REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Mapping legal and regulatory compliance for a fermentation-derived protein manufacturing facility in India

Issue date: 27 Jan 2026

Deadline for the submission of proposals: 24 Feb 2026

Primary contact: Astha Gaur, Senior Policy Specialist - Regulatory; indiacollab@gfi.org

DESCRIPTION: Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), the Good Food Institute India (GFI India) seeks proposals from law firms, regulatory consultants, and individual compliance practitioners to map the legal and regulatory compliance requirements for establishing and operating a fermentation-derived protein manufacturing facility in India.

The primary objective of this project is to clarify the regulatory landscape and provide a simplified, clear compliance roadmap to help companies set up food-grade fermentation manufacturing facilities in India, including those utilising Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and their derivatives, over the next two to three years, while also highlighting the areas where compliance burden can be reduced for food-grade ingredient facilities.

REQUIREMENTS:

The proposals must be emailed to indiacollab@gfi.org by the specified due date. No hard copy submissions or late proposals will 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 Proposals (RFP) 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 Addenda issued by GFI India will be sent via email to those Respondents that submit a proposal on time. 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 indiacollab@gfi.org on or before February 24, 2026. Late proposals will not be accepted.

b) A single PDF file is preferred. 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 with 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 solely the Respondent's responsibility. No pre-proposal costs will be reimbursed.

f) Proposals must be valid for at least ninety (90) days.

g) Proposals must be signed by an authorised signatory of the Respondent's institution. Each signature represents the Respondent's binding commitment to fulfil the objectives of this RFP and to deliver the specified deliverables if the Respondent is awarded the project.

5) WITHDRAWAL:

Proposals may be withdrawn before February 24, 2026. 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 the proposal to one (1) Respondent, in the best interest of the execution of the project, to the optimum quality-to-cost ratio. Research partnerships may include individuals or groups within the respondent's organisation. Total budgets (including indirect costs) for applicants, including such collaborations, should not exceed **₹3,00,000** (inclusive of all taxes and expenses related to project implementation). The successful Respondent will be notified of GFI India's intent to award the project at the earliest possible date.

STATEMENT OF WORK

1) BACKGROUND AND WORK:

Smart proteins are a solution to the most pressing challenges globally, including climate change, antimicrobial resistance, effective land use, and water scarcity. In India, in addition to addressing these challenges, smart proteins can also contribute to India's growing bioeconomy. GFI India classifies smart protein into three modalities: plant-based (meat, seafood, eggs, and dairy), cultivated meat, and ingredient technologies (precision fermentation and biomass fermentation).

Precision fermentation uses microbial hosts (genetically engineered microorganisms such as bacteria, yeast, or fungi) as "cell factories" to produce specific functional ingredients. These ingredients typically require greater purity than the primary protein ingredients and are incorporated at much lower levels. These functional ingredients can improve sensory characteristics and functional attributes of plant-based products or cultivated meat. Precision fermentation can produce enzymes, flavouring agents, vitamins, natural pigments, and fats. In India, Perfect Day's non-animal-derived whey protein has received pre-market approval from the FSSAI.

Biomass fermentation leverages the rapid growth and high protein content of many microorganisms to efficiently produce large quantities of protein. The microbial biomass itself can serve as an ingredient, with cells intact or minimally processed—for example, broken open to improve digestibility or to enrich for even higher protein content. This biomass serves as the main ingredient of a food product or as one of several primary ingredients in a blend. In India, ACME's mycoprotein derived from Fusarium venenatum, Reliance's phototrophic algal biomass-derived protein powder, and Nature's Fynd's Fy Protein (Nutritional Fungal Protein derived from Fusarium str. flavolapis) have received pre-market approval from the FSSAI.

Opportunity for India's bioeconomy to leverage the growing demand for fermentation-derived inputs

Fermentation-derived products are a rapidly growing category within the alternative protein sector. Driven by innovations in biotechnology that enable microbes like yeast and bacteria to produce proteins, fats/oils, and other ingredients, many foods can now be made using these technologies. Furthermore, the biomass fermentation industry has

seen a rapid diversification in microbial species, production methods, and consumer products.

Together, these advancements have set the stage for fermentation-derived products to earn widespread presence in food formulations and on store shelves. To ensure long-term category growth, the industry needs to scale manufacturing and sustain continuous R&D to accommodate rising demand and ever-improving innovations in microbial biotechnology and fermentation approaches. Converting existing breweries, ethanol plants, or pharma bioreactors can also reduce capital expenditure by up to 70% (as per a 2023 GFI study).

To capitalise on this opportunity, India needs food-specific manufacturing facilities to produce food-grade precision fermentation and biomass fermentation ingredients for alternative proteins and other products. Both Indian and foreign companies are looking to set up manufacturing in India or utilise the services of existing contractual manufacturing operations (CMOs), which traditionally serve the biotechnology and pharma industry with more stringent regulatory and compliance specifications. Thereby, alternative protein companies and CMOs have identified and shared challenges in navigating the over-regulation for producing food-grade ingredients from the biotechnology-based biomanufacturing set-ups.

GFI India is planning a project to guide the industry, recognise the challenges, and support policymakers to improve the ease of doing business index for manufacturing these inputs. GFI India would like to work with the identified partner to utilise their expertise to undertake a mapping study and develop a detailed understanding of the regulatory compliance requirements for setting up a fermentation facility in India (especially Telangana and Karnataka). The results from this mapping exercise would be published as an open-access report, to be shared with companies to clarify the compliance pathways and, as a result, invite their interest in setting up facilities in India. The mapping would also help us understand the areas of over-regulation regarding food-specific ingredients in biomanufacturing facilities and advocate with policymakers for separate categorisation and reduced compliance burden for such facilities.

2) PROPOSED FINAL DELIVERABLES:

1. **Detailed mapping of all relevant legal and regulatory requirements** for establishing and operating a commercial, food-grade, fermentation-derived protein manufacturing facility in India, including those utilising GMOs and their derivatives.
2. **Highlighting the areas where compliance burden can be reduced** for a food-grade ingredient facility.
3. **Presenting the findings in a clear, simplified, and easily disseminated format (a regulatory roadmap and report)**, referring to case studies conducted collaboratively with relevant stakeholders, as necessary.

3) TIMELINE AND BUDGET

GFI India's estimated maximum cost for the project is **₹3,00,000 (inclusive of all taxes and project implementation expenses)**. The financial proposal's cost competitiveness within this budget will play a crucial role in the scoring assessment during the evaluation.

We seek to begin the project by April 2026 and anticipate it to last four months from the date of initiation.

4) EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

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

- Qualifications, experience, and specific research expertise in the subject area of this RFP **(30 percent)**
- Technical quality of the proposal **(40 percent)**
- Financial proposal **(30 percent)**

The Evaluation Team may consider the past performance 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 further information at its sole discretion.

B. GENERAL PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS:

- **Electronic proposal:** Submit the proposal via email to indiacollab@gfi.org by February 24, 2026. Late proposals will not be accepted.
- **Proposal format:** Proposals must be in a single PDF file and should include research goals that can be achieved within a period of four (4) or fewer months.

Please submit a proposal that includes:

1. **Proposed methodology:** A detailed plan for how your team will conduct the compliance mapping and deliver the final report.
2. **Team profile:** Relevant experience of the key personnel in law and regulatory compliance advisory for large-scale infrastructure in India.
3. **Proposed timeline:** A schedule of key phases/milestones and deliverables aligned with the four-month duration.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about your submission, please contact Astha Gaur, Senior Policy Specialist - Regulatory, GFI India (indiacollab@gfi.org).

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.