

**Terms of Reference (TOR) for Consultancy Services**

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| <b>Title:</b>              | Onboarding of consultant for Documentation of Community Innovation Hubs & Grassroots Innovation Ecosystems                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Duration</b>            | <b>August 2026 – November 2026</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Scope of work</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Document the overall journey and model of the selected 6 innovation hub</li><li>• Identify and document selected innovators / entrepreneurs supported by the hub (at least 18)</li><li>• Ecosystem Insights</li><li>• Knowledge materials, suitable for dissemination across the ACIC ecosystem, ecosystem learning, policy dialogue, ecosystem replication and online portal (web).</li></ul> |
| <b>Application Link</b>    | <a href="https://forms.gle/45rVYkpDoy8dGPqi9">https://forms.gle/45rVYkpDoy8dGPqi9</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Last date to apply:</b> | <b>30<sup>th</sup> July 2026</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

**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: <https://selcofoundation.org/>)

**1. BACKGROUND OF THE PROGRAM:**

Over the last decade, SELCO Foundation has worked extensively with grassroots innovators, enterprises, fabricators, service providers, and community institutions across underserved geographies in India. Through its incubation programs, enterprise development initiatives, climate-smart technology programs, and the [AIC-SELCO Foundation](#) ecosystem in Northeast India, SELCO Foundation has supported innovators working on real-world challenges across livelihoods, agriculture, healthcare, decentralized manufacturing, and climate resilience.

Across these engagements, a recurring insight has emerged: innovation is not absent in rural and underserved communities - rather, it is often invisible, unsupported, and disconnected from mainstream innovation ecosystems.

Many grassroots innovators are deeply embedded within community realities and are continuously solving contextual problems through adaptation, frugal engineering, local manufacturing, repair ecosystems, and service innovations. However, they frequently remain excluded from formal incubation and entrepreneurship systems due to barriers such as:

- limited access to finance and networks,
- language and communication gaps,
- lack of exposure to formal innovation ecosystems,
- geographic distance from urban startup centers,
- and the inability to identify themselves within conventional definitions of “entrepreneurship” and “innovation.”

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### Documentation of Community Innovation Hubs and Grassroots Innovation Ecosystems

At the same time, existing innovation ecosystems in India have largely evolved around urban, technology-first, venture-scale startup models. While these ecosystems have significantly accelerated entrepreneurship and innovation nationally, they are often less equipped to support innovators working on localized, community-centered, and social-impact-driven problem statements (particularly those emerging from rural, peri-urban, and vulnerable contexts).

It is through this gap that a larger opportunity emerges:

*How can India build a more inclusive innovation ecosystem - one that enables innovation not only for communities, but also by, with, and within communities?*

This question aligns strongly with the vision of [Atal Innovation Mission \(AIM\)](#) under NITI Aayog, which has played a transformative role in strengthening India's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem over the past decade. Through initiatives such as Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs), Atal Incubation Centres (AICs), and Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACICs), AIM has expanded access to innovation infrastructure and entrepreneurship support across the country.

Particularly significant within this evolution has been the emergence of the Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACIC) initiative, which recognizes the need for innovation ecosystems that are rooted in underserved geographies and responsive to grassroots challenges. With nearly 50+ ACICs approved across India, there now exists an important opportunity to reimagine what community-centered innovation ecosystems can look like in practice.

Building on SELCO Foundation's long-standing experience in grassroots incubation and ecosystem-building, the concept of "Community Innovation Hubs" emerges as an effort to deepen this vision — moving beyond conventional incubation approaches towards decentralized, community-embedded ecosystems that can identify, nurture, and support innovators solving real-world challenges from within their own contexts.

#### Reimagining the "Community" in Community Innovation

The idea of a Community Innovation Hub goes beyond a conventional incubation center. It raises a deeper systems question:

*What does it truly mean for innovation to be community-centered?*

The "community" dimension can manifest in multiple ways:

- **Innovation FOR communities** - solving pressing livelihood, healthcare, climate, or local infrastructure challenges
- **Innovation BY communities** - enterprises and innovators emerging from within the community itself
- **Innovation AT communities** - innovation systems physically embedded in rural, peri-urban, or underserved geographies
- **Innovation WITH communities** - co-created solutions with active participation, ownership, and benefit-sharing

This shifts the focus from startup-centric innovation to ecosystem-centric innovation.

Community Innovation Hubs therefore are not merely physical incubation spaces. They are decentralized ecosystems of trust, relationships, mentorship, prototyping support, local manufacturing linkages, financial access, and community participation that enable grassroots innovators to solve the/their community problems at scale.

However, while the vision of community-led innovation is compelling, the operational question remains:

*What does it actually take to build and sustain such ecosystems?*

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Across India, there are already organizations, incubators, ACICs, and grassroots innovation platforms experimenting with these models. These are important “bright spots” demonstrating:

- locally rooted innovation ecosystems,
- inclusive incubation practices,
- vernacular-first engagement,
- decentralized manufacturing and servicing networks,
- climate-responsive entrepreneurship,
- and community-owned innovation pathways.

Yet, many of these learnings remain undocumented, fragmented, or invisible to the broader innovation ecosystem.

There is therefore a need to document and amplify these emerging practices, not merely as success stories, but as actionable ecosystem learnings that can help reimagine the future role of ACICs and community innovation systems in India.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT:

This assignment aims to undertake a documentation and storytelling exercise focused on established Community Innovation Hubs / ACIC-type ecosystems that are enabling inclusive and grassroots innovation.

The objective is to capture:

- how these ‘hubs’ function,
- how they identify and support innovators,
- what makes their approach community-centered,
- what kinds of innovators and enterprises emerge from them,
- what support systems are critical,
- and what kinds of impact they are creating at individual, enterprise, and community levels.

The documentation is expected to generate nuanced insights into the operational, institutional, and human dimensions of community innovation ecosystems.

## 3. SCOPE OF WORK:

The consultant / agency will undertake a detailed qualitative documentation exercise covering approximately 6 established Community Innovation Hubs / ACIC-type institutions across India.

The assignment will include:

### A. Institutional Documentation

Document the overall journey and model of the **selected 6 innovation hub**, including:

- Origin and evolution
- Vision and philosophy
- Understanding of “community”
- Innovation and incubation approach



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### Documentation of Community Innovation Hubs and Grassroots Innovation Ecosystems

- Selection and outreach mechanisms
- Ecosystem partnerships
- Support systems provided
- Challenges and learnings
- Sustainability and scaling pathways

#### ***Deliverables:***

- *Overview Deck, along with a brief introduction to each innovation hub*
- *Photographs*

## **B. Innovator and Entrepreneur Stories**

Identify and document selected innovators / entrepreneurs supported by the hub (**3 Innovators/entrepreneurs per Hubs**), including:

- Background and context
- Problem statement being addressed
- Innovation journey
- Type of support received
- Enterprise and livelihood impact (within enterprise, and in the community of operation)
- Community engagement and adoption
- Challenges faced
- Future aspirations

*\*To note, some of the selected innovators/ entrepreneurs might not be linked to the community innovation hub in step 1, but may be selected to unpack their story and seek insights for learning of the programme.*

#### ***Deliverables:***

- *Overview Deck - 1*
- *Detailed Report / Case Study of each Innovator/Entrepreneur- 18*
- *Photographs*

## **C. Ecosystem Insights**

Analyse, synthesize and parallelly integrate learnings from Program team

- Patterns emerging across hubs
- Different models of community (centered incubation Scouting process, Support models & framework)
- Key enablers and barriers
- Role of local ecosystems
- Lessons for ACICs and grassroots innovation ecosystems nationally

#### ***Deliverables:***

- *Consolidated overview report and deck with Key Finding*

## **E. Knowledge Product Development & Branding coordination**

Develop high-quality storytelling and documentation outputs suitable for:

- Dissemination across the ACIC ecosystem

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### Documentation of Community Innovation Hubs and Grassroots Innovation Ecosystems

- Ecosystem learning
- Policy dialogue
- Ecosystem replication
- Online platform/Web Portal

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

The assignment is expected to adopt an immersive and qualitative methodology, including:

- Secondary research and review of institutional materials
- Field visits to selected hubs
- Semi-structured interviews with incubator teams
- Interviews with innovators and entrepreneurs
- Community interactions where relevant
- Observation and photo/video documentation
- Narrative and systems-based storytelling approaches

The consultant is expected to combine analytical rigor with compelling storytelling.

#### 5. KEY DELIVERABLES & PAYMENT MILESTONE

- Detailed profile and operational mapping of 6 distinct community innovation hubs
- Profile of the 18-20 community innovators and entrepreneurs (case study and photo story in deck format)
- Consolidated overview report- presenting key insights from the interviewed stakeholders for the broader ecosystem
- Create 1 consolidated insights platform or dashboard (co-developed with SELCO Foundation), which helps disseminate the findings in an interactive manner

##### To be noted:

- SELCO Foundation reserves the right to onboard multiple entities for the defined scope of work, or award only part of the scope of work to an entity
- Consulting entity should account for 2 rounds of reviews by SELCO before finalisation of any output
- Consulting entity is required to submit all raw material collected as part of primary research

##### PAYMENT MILESTONES:

|                    |                                                                                              |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 40% of the payment | Signing of the Contract                                                                      |
| 30% of the payment | Completion of Primary Research and submission of recordings of conversations and field notes |
| 30% of the payment | Completion and submission of all final outputs                                               |

#### 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

##### (A) Agency

- Conduct secondary research and desk review of all selected hubs and ecosystem materials
- Plan and undertake field visits to the 6 selected Community Innovation Hubs
- Conduct semi-structured interviews with incubator teams, innovators, entrepreneurs, and community members

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### Documentation of Community Innovation Hubs and Grassroots Innovation Ecosystems

- Lead all qualitative and visual documentation: written case studies and photo stories
- Synthesize cross-hub ecosystem insights, patterns, enablers and barriers into a consolidated report and deck
- Develop knowledge products (policy briefs, inspirational decks/videos, op-eds) in coordination with SELCO Foundation
- Ensure data accuracy, completeness, and reliability, including establishing internal data-cleaning processes
- Submit recordings, field notes and interim outputs as per agreed payment milestones
- Obtain prior written approval from SELCO Foundation before engaging any subcontractors (such as Translators), and remain fully responsible for subcontractor deliverables

#### **(B) SELCO Foundation**

- Provide access to relevant institutional materials, past program documentation, and ecosystem contacts
- Facilitate introductions and coordination with the 6 selected hubs, innovators and relevant ACIC/AIM stakeholders
- Provide guidance and inputs on the selection of hubs, innovators and event locations
- Review and provide feedback on draft deliverables (case studies, decks, reports) at each stage
- Support coordination for state-level and national events (introductions, government/ACIC, venue support where applicable)
- Release payments as per agreed milestones, subject to satisfactory completion of deliverables
- Provide timely written approval/feedback to avoid delays in the consultant's timeline

## **7. DESIRED CONSULTANT PROFILE:**

The consultant / agency should demonstrate:

- ❖ Experience in qualitative research and documentation
- ❖ Strong storytelling and narrative-building capabilities
- ❖ Experience working with innovation, entrepreneurship, livelihoods, climate, or community systems
- ❖ Ability to conduct immersive field-based research
- ❖ Strong visual and communication sensibilities
- ❖ Ability to synthesize systems insights into accessible outputs
- ❖ Experience working with grassroots ecosystems, incubation ecosystems, or social innovation platforms will be preferred.

## **8. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENT**

The application is supposed to send a proposal covering the following:

#### **A). About the organisation**

Provide an overview of your organisation/profile, including a portfolio of relevant projects and engagements.

#### **B). Executive Summary (background + previous work in sector, if any)**

Summarise the context, relevant experience and key achievements in documentation, storytelling or grassroots innovation/incubation ecosystems

#### **C). Approach to the program (as per scope of work)**

Explain your understanding of the program objectives and the proposed approach to deliver expected outcomes, covering institutional documentation, innovator stories, ecosystem insights, outreach & visibility, and knowledge product development.

**D). Breakup of the team to be engaged in the project**

List down key team members with experience and their roles and responsibilities in this initiative (including capabilities for field research, storytelling, videography/photography, and event design & management).

**E). Detailed financial proposal**

Provide a detailed budget with item-wise breakup of costs, including GST and applicable taxes.

**F). Terms and conditions**

Specify terms, conditions, assumptions, or dependencies related to the engagement (if any).

**Annexure:**

- a. Relevant Case Studies / documents / publications
- b. Work with other stakeholders / program design documents
- c. Link to videos / photos / websites / events
- d. Social media links / handles of the agency
- e. Previous work with SELCO Foundation (if any)

**9. Intellectual Property:**

All final outputs, templates, and visual assets created under this engagement will be the intellectual property of SELCO Foundation and will be freely available for public sharing under an open-source license.

**Payment Terms:**

It will be deliverable based with payments made in accordance with the terms agreed upon between the consultant and SELCO Foundation.

**To apply:**

If you meet the eligibility criteria and is interested in collaborating with the SELCO Foundation, please complete the application form linked below with the required information

Link: <https://forms.gle/45rVYkpDoy8dGPqi9>

Any further queries please write to [procurement@selcofoundation.org](mailto:procurement@selcofoundation.org) Including [usma@selcofoundation.org](mailto:usma@selcofoundation.org) and [chongnei.m@selcofoundation.org](mailto:chongnei.m@selcofoundation.org) along with number +91 99584 95155 with a subject line: “Consultancy for Documentation of Community Innovation Hubs & Grassroots Innovation Ecosystems”

**REFER TERMS & CONDITIONS**

**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



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### Documentation of Community Innovation Hubs and Grassroots Innovation Ecosystems

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

- a) 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.
- b) 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
- c) 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.
- d) 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:**

*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:**

- 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.