Good Food Institute India

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

A comprehensive analysis of India's talent landscape for the smart protein sector

Issue date: April 22, 2025

Proposal deadline: May 19, 2025

Primary contact: Amrutha Girivasan, indiacollab@gfi.org

DESCRIPTION: Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), the Good Food Institute (GFI) India seeks proposals from qualified research and consultancy firms to map the skills landscape in India, with a focus on the smart protein sector. The study aims to determine the number of graduates from key disciplines relevant to the smart protein industry (plant-based meat, dairy, and egg; cultivated meat, and fermentation-derived ingredients for smart protein end-products) and compare the skills acquired from these courses to technical skill gaps prevalent across various job archetypes in the sector. By understanding where the gaps lie, recommendations for a skill-building framework can be developed for adoption/implementation into relevant university curricula and industry training programmes. The project must be completed within four (4) months from the date of the formal awarding of the contract and will be fully funded by GFI India.

The maximum estimated cost for this project is **up to ₹5,00,000** (inclusive of taxes and expenses).

REQUIREMENTS: Solicitation documents (including any/all Addenda issued by GFI India) will be provided via email by the Primary Contact listed above. Proposals must be sent via email to the Primary Contact listed above by the due date and time specified. No hard copy submissions. Late proposals will not be accepted.

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RFP INSTRUCTIONS

1) **PRE-PROPOSAL INFORMATION:** In preparing proposals, Respondents are advised to rely solely upon the contents of this Request for Proposal (RFP), its accompanying documents, and any written clarifications or Addenda issued by the Primary Contact listed on the cover page of this RFP. If any changes are made to this RFP document by any party other than GFI India, the original RFP document and associated Addenda in GFI India's files shall take precedence.

2) **QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS:** If a Respondent finds a discrepancy, error, or omission in the RFP package or requires any written clarification thereto, the Respondent may notify the Primary Contact listed on the cover of this RFP.

3) **MODIFICATIONS/ADDENDA:** Clarifications, modifications, or amendments may be made to this RFP at the sole discretion of GFI India. Any and all Addenda issued by GFI India will be sent via email to those Respondents that submit a timely Letter of Intent to Bid. It is the responsibility of the Respondent to obtain the available Addenda and acknowledge them on the Proposal Form of this RFP. Failure to acknowledge Addenda may result in the proposal being deemed non-responsive and rejected without further evaluation.

4) **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:**
   a) Proposals must be submitted via email to the Primary Contact by 5:00 pm IST on May 19, 2025. Late proposals will not be accepted.
   b) A single PDF file is preferred for submission. However, multiple PDF files are acceptable if a single PDF exceeds the attachment size limits.
   c) Submission of a proposal establishes a conclusive presumption that the Respondent is thoroughly familiar with this RFP and that the Respondent understands and agrees to abide by the stipulations and requirements contained herein.
   d) Respondents who have worked for GFI India in the past are not exempt from submitting required documents or meeting other requirements listed in this RFP.
   e) All costs incurred in preparing and presenting the proposal are the Respondent's sole responsibility. No pre-proposal costs will be reimbursed. All documentation submitted with the proposal will become the property of GFI India.
   f) All submitted proposals must remain valid for a minimum of ninety (90) days from the final submission date.
   g) Proposals must be submitted on company letterhead.
   h) Proposals must be signed by an authorised signatory of the Respondent. Each signature represents a binding commitment of the Respondent to provide the goods and/or services offered if they are awarded the contract.

5) **WITHDRAWAL:** Proposals may be withdrawn prior to the proposal deadline. Proposals may not be withdrawn after that deadline.

6) **REJECTION:** GFI India reserves the right to reject any/all proposals or to accept or reject any proposal in part and to waive any minor irregularity in proposals received if it is determined by the Primary Contact to be in the best interest of GFI India.

7) **CONTRACT AWARD:** GFI India reserves the right to award by item, group, or total proposal to one (1) or more Respondents, a group of Respondents, or a combination, whichever is in the best interest of the execution of the project to the optimum quality-to-cost ratio. The description of this collaboration should highlight how it will bring new expertise, perspectives, and technologies to the subject area of this project. Total budgets (including indirect costs) for applicants, including such collaborations, should not exceed ₹5,00,000 (inclusive of all taxes and expenses related to project implementation). The successful Respondent(s) will be notified of GFI India's intent to award the contract at the earliest possible date.

STATEMENT OF WORK

1) **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:** As India's smart protein sector evolves, a well-equipped workforce will be essential to drive innovation and scale production. With the announcement and implementation of the BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) policy, the Government of India envisions the acceleration of bioeconomic growth by establishing biomanufacturing facilities, fostering innovation, and creating a highly skilled workforce. Additionally, the recognition and inclusion of 'Functional Foods and Smart Proteins' as a thematic area under the policy, with dedicated funding efforts for cutting-edge research in the field, serves as a testament to the increasing growth of the smart protein sector. As a result, the need for graduates with industry-relevant skills tailored to emerging areas of biomanufacturing has become more critical than ever. While India produces a large number of graduates in disciplines relevant to the sector—such as biotechnology, food science, and bioprocess engineering—there is a dearth of specialised, hands-on skills required for smart protein research and manufacturing. This gap poses a challenge for companies looking to hire talent with industry-specific expertise.

   The current study aims to address this workforce challenge by systematically identifying the specialised technical skills required for various job roles in the Indian smart protein sector, assessing the alignment between current academic curricula and talent needs, and formulating structured recommendations for upskilling programmes. By engaging with industry stakeholders, analysing academic and vocational training programmes, and estimating skilled workforce availability, the study will provide a roadmap for integrating smart protein training into university curricula and professional development programmes, ensuring that students and professionals alike can acquire the necessary expertise to contribute effectively to this growing industry. The findings outlined in the final report will form the foundation for collaboration with universities, skill development councils, and policymakers and will aid public sector bodies to compile a skills shortage list to inform workforce planning in the Indian smart protein sector.

2) CORE OBJECTIVES

This project will aim to determine technical skill gaps through a thorough analysis of industry requirements for the smart protein workforce across various job archetypes and a comparison with the current training landscape.

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the skills landscape in India's smart protein sector, identifying critical job roles (derived from GFI's comprehensive Alternative Protein Career Pathways tool) across the three verticals (plant-based meat, dairy, and egg, cultivated meat, and fermentation-derived ingredients for smart protein end-products) and mapping the specific technical skills required for each role.

- Analyse course curricula in Bachelor's, Master's, PhD, Vocational, Diploma, and similar programmes across various key disciplines relevant to smart protein and assess the talent/skill gap (theoretical and practical/technical competencies) in the Indian workforce.

- Map the number of students graduating from the most relevant programmes each year to estimate the pool of employable candidates that need to be upskilled and placed in smart protein job roles in India.
- Develop structured recommendations for academic institutions, skill development councils, and policymakers, outlining strategies to integrate smart protein-specific modules and/or courses into university curricula and establish upskilling programmes for early and mid-career professionals.

3) SCOPE AND DESCRIPTION OF WORK:

This skills mapping study is to be divided into three sequential phases:

PHASE 1: INDUSTRY JOB ROLES AND TECHNICAL SKILL REQUIREMENTS

Using the GFI Career Pathways tool and by plugging in any India-specific information on job archetypes and technical skill requirements for each job role (if applicable), GFI India will conduct surveys/interviews with companies under each vertical of smart protein technology (plant-based dairy and meat, fermentation, and cultivated meat). We expect that companies will provide insights on job roles and skills specific to their level of manufacturing (pilot scale or above) and any hiring and training preferences. Additionally, the consultant will conduct in-depth secondary research of published studies analysing the current talent shortcomings in smart protein-adjacent industries (food processing, biotechnology, etc.) to supplement the data obtained from industry interviews.

This phase will aim to collect data on:

- Which key disciplines do graduates typically come from to possess the required technical skills for this job archetype upon entering the workforce?
- The skills gaps among graduates that need to be addressed for each job archetype.
- Companies' preferences for induction/training of new recruits (on-site/external training).

With the results obtained by GFI India from the survey and independent secondary research data extrapolated from industry job trends, the consultant will create a comprehensive write-up of the skills expectations and current scenario of the regional smart protein hiring landscape. This will be part 1 of the final report.

Outcome:

- Collate information on job roles unique to the Indian smart protein sector (if any), segregated across each smart protein vertical.
- Deeper insight on the roles companies find most challenging to fill, the technical skills required for these roles and the specific skills lacking in fresh graduates and mid-career professionals.

PHASE 2: CURRICULUM AND TECHNICAL SKILLS STUDY IN ACADEMIA

The consultant will:

- Analyse the course structures and modules within key degree programmes across Indian universities [University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) certified], certificate courses by skill-building councils [National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) & Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) and all bodies that fall under their ambit, such as FICSI, LSSSDC, etc., and government councils such as MoFPI, FSSAI, etc.]
- Estimate the annual number of graduates at different levels [Bachelor's (B.Sc, B.Tech, B.E, B.Pharm, B.Voc), Master's (M.Sc, M.Tech, M.E), integrated Bachelor's and Master's, Diploma (DMLT, DFPT, DDT, etc.), Vocational (B.F.Sc.., BMLT, BDT, etc.), and PhDs in these disciplines to assess the talent pool that could be upskilled for smart protein roles. This information can be obtained through a desktop search (with or without specialised software/tools) of curricula across various universities and institutes in India, and if further information is required, through interviews with academic faculty/course coordinators/instructors.

Further, the consultant will compare the above information with insights gathered from Phase 1 to:

- Map the technical skills required by companies that are not currently covered in existing theoretical and practical curricula.
- Highlight the various existing course titles and types (vocational, diploma, UG, PG, PhD) under which these skilling courses can be incorporated. For example, introducing an 'extrusion and extruded products' hands-on training course into a 'food processing' degree and 'food industry manufacturing' vocational course could bridge the knowledge and skill gap specific to extrusion, which would enable graduates of the above courses to find jobs in a plant-based meat/ingredient manufacturing company.
- Delineate the technical skills based on expertise levels—operator (vocational training skillset), scientist (undergraduate/graduate skillset, PhD skillset), etc., to understand where upskilling courses can be plugged.
- Identify the number of graduates and their regional distribution across India in comparison to the location of smart protein manufacturing industrial hubs.

Outcome:

- Preliminary mapping of industry demand against the existing graduate talent pool.
- A reference list of educational programmes most suited for incorporating training curricula required for the smart protein sector, which will form part 2 of the final report.

PHASE 3: DRAFT A REPORT WITH FOCUSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

Using the data and learnings derived from the above two phases, the consultant will formulate recommendations for industry stakeholders, academic stakeholders (educators, department heads, and university boards), government ministries and skill development councils, encompassing the following information:

- Clear recommendations (what, how, why, when) for integrating smart protein-specific theoretical/practical training into curricula and standalone upskilling programmes, intended to increase flexibility in course selection and emphasis on research and interdisciplinary thinking, as outlined in the National Education Policy, 2020.
- What is the importance of adding these courses to the national education policy framework, and why is there an urgency for this in the current employment scenario?

Outcome:

- A comprehensive report outlining:
    - Findings from Phase 1: Talent expectations in the Indian smart protein workforce.
    - Findings from Phase 2: Strategies for skill development programmes to enhance the employability of the graduate talent pool and industry professionals, and relevant academic curricula to incorporate these strategies into.
    - Structured recommendations for industry trainers, academic boards, and policymakers to address skill gaps by curating and constantly updating curricula for emerging technologies. If relevant, additional messaging for students (from key disciplines) who are looking to pursue a career in the smart protein sector on how to navigate upskilling.

4) PROPOSED FINAL DELIVERABLES:

1. **Inception report:** An up to 5-page document outlining the study design, data collection and analysis methods, and a work plan along with timelines.
2. **Interim report:** An 8-10 page report at the halfway point and after the completion of each phase (1 and 2) providing preliminary findings, progress updates, or any course correction, and a detailed plan for Phase 3.
    a. Phase 1 completion report
    b. Phase 2 completion report
    c. Phase 3 discussion plan
3. **Final report:** A 45-50 page final report, including an executive summary, all data, analyses, purpose and methodology (including justification of the process used to collect data), figures depicting data and findings, and recommendations for each type of audience corresponding to the detailed work description shared.
4. **Raw data:** All raw data (qualitative and quantitative), information collection templates, sources, cleaned transcripts and contact information of stakeholder interviews (if

applicable), etc., generated over the course of the project. These are also to be included in each interim report, as well as presented at the very end as a compilation of all raw data collected/generated during the course of the study.

5. **Presentation:** Slide deck(s) with clear divisions between each phase (scope/objective, methodology, results, and final recommendations) with appropriate visual aids for presenting the findings and recommendations to government, academic and industry stakeholders (and students, if relevant).
6. **Webinar:** Participate and present the findings alongside GFI India in a webinar organised by GFI India (late 2025).

5) TIMELINE AND BUDGET

GFI India's maximum estimated cost for the project is **INR 5,00,000**. Cost competitiveness within this limit will be a key evaluation criterion for the financial proposal.

We seek to begin the project in June 2025 and anticipate it to last for **four months**. This does not include the additional time required for the consultancy to participate in a webinar after the report is published (approximately 8–12 weeks after the work is completed).

The following project phases are guidelines for the release of payment:

Milestone	**Timeline**	**Payment (subject to approval of the deliverable)**
Formal awarding and acceptance of the contract	Upon contract signing	10 percent of the total contract amount
Inception report: Study design, methodology and work plan	2 weeks after the date of contract signing	—
Phase 1 completion report with findings and plans for Phase 2	6 weeks after the date of contract signing	20 percent of the total contract amount
Phase 2 completion with findings published as an interim report for GFI India's final report	10 weeks after the date of contract signing	20 percent of the total contract amount
Discussion of final report content based on findings from interim report (Phase 1 and 2)	12 weeks after the date of contract signing	—
Final report submission along with presentation	16 weeks after the date of contract signing	50 percent of the total contract amount

6) EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. **EVALUATION:** Proposals will be evaluated on merit and completeness by an Evaluation Team. Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

    - Qualifications, experience, and expertise of the consultant **(20 percent)**
    - Technical proposal **(50 percent)**
    - Financial proposal **(30 percent)**

The Evaluation Team may consider the past performance of the Respondent on other contracts with GFI India (if any). GFI India reserves the right to conduct additional due diligence as deemed necessary and may require the submission of additional information at its sole discretion.

2. **GENERAL PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS:**

- **Electronic proposal**: Send proposals by email to the **Primary Contact mentioned on page one** of this RFP by 5:00 PM IST on May 19, 2025. Late proposals will not be accepted.
- **Proposal format:** It is preferred that proposals are assembled in the order of *specific proposal requirements* listed below. Applicants may submit one single PDF file only.

    - All proposal document uploads should be in PDF format, use Arial font size 11 pt or larger, have document margins of 0.5", and use a standard A4 page size.

    - Please verify that your proposal follows the budget and page limits. **Proposals exceeding the page limits will not be reviewed.**

    - Proposals may be submitted until the deadline listed on the first page of this RFP. **Proposals will not be accepted after the deadline for any reason**.

3. **SPECIFIC PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS:** Failure to include a complete response to each of the following items, which are specific to proposal responsiveness and to the RFP's Evaluation Criteria, may result in the proposal being deemed non-responsive.

- **Qualifications, experience, and expertise:**

    - A sample of previous work, ideally related to skills/talent mapping, workforce development in food processing, food and beverage manufacturing, biotechnology, and biomanufacturing or in allied sectors.
    - A brief profile of the organisation, along with a list of project team members who would be significantly involved, including their CVs, areas of expertise, and proposed roles.
    - List of any additional subcontractors that may be used to complete the assignment.
    - References from previous clients.

- **Technical proposal:** A project plan that responds to the scope of work with discussion on study design and methodology proposed. This should include a detailed timeline, including intermediate milestones (including start and completion of each project phase),

that shows the Respondent's ability to work within the timeline specified. This will account for 50 percent weightage during proposal evaluation.

  - **Project design (mandatory)–5-page limit**
    - Up to five pages describing project aims, methods, collaborations within the Respondent's organisation (if applicable), and references (if applicable).

  - **Work plan with timeline (mandatory) –2-page limit**
    - Up to two pages outlining the project objectives, milestones, tasks, and dependencies included in your research design. You may choose the format, but Gantt charts and timeline diagrams are often preferred. Please use general timeframes rather than specific calendar dates.
  - **Impact strategy (mandatory)–1-page limit**
    - One page providing a detailed description of the impact of the proposed skills mapping study on the Indian smart protein ecosystem.

- **Financial proposal**: Provide a detailed budget breakdown for the entire study, including personnel costs, data collection, analysis, reporting, and any other relevant expenses. Budget requests must be in INR. As mentioned earlier, cost competitiveness within the provided maximum estimated cost of ₹5,00,000 will account for 30 percent of the proposal evaluation. This guidance applies to both the applicant and sub-award organisations.

  Applicants are advised to base their budget on the actual estimated cost of the proposed study. We encourage applicants to request the funding required for the success of their project while building a conservative and realistic budget.

ABOUT THE GOOD FOOD INSTITUTE INDIA

The Good Food Institute India (GFI India) is the leading organisation and expert convening body for India's emerging smart protein sector. As part of an international network of organisations across the U.S., Brazil, Europe, Israel, Japan, and APAC, we are on a mission to build a secure, sustainable, and equitable global food system for all. Working alongside scientists, businesses, and policymakers, GFI India's team focuses on making alternative proteins delicious, affordable, and accessible. Leveraging India's unique strengths—indigenous crops and agrarian economy, low-cost technologies and infrastructure, abundant talent pool, and biomanufacturing prowess—we are pioneering an ecosystem that can put smart protein on every plate.

By 2050, the world's population will reach 10 billion, nearly a sixth of whom will be Indian. This population growth, combined with rising incomes and urbanisation, is fuelling the demand for protein. Meeting this demand primarily with conventional animal products poses significant risks, further exacerbating environmental degradation and resource depletion, including deforestation, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and a rise in anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.

India's agricultural biodiversity, with crops such as pulses, legumes, and oilseeds, as well as an abundant coastline with access to resources such as seaweed and algae, has the potential to offer high-value inputs for the global alternative protein industry. By diversifying agriculture toward these climate-positive crops and leveraging cutting-edge technologies, GFI India is unlocking opportunities to scale sustainable protein production while supporting rural workforce development, agricultural resilience, and an economic boost for farmers.

In building the smart protein sector in India from the ground up—through science, business, and policy initiatives that are engaging academia, industry, and government—we are establishing a model for its growth in the global south. Our team of experts provides critical advisory support, drives high-impact research, and builds networks across the smart protein value chain to accelerate innovation and position India at the forefront of the sector.

Our strategy includes advancing public funding for R&D, supporting the techno-commercialisation of smart protein innovation, and promoting a progressive regulatory environment. With one of the world's largest working-age populations, India stands to become a leading hub for talent, training, and innovation in smart protein, with the potential to cultivate a high-margin agribusiness sector that benefits millions. At GFI India, we envision a future where smart protein products taste as good as, cost as much or less than, and are as accessible as conventional animal proteins, transforming the food system toward a more just and sustainable model.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about your submission or any other pre-bid queries, please contact Amrutha Girivasan (indiacollab@gfi.org).