

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Individual Consultant to Guide Career Planning, Idea Generation, Business Plan Development and Resource Linkage for Selected Dalit Youth Interns

Assignment Title	Individual Consultant – Career Guidance, Idea Generation, Business Plan Development and Resource Linkage Mentor, Dalit Youth Internship & Community-Driven Innovation Program
Type of Contract	Individual consultancy, fee-based (lump-sum/output-based)
Duty Station	Home-based / field-based, with travel to intern host organizations and community sites as required
Duration	[Insert number] months, aligned with the full internship cycle (indicatively 6–9 months)
Reporting To	Head of Program - General, DALIT
Number of Positions	One (1)

1. Background

As part of Implement an internship program for Dalit students to foster community-driven innovation¹ - the project will place 10 Dalit students in structured internships with local businesses, NGOs, social enterprises, and government institutions. The internship integrates academic learning with practical exposure to technology, entrepreneurship, and civic leadership, and is designed to build participants' skills, confidence, and professional networks.

Within this cohort, 5 students will be supported to propose and pilot community-driven innovation ideas that respond to challenges faced by Dalit communities, such as access to education, healthcare, or livelihood opportunities. As set out in the activity design, these students require dedicated guidance from an external expert who will support proposal development, provide technical mentorship, and help translate ideas into viable, fundable initiatives without providing direct financial support to students, since all approved piloting costs are managed and disbursed directly by the project in line with approved activity plans.

To deliver this support, the project intends to hire an Individual Consultant who will work closely with the selected interns to shape their career plans, guide idea generation, support business plan development, link them to relevant resources and networks, and mentor them consistently over the life of the program.

2. Objective of the Assignment

The overall objective is to strengthen the career readiness and entrepreneurial capacity of selected Dalit youth interns by providing structured, hands-on mentorship covering career planning, innovative idea generation, business plan development, and linkage to resources, so that participants can translate their internship experience into sustainable community impact and future opportunities.

Specific objectives:

- Support each selected intern to develop a clear, individualized career development plan aligned with their skills, interests, and community priorities.
- Facilitate structured idea-generation workshop so that the selected students can identify feasible, context-specific community innovation ideas.
- Coach interns in developing practical, well-costed business/implementation plans for their innovation ideas, suitable for pilot implementation.
- Connect interns with relevant resource persons, institutions, funding opportunities, and professional networks that can sustain their ideas beyond the program.
- Provide continuous mentorship, progress monitoring, and constructive feedback to interns throughout the internship period.

3. Scope of Work and Key Tasks

The consultant will undertake, at minimum, the following tasks:

3.1 Career Planning

- Conduct an initial assessment of each intern's skills, interests, and career aspirations.
- Develop individual career development plans in consultation with each of the 10 interns.
- Organize career-guidance sessions, including exposure to professional pathways in technology, entrepreneurship, and civic leadership.

3.2 Idea Generation and Screening

- Facilitate idea-generation workshops with interns to identify community-driven innovation concepts addressing Dalit community priorities (e.g., education, healthcare, livelihoods, digital literacy, and advocacy).
- Support selected students to refine and prioritize their innovation ideas prior to proposal development.
- Provide technical review and feedback on draft proposals, in coordination with the program team.

3.3 Business/Implementation Plan Development

- Coach selected students in developing simple, practical business or implementation plans for their pilot innovations, including objectives, activities, budget estimates, and expected outcomes.
- Review and validate budget estimates for small-scale program costs (materials, community-engagement travel, and event facilitation) for submission to the DALIT for approval and disbursement; the consultant will not handle or disburse funds directly.
- Support interns to define measurable outcomes tied to community priorities.

3.4 Linkage to Resources and Networks

- Identify and connect interns with relevant mentors, technical resource persons, host institutions, local governance actors, and potential future partners or employers.
- Support the establishment of an alumni network to sustain relationships between interns, host organizations, and the project beyond the internship period.
- Introduce interns to resource-mobilization strategies so they can independently seek future support for their initiatives.

3.5 Ongoing Mentorship and Monitoring

- Provide regular one-on-one and group mentorship sessions throughout the internship period.
- Monitor the progress of pilot innovation activities and provide troubleshooting support.
- Maintain simple tracking records/logs of mentorship sessions and intern progress.
- Support the organization of a final networking/showcase event to present interns' achievements to host organizations, partners, and community stakeholders.
- Submit periodic progress reports to the Head of Program - General.

4. Deliverables and Indicative Timeline

Payments will be made against satisfactory completion and approval of the following deliverables:

#	Deliverable	Indicative Timeline	Payment Linkage
1	Inception note, including assessment methodology, career-planning tools/templates, and a work plan for the assignment	Within 1 weeks of contract signing	30%
2	Individual career development plans for all 10 interns. Facilitation report of idea-generation workshop(s), and Reviewed and endorsed business/implementation plans (with budget estimates)	Month 1	40%
3	Final report, including a documented networking/showcase event and consolidated outcomes for all 10 interns	End of assignment	30%

5. Duration and Level of Effort

The assignment is expected to run for 6 months, structured to align with the internship cycle, from intern orientation through to the final showcase event. The consultant is expected to commit an estimated 2 working days per month, with flexibility to accommodate mentorship needs and key milestones (business plan development, pilot rollout, monitoring visits, showcase event).

6. Reporting and Coordination

- The consultant will report to the Head of Program - General of DALIT.
- The consultant will coordinate closely with the project team, and any other technical experts engaged under the internship program.
- Monthly progress updates and a final report will be submitted in the format agreed with the project team.

7. Qualifications and Experience

The consultant should possess the following qualifications and experience:

- A Bachelor's degree (Master's preferred) in business administration, social entrepreneurship, development studies, education, or a related field.
- A minimum of 10 years of relevant experience in career counselling, youth mentorship, business plan development, incubation/acceleration support, or livelihoods programming.
- Demonstrated experience designing or facilitating idea-generation, business planning, or entrepreneurship-coaching processes, preferably with youth or marginalized groups.
- Strong understanding of, and demonstrated sensitivity to, Dalit rights, caste-based discrimination, and inclusive community development approaches.
- Established networks with businesses, NGOs, social enterprises, government institutions, or funding bodies that can support resource linkage for interns.
- Excellent facilitation, coaching, and interpersonal communication skills, with the ability to work directly with university students.
- Willingness and ability to travel to community and host-organization sites as required.

8. Selection Criteria and Process

Interested candidates will be assessed based on a combined review of technical qualifications/experience and, where applicable, a financial proposal, using an indicative weighting such as the following (to be finalized by the procurement/selection committee):

- Relevant qualifications and experience (40%)

- Technical approach/methodology for career guidance, idea generation, and business-plan mentorship (30%)
- Demonstrated networks and experience relevant to Dalit youth and community development (15%)
- Financial proposal (15%)

Shortlisted candidates may be invited for an interview and/or a brief presentation of their proposed approach.

9. Payment Terms

Payment will be made on a lump-sum, deliverable-based schedule as outlined in Section 4, upon submission and approval of each deliverable by the Head of Program - General. No advance payment will be made to students, and the consultant will not directly manage or disburse program funds intended for student-led pilot activities; such costs remain the responsibility of the project/DALIT, disbursed in line with approved activity plans.

10. Application Procedure

Interested candidates should submit the following documents to the **Chairperson, Procurement Committee, through career.dalit@gmail.com by 10 July 2026:**

- An updated Curriculum Vitae (CV).
- A brief technical proposal/approach note (maximum 3 pages).
- A financial proposal, indicating a daily/monthly rate or lump-sum fee for the full assignment.
- Contact details of at least two professional references.