

# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FILE CONSULTANT SELECTION**

## **WOMEN CLIENT STUDY**

### **PAHAL FINANCIAL SERVICES INDIA**

**JUNE 2025**

With the financial support of

**Table of contents**

Section 1. Letter of invitation .....3

Section 2. Instructions to Consultants .....4

Section 3. Terms od reference .....6

## Section 1. Letter of invitation

Montrouge, 18/06/2025

Dear Sir or Madam,

1. GCA now invites proposals to provide the following consulting services: « **Women client study** » on behalf of **Pahal Financial Services**. For further information on the activities to be conducted, please refer to the Terms of Reference in Section 3 of the document.
2. The Consultant will be selected under selection based on consideration of quality and cost (SBQC) and procedures described in this document. The budget relating to this mission cannot exceed **fifteen thousand EUR**, excluding tax (15,000 EUR excluding tax).
3. This call for proposals includes the following sections:
  - Section 1 - The Letter of Invitation
  - Section 2 - Instructions to Consultants
  - Section 3 - Terms of reference

Yours sincerely,

Edouard SERS, Risk and Impact Director  
Maya AZCONA, Technical Assistance Programme Officer

## Section 2. Instructions to Consultants

- 1.1 Name of project owner: Grameen Crédit Agricole Microfinance Foundation represented by Mrs Maya AZCONA, Technical Assistance Programme Officer and Mr Edouard SERS, Chief Risk & Compliance Officer.

Selection method: selection based on consideration of quality and cost (SBQC)

- 1.2 Name, objectives and description of the mission: **Mission « Women client study »** on behalf of **Pahal Financial Services**.

The Project Owner provides the following inputs: any available document that could be useful for the proper conduct of the mission.

- 1.3 Clarifications may be requested up to 2 (two) days before the submission date **by email with confirmation of receipt:**

- [maya.azcona@credit-agricole-sa.fr](mailto:maya.azcona@credit-agricole-sa.fr)
- [edouard.sers@credit-agricole-sa.fr](mailto:edouard.sers@credit-agricole-sa.fr)

Proposals will be submitted in the following language: **English**

- 2.1 Reports that are part of the assignment must be written in the following language(s): **English**

- 2.2 Consultants shall state their price component for cost incurred in Euro. Consultants who intend to incur costs in other currencies for the assignment may state the corresponding price component in Euros.

- 2.3 Proposals must remain valid 60 days after the submission date.

- 2.4 Consultants must submit an electronic version of each proposal (one version for the technical proposal and one version for the financial proposal).

**The CVs sent by the Consultants must not exceed 5 pages and the experiences/previous missions related to this proposal must be clearly indicated. The Consultants' financial proposal must clearly distinguish the following budget lines:**

- **Consultancy fees/costs**
- **Travel expenses.**

- 2.5 The Consultant takes note that this declaration provides that GCAMF reserves the right to have the Consultant's files and archives relating to the contract inspected and copied by the auditors they appoint.

3.1 Consultants must submit an electronic version of the Proposal to the following addresses:

- [edouard.sers@credit-agricole-sa.fr](mailto:edouard.sers@credit-agricole-sa.fr)
- [maya.azcona@credit-agricole-sa.fr](mailto:maya.azcona@credit-agricole-sa.fr)

Proposals must be submitted no later than the following date and time: **04/07/2025 by 6 PM (CET)**

4.1 The number of points awarded for each evaluation criterion and sub-criterion is as follows (indicative values):

4.2 Points

**i) Profile of principal Consultant(s):**

- Proven relevant experience (see point 2.1 on the Instructions to consultants' section) [0 – 10]
- Proven knowledge and experience in client studies [0 - 10]
- Similar country experiences and region at large [0 – 10]

Sub-total : [0 - 30]

**ii) Technical offer:**

- Comprehensive understanding of the ToR [0 – 5]
- Degree of critical analysis of the requested service [0 – 5]
- Clarity of the offer [0 – 10]
- Proposed approach [0 – 35]

Sub-total : [0 - 55]

iii) Participation of local staff among the proposed consultancy team [0 – 15]

Total : [0 – 100]

The minimum technical score (TS) required to pass is:

60 points

Currency used for price conversion: Euro

4.3 The respective weights assigned to the technical and financial Proposals are:

Technical proposal = 0.8, and

Financial proposal = 0.2

4.4 Negotiations may take place by email, telephone or digital platforms (Zoom, Skype, Webex, Teams, etc.).

5.1 Expected date for commencement of the mission is planned for 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2025 but the exact date will be agreed with Pahal.

Travels are planned in regions in India where Pahal operates.

## Section 3. Terms of reference

### 1) Context

The mandate of the inclusive finance sector is to provide access to financial services for people who are excluded from them, giving them the opportunity to finance their needs, particularly their income-generating activities.

Grameen Crédit Agricole (GCA) aims to promote women's empowerment through tailored financial services and by supporting women's entrepreneurship in countries in territories where women financial needs remain underserved. As an investor, lender, technical assistance coordinator and fund advisor, GCA finances and supports initiatives that promote inclusive finance for, by and with women. GCA currently supports 77 partners in 35 countries with over €80 million in commitments.

Pahal is a Tier 1 microfinance institution that was established in 2011 by Purvi Jayendra Bhavsar and Kartik Shailesh Mehta, currently the two Managing Directors. Pahal provides group (90%) and individual loans (10%), serving more than 500k clients in 10+ Indian states. Its mission is to provide sustainable and inclusive financial services at an affordable price, having exposure with women (98% and rural areas (56% of clients) and displaying a developed offer.

### 2) GCA's client survey initiative

Women's financial inclusion has progressed significantly in recent years, as the gender gap in access to banking services has reached an all-time, according to the Global Findex. While this represents a solid base, 742 million women remain financially excluded worldwide, and strong regional disparities persist. What's more, having an account doesn't always guarantee active, beneficial financial engagement. Indeed, offering financial services to women does not systematically lead to effective use of these services i.e. empowerment or other positive externalities. Barriers of different kinds can explain the mixed results of many campaigns for women's financial inclusion.

In this context, GCA wishes to carry out relevant customer survey in 2025 with several partners. The aim of these studies is to listen to women customers and to get their feedback in order to 1) document outcomes of existing financial services and 2) further adapt those services to the specific needs expressed.

### 3) Pahal presentation

Pahal's ambition (to develop the economic contribution of women in India) is supporting India's ambitious development plan. Pahal helps women do productive work directly by giving access to funds or indirectly by giving access to services that will free productive time (access to clean water, having a proper roof, menstrual hygiene, health). This action has a three-fold impact:

1. On women's wellbeing and agency: strengthening women's control over resources, their own time, lives and bodies; and enhancing their self-confidence and voice, agency and effective participation in economic decision-making. When a woman starts earning, she gets more respected in her family and her community, and possibility of violence goes down.
2. On the local (and global) economy: fueling sustainable economic growth by encouraging entrepreneurship and boosting productivity. Worldwide, banks and other financial institutions could benefit from an estimated \$700 billion in additional annual revenue simply by serving women on an equal footing with men.
3. On their families and communities: significantly enhancing household financial stability, resulting in improved health, education and the general well-being of families and communities.

#### 4) The GCA-Pahal common project

The objective of this project is to conduct gender disaggregated research to identify specific financial challenges women face (lack of collateral, mobility restrictions, lower financial literacy, unsuited financial products...) and what could be upcoming improvements. In details:

- Understand the outcome of products and services provided by Pahal to date, taking into account key expected outcomes by GCA and Pahal. The study can focus a specific product or service, financial or non-financial.
- Identify the remaining barriers for women to access and use the products and services offered by Pahal
- Identify the areas of improvement for Pahal to better serve their women clients, such as new product features or specific training for agents.
- Understanding the specific need of women clients by listening to them directly

The questionnaire addressed to women borrowers will be developed by a selected third-party provider. The provider will work jointly with Pahal and GCA to refine the said questionnaire, to adequately capture essential points that Pahal wants to tackle in the survey. The questions will be adapted to the Pahal's set of products and services, to their client base and to their operational challenges.

If possible, Pahal's own field staff will be leveraged for data collection, by conducting on the field **face to face interviews** and using a **focus-group methodology**. In that case, the provider will train Pahal's staff and equip them with the right tools to lead the data collection independently, therefore participating in the team's **capacity building**.

The sample will be built according to Pahal's needs, relevance of activities of client and regional disparities. It should be a representative selection of Pahal's women client base. The analysis will also require data analysis, to be provided by Pahal.

The Provider will play a role on the quality control and validation of the results of the quantitative and qualitative survey. The provider will also ensure that polling and focus-group discussions are conducted in compliance with the best practices in terms of ethical conduct of surveys.

#### 5) Conditions

##### Timeline

Submission for proposal deadline: 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2025, 6pm CET.

Launch of the project: 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2025

End of the project and report presentation: end of October at the latest

Indicative steps and timeline:

- Drafting an adequate questionnaire, jointly with Pahal
- Training Pahal's field staff and equip them with the right tools to conduct data collection
- On the field: supervising the polling based on the established questionnaire
- Analysis of the results
- Finalizing the report at the end of October at latest

The proposal will include a diagram presenting the timeline of each step.

## **Budget**

The maximum budget should be EUR 15,000.

## **Deliverables**

- A tailored questionnaire, built with Pahal
- A training plan for Pahal's field staff to conduct data collection
- A database of all results or questionnaires
- A focus group discussion transcript / minutes
- Final outcome of the study is a long report, detailing conclusions on women feedback
- Debriefing session with Pahal and GCA. This should turn into a follow-up action plan integrating study result, to be validated by GCA and Pahal