooperative-led) and varying levels of solution maturity.

### **Data Collection Responsibilities**

The selected agency will undertake primary data collection across 113 sites located in:

<b>State</b>	<b>Total Sites</b>
Jharkhand	6
Odisha	12
Meghalaya	14

Telangana	15
Maharashtra	20
Karnataka	46

*The district-level distribution of all 133 sites is provided below for reference.*

SELCO Foundation will undertake **primary data collection** for the remaining 20 sites in other states, using tools and protocols co-developed with the selected agency.

State	Total Sites
Gujarat	1
Jammu & Kashmir	1
Mizoram	1
Rajasthan	1
Tamil Nadu	1
Madhya Pradesh	3
Himachal Pradesh	3
Manipur	3
Andhra Pradesh	4
Assam	4

The selected agency will be responsible for:

- Designing the overall study framework and tools
- Providing alignment or orientation for SELCO Foundation-led data collection where required
- Ensuring data quality validation and standardisation
- Consolidated analysis and synthesis across all 133 sites
- Cross-state comparative assessment and reporting

The study should integrate site-level assessments with cross-cutting ecosystem insights, while keeping user experience, livelihood outcomes and sustainability central.

### **Process and Implementation Pathways**

The study will examine implementation processes at two interconnected levels:

#### **A. Program Design and Internal Implementation Pathways (SELCO Foundation Level)**

- Site identification and selection criteria
- Partner identification and onboarding processes
- Technology selection and contextual adaptation decisions
- Financing structuring and internal approval flows

- Installation planning and commissioning protocols
- Monitoring frameworks and adaptive management processes
- Cross-functional coordination within SELCO Foundation
- B. Local Governance and Operational Pathways (FPO+Partner Level)**
- Governance and ownership structures of the cold storage unit
- Operational management arrangements
- Revenue and cost management systems
- Farmer onboarding and usage norms
- Maintenance and servicing arrangements
- Engagement with local markets and institutions
- Coordination with vendors and service providers

The objective of this component is to document operational strengths, adaptive practices and systemic bottlenecks and to generate constructive recommendations for enhancing program efficiency, coordination and scale-readiness.

The consultant is expected to engage with relevant SELCO Foundation teams and external stakeholders to understand implementation design and execution across contexts.

### **Deep-Dive Case Studies**

Following the evaluation of all 133 sites, the consultant will conduct in-depth case studies of 10 selected sites:

- 5 sites demonstrating strong performance and sustained outcomes
- 5 sites demonstrating operational or outcome-related challenges

Site selection will be based on jointly agreed performance criteria emerging from the broader analysis.

The deep dives should:

- Analyse contextual, institutional and operational drivers of performance
- Examine governance, ownership and management models
- Assess ecosystem alignment including financing, servicing and market linkages
- Evaluate technology performance and maintenance dynamics
- Document lived user experiences and operational practices
- Identify transferable lessons and risk factors

The deep dives must include interviews with relevant stakeholders such as:

- SELCO Foundation team
- Implementing partners
- Technology vendors and service providers
- Financial institutions (where relevant)

- Local institutional actors

A dedicated deep-dive report is expected as part of the final deliverables.

### **Key Areas of Enquiry**

While the consultant may propose the most appropriate methodology, the study is expected to generate insights across the following areas:

- End-user and operator pathways: identification, selection, ownership, governance and operational responsibility
- Solution relevance and performance: capacity utilisation, reliability, energy performance and adaptability to local needs
- Commodity and value chain alignment: perishability, seasonality, aggregation models and market timing
- Forward and backward linkages: access to inputs, servicing, maintenance, logistics and markets
- Training and capacity building: adequacy of technical, operational and business training
- Financial linkages: access to credit, subsidies, grants or blended finance models
- Institutional partnerships: role of FPOs, SHGs, NGOs and private actors
- Policy and scheme convergence: district, state or national-level linkages
- Ecosystem coordination and gaps: alignment and processes across actors and systemic bottlenecks
- The consultant may use qualitative deep-dive or ethnographic approaches where relevant to understand lived user experiences, operational practices and institutional dynamics.

### **Expected Deliverables**

- Kick-off meeting with SELCO Foundation to align on objectives, scope and expectations.
- Inception Report outlining the study framework, methodology, tools and timelines.
- Enumerator training to be an intensive 4-day training program: 2 days classroom training + 1 day field practice + 1 day review
- Dataset (raw and cleaned) and field documentation (photos, videos and recordings) covering all evaluated livelihood sites.
- In-person interim meeting to present early findings at SELCO Foundation's Bangalore office.
- Draft report presenting findings, analysis and emerging patterns.
- Draft deep-dive case study report.
- Final report incorporating SELCO Foundation feedback.
- Final deep dive report incorporating SELCO Foundation feedback.
- Presentation deck summarising key insights and recommendations, to be presented (in-person) at SELCO Foundation's Bangalore office.

## **Key Requirements**

- Capacity to conduct a study across geographies
- Demonstrated experience in evaluating livelihood or value-chain interventions
- Strong understanding of systems-based or ecosystem-building approaches
- Experience in process mapping, program design analysis or implementation research
- Experience designing learning-oriented evaluations or knowledge products for programs
- Experience working with farmer collectives and rural institutions
- Ability to engage across multiple states and stakeholder types
- Strong analytical, writing and synthesis skills
- Multilingual field capability (regional languages relevant to study areas preferred)

## **Evaluation Criteria for Selection**

- Capacity to conduct pan-India study.
- Relevance and depth of prior experience.
- Clarity and strength of the proposed evaluation approach.
- Demonstrated understanding of ecosystem-building and programmatic pathways.
- Ability to translate findings into actionable recommendations.
- Strength and composition of the proposed team.
- Experience across diverse geographies.
- Demonstrated ability to capture and synthesise process-level and experiential insights alongside outcome findings.

## **Payment Terms**

Payments will be milestone-based as per agreement with SELCO Foundation.

Indicative structure:

40% on submission of the Inception Report

40% on submission of datasets and draft findings

20% on submission of the final report and presentation

## **To apply:**

Interested consultants / organizations, 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/xDHL3Pw5jN8Wu8257> on before 28th March, 2026.

Any further queries please write to [procurement@selcofoundation.org](mailto:procurement@selcofoundation.org) with a subject line:

**“(TOR) for Consultancy Services Ecosystem Learnings from SELCO Foundation’s Decentralised Cold Storage Program .” on or before 28th March 2026.**

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.

(i) 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

(i) 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.

(i) 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:

(i) The Consultant shall comply with all laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations bearing upon the performance of its obligations under the Contract.

(i) The Consultant represents and warrants that neither it, 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.

(i) The Consultant represents and warrants that it shall 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:

**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.

9. Force Majeure:

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

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.

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.

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.

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:

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.