



BUSINESS PLAN · INDIA

Landscape & Outdoor Design Business

*Garden design, softscape and hardscape execution, terrace landscapes and
maintenance contracts*

INTERIOR DESIGN & FURNISHING

AISEVAK.IN · BY ABL DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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This document is confidential and prepared for planning purposes. All financial figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian MSME context and must be validated against live quotes, local rates and professional advice before any investment or borrowing decision.

1. Executive Summary

This plan sets out a **Landscape & Outdoor Design** business in India — designing and executing **gardens, hardscape, planting, lawns, water features, terrace and podium landscapes and vertical gardens** for residential, corporate campus, hospitality, township and institutional clients, with **irrigation design and long-term maintenance contracts**.

This closes the interior vertical, and it is the third fee-based design model in it. But it differs from the interior design studio and the lighting practice in one fundamental respect that changes almost everything about how the business must be structured.

A landscape is the only design in this vertical that is incomplete on the day it is handed over. An interior designer hands over a finished room; a lighting designer commissions the installation and measures it. **A landscape designer hands over what is essentially a construction site with small plants in it, and the design only becomes itself over three to five years.** The consequence is uncomfortable and shapes the whole practice: **the handover photograph shows the worst the landscape will ever look — and it is the photograph the client sees, the portfolio carries, and the next prospect judges.** Clients respond by under-buying plant size, which is expensive; the designer's portfolio then suffers for years for a decision made on cost. **Managing that expectation honestly — showing three-year and five-year projections alongside the handover state — is not presentation polish, it is the core of selling this service.**

Second, and the reason maintenance is the business rather than an afterthought: plants die. No other discipline in this vertical carries a maintenance dependency of this kind. A modular kitchen without an AMC still works; an unmaintained lighting installation still lights. **An unmaintained landscape reverts to something visibly worse than bare ground within a single season** — weeds, dead plants, failed irrigation, and a client who concludes the design was wrong. **Maintenance contracts therefore grow from 15.0% to 22.0% of revenue here, with renewal rising from 62% to 85%,** and that is the strongest recurring-revenue story in the entire vertical — **stronger than modular AMC or lighting commissioning, because the alternative to maintenance is not degraded performance but visible failure.**

And the constraint that no rendering shows: soil, drainage and water. Most Indian landscape failures are soil failures — **construction debris used as backfill, no topsoil, compacted subgrade, no sub-surface drainage.** **A beautiful planting plan laid over 200mm of builder's rubble will die regardless of how good the design is,** and the designer will be blamed. This plan therefore treats **soil testing and drainage design as work that precedes planting design** — tracked from 44% to 88% of projects — and carries **plant replacement and establishment losses as an explicit cost falling from 7.9% to 5.5% of revenue.** The water question is equally direct: the water-conservation plan elsewhere in this library established that **tanker rates, not municipal tariffs, are the honest benchmark — and a landscape designed to need daily tanker water has a running cost the client was never told about.**

This plan models a business requiring **₹75 lakh** (₹40 lakh promoter + ₹12 lakh term loan + ₹23 lakh working-capital finance), moving from **₹2.8 crore revenue and a ₹14 lakh loss** in Year 1 to **₹7.95 crore revenue and ₹49 lakh profit** by Year 3, across roughly 6.8 lakh sq ft landscaped. (*Landscape design & build; maintenance-annuity driven, establishment-risk exposed — figures illustrative.*)

2. Business Description, Vision & Legal Structure

Concept: A landscape design-and-build practice — site analysis, soil and drainage assessment, planting and hardscape design, irrigation design, execution of softscape and hardscape, terrace and podium landscapes, vertical gardens, and long-term maintenance contracts.

Vision: To build gardens that look better in their fifth year than in their first — and to still be maintaining them when they do.

Mission: Test the soil before drawing the planting; design for the water the site actually has; show the client what it will look like in three years, not just on handover day; and stay to look after it.

Legal structure options

- **Private Limited** — suits corporate campus, township, hospitality and institutional clients and multi-year maintenance contracts.
- **LLP** — workable for a design-led practice subcontracting execution.
- **Proprietorship** — viable for a small residential practice but limits institutional and maintenance contracting.

Regulatory anchor: landscape work touches several regimes that a purely decorative reading would miss. **Municipal and development-authority norms frequently mandate minimum green or open-space provision**, and green-building certification (IGBC, GRIHA) awards credits for native planting, water-efficient irrigation and heat-island reduction — **which makes landscape a compliance deliverable on many projects rather than an amenity. Tree cutting, transplanting or pruning of existing trees generally requires municipal or forest-department permission, and unauthorised felling is an offence** — a point that catches many residential projects. Water sourcing for irrigation may involve **groundwater extraction rules and treated-wastewater reuse standards**, and reuse for landscape irrigation is often the most defensible water strategy available. Terrace and podium work sits on someone else's **waterproofing warranty**, which must be respected contractually. Otherwise: contract-labour compliance for gardening crews, plant-material sourcing documentation, and — for imported species — **plant quarantine and phytosanitary requirements**.

3. Promoter & Ownership

Led by a promoter with landscape architecture, horticulture or design-build background. Three competences decide outcomes: *horticultural judgement* — knowing what will actually survive in a given soil, aspect, microclimate and water regime, which is entirely different from knowing what looks good in a rendering; *site and services understanding*, since drainage, soil profile and irrigation determine whether the design lives; and *maintenance-business capability*, because the annuity is where this practice becomes durable. Plant survival, soil and drainage rigour, maintenance retention & honest expectation-setting are the differentiators. Ownership, equity & any partner are editable inputs.

4. Market Analysis — India

Demand is driven by villa and farmhouse development, corporate campus and IT-park landscaping, hospitality and resort projects, township common areas, green-building certification requirements, urban terrace and balcony gardening, and institutional campuses. Demand is growing and increasingly compliance-linked. The market rewards survival and maintenance capability over drawing quality; it is **seasonal, establishment-risk exposed and maintenance-dependent**.

Demand drivers

- **Villa, farmhouse and premium residential** — the volume base, emotionally driven, highest expectation of instant effect.
- **Corporate campuses and IT parks**, with large areas, professional procurement and genuine maintenance budgets.
- **Hospitality and resorts**, where landscape is a substantial part of the guest experience and is maintained accordingly.
- **Township and developer common areas** — large, price-competitive, and often handed to a residents' association whose maintenance appetite is uncertain.
- **Green-building certification and municipal green norms**, which convert landscape from optional to required.
- **Urban terrace, balcony and vertical gardens** — small, high-value, technically demanding.

Market sizing (illustrative framing)

Layer	Definition	Indicative scale
TAM	Indian landscape design, build & maintenance	Large, fragmented
SAM	Projects within crew reach & climate competence	Region-bounded
SOM (Yr 1-3)	Projects retained into maintenance	~34 → ~82 projects

Defining the addressable market by projects *retained into maintenance* rather than projects executed is deliberate, and it reframes the business. A landscape practice that builds gardens and walks away has a project business with a portfolio that deteriorates behind it — **every completed job becomes, within two years, evidence against the firm rather than for it.** A practice that retains maintenance has an annuity, a portfolio that improves with age, and a standing relationship at exactly the moment the client is considering their next phase. **The maintenance contract is therefore not an add-on sold after handover; it is the reason the design work is worth doing at all,** and it should be presented as part of the original proposition rather than raised once the client has already paid for a garden.

Target segments

- **Corporate campuses and IT parks** — best maintenance budgets and multi-year contracts.
- **Hospitality and resorts** — design-intensive, maintained to a standard, prestige for the portfolio.
- **Villa, farmhouse and premium residential** — the volume base and the referral engine.
- **Developers and townships** — large areas, thin margins, uncertain long-term maintenance.
- **Terrace, podium and vertical gardens** — technically demanding, high value per square foot.

5. Competition & Competitive Advantage

Landscape: nurseries offering free design against plant supply, general contractors adding landscaping to a build package, individual gardeners and malis, landscape architects who design but do not execute, and facility-management companies bundling garden upkeep. **The market is fragmented and the entry barrier is low, which means the differentiator has to be something a gardener with a van cannot claim.**

The business's edge

- **Plant survival** — measured and reported, which is the only outcome the client genuinely cares about a year later.
- **Soil and drainage rigour**, done before the planting plan rather than discovered afterwards.
- **Water-honest design** — planting selected for the site's actual water availability and cost, not for the rendering.

- **Maintenance capability** with trained crews, which turns each project into an annuity and each garden into a maturing portfolio piece.
- **Honest expectation-setting**, including three- and five-year projections at proposal stage.

On the nursery offering "free design", the same structure appears here as with manufacturer free design in the lighting plan — and it is worth stating without disparagement. A nursery's design service is free because it is a plant-sales function, and its output will specify what the nursery has in stock. That is not improper, and for a small garden it is often perfectly adequate. The difference is that a nursery has an interest in selling more plants and larger plants, while an independent practice has an interest in the garden surviving — and those diverge most sharply on exactly the decisions that matter: **species suited to the site rather than available in the yard, appropriate spacing rather than instant density, and soil preparation, which sells no plants at all.**

6. Services & Revenue Model

Service	Basis	Share
Landscape design fees	Per sq ft / staged lump sum	~22% — the design core
Softscape execution (planting, lawns, irrigation)	Per sq ft / BOQ	Where the risk lives
Hardscape execution (paving, walls, water features)	BOQ / contract	Contracting margins
Maintenance contracts (AMC)	Monthly / annual per site	15.0% → 22.0% — the annuity
Terrace, podium & vertical gardens	Project fee, specialist	High value per sq ft

Hardscape and softscape are two different businesses sharing a site, and confusing them is a common source of disappointment on both sides. Hardscape — paving, retaining walls, decks, water features — is ordinary contracting: measurable, predictable, subject to the same variation and retention issues as the turnkey plan describes, and it either works or it does not on the day it is finished. **Softscape is where the design actually lives and where every risk in this business sits:** it is unfinished at handover, dependent on soil the practice may not have controlled, vulnerable to weather, and it can fail six months later for reasons nobody observed. **The practical consequence is that they should be priced, warranted and reviewed separately** — a single "landscape package" price bundles a predictable contracting margin with an open biological risk, and the contracting margin is invariably the one that gets competed away.

7. Go-to-Market — Sell the Fifth Year

Winning work

- **Architect and interior-designer referral**, since landscape is usually appointed alongside or after them.
- **Completed gardens photographed at maturity**, not at handover — **a portfolio of two-year-old gardens sells far better than one of freshly planted sites.**
- **Corporate and hospitality facility teams**, where maintenance capability is often the deciding factor.
- **Developer relationships** for township and common-area work.

Setting expectations honestly

- **Three-year and five-year projections** presented alongside the handover state, so the client buys the garden rather than the day it opens.

- **Plant size and cost trade-offs explained** — larger stock costs more, establishes slower and often ends up smaller than smaller stock after four years.
- **Water and maintenance running costs stated at proposal stage**, not discovered afterwards.
- **Maintenance offered as part of the original proposition**, not sold after handover.

Sales approach

Build architect and designer referral → present maturity projections as standard practice → price softscape and hardscape separately → include maintenance in the original proposal → and **decline projects where the client will not fund soil preparation**. That refusal is the hardest and most valuable in this trade: **soil preparation is invisible, unglamorous, generates no photograph, and is the single largest determinant of whether the garden survives**. A client who will pay for imported specimen plants but not for topsoil and drainage is buying a landscape that will fail — **and it will fail slowly enough that the practice will be blamed long after the decision has been forgotten**.

8. Operations Plan (assess, design, prepare, plant, maintain)

- **Site assessment: soil testing (texture, pH, drainage, contamination), sub-surface investigation, aspect, microclimate, existing trees and water availability** — before any planting plan is drawn.
- **Design:** spatial layout, hardscape, planting design by **hydrozone**, and irrigation strategy integrated rather than added.
- **Ground preparation: debris removal, sub-surface drainage, subgrade decompaction and adequate topsoil depth** — the stage that decides survival.
- **Hardscape execution:** paving, walls, decks, water features and lighting coordination.
- **Plant sourcing & acclimatisation:** nursery selection, **hardening-off before planting**, and health inspection on receipt.
- **Planting & irrigation:** installation, mulching, staking and commissioning of the irrigation system by zone.
- **Establishment period: 6-12 months of intensive care, with responsibility for the plants contractually defined**.
- **Maintenance:** scheduled horticultural care, irrigation servicing, seasonal replacement and reporting.

Project cycle

Stage	Activity	Control point
Assess	Soil, drainage, water, microclimate	Soil tested before planting design
Design	Layout, hydrozoned planting, irrigation	Native/adapted species share
Prepare	Drainage, decompaction, topsoil	Topsoil depth achieved
Plant	Acclimatised stock, mulch, irrigate	Stock health on receipt
Establish	6-12 months intensive care	Plant survival at 12 months
Maintain	Scheduled care & reporting	AMC renewal rate

The establishment period contains the single most important contractual question in this trade, and most contracts leave it unanswered: who owns the plants while they are establishing? For six to twelve months after planting, a garden requires watering at the right frequency, weeding, feeding and observation — and **plants die during this period for reasons that may be the practice's (poor stock, wrong species, bad planting) or the client's (irrigation switched off, gardener dismissed, watering by a security guard)**. If responsibility is undefined, every

death becomes an argument, and the practice usually replaces the plant to preserve the relationship, absorbing a cost it may not have caused. **The workable structure is explicit: the practice retains responsibility for plant survival during establishment ONLY where it also holds the maintenance contract for that period.** That single clause aligns the incentive correctly — **the party that controls the watering carries the risk** — and it converts the establishment period from a source of disputes into the natural on-ramp for the maintenance annuity. Where a client declines maintenance, the practice should warrant workmanship and stock health at planting, and be equally explicit that **it cannot warrant the survival of plants it is not permitted to look after.**

9. Regulatory, Licences & Compliance (India)

- **Green-space norms:** municipal and development-authority requirements for minimum open and green area on many project types.
- **Green-building certification:** IGBC and GRIHA credits for **native planting, water-efficient irrigation, heat-island reduction and stormwater management** — making landscape a compliance deliverable, not an amenity.
- **Tree protection: cutting, transplanting or heavy pruning of existing trees generally requires municipal or forest-department permission, and unauthorised felling is an offence** — a requirement that regularly catches residential projects.
- **Water:** groundwater extraction rules where applicable; **treated-wastewater reuse standards for landscape irrigation, which is often the most defensible water strategy available.**
- **Plant material:** sourcing documentation; **plant quarantine and phytosanitary requirements for imported species.**
- **Terrace & podium work:** executed over someone else's **waterproofing warranty** — protection, drainage layers and load limits agreed in writing before work starts.
- Contract-labour compliance for gardening and maintenance crews; site safety for tree work and machinery; GST as works contract.

10. Organisation & Manpower Plan

Role	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Promoter / principal landscape designer	1	1	2
Gardeners, malis & maintenance crew	38	68	108
Site execution supervisors	8	13	20
Landscape designers & CAD	7	12	18
Horticulturists & plant specialists	4	7	11
Irrigation & services	3	5	8
Client servicing & business development	3	5	8
Admin, accounts & procurement	3	5	8
Total	67	116	183

Maintenance crew is 59% of headcount — a proportion that would look odd in any other design practice in this vertical and is exactly right here. **This is a design practice with a service business attached, and the service business is**

the larger half.

11. Implementation Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Setup	Month 0-3	Studio, nursery tie-ups, holding area, crews, soil-testing capability
Ramp	Month 3-12	~34 projects; ₹2.8cr revenue, ₹14L loss; AMC at 15% of revenue
Grow	Year 2	Survival 86%, AMC renewal 74%; ₹4.9cr, ₹6L profit
Scale	Year 3	₹7.95cr revenue, ₹49L profit; AMC 22% of revenue, survival 92%

12. Financial Plan (Illustrative)

All figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian context, shown so the promoter can replace them with live rates. **Plant survival, maintenance renewal, soil-preparation discipline and native-species share are the levers — and plant replacement is carried as a visible cost because it is where an unprepared landscape practice loses its margin.**

12.1 Project cost & means of finance

Capital requirement	₹
Working capital (salaries, plant material float & receivables)	28,00,000
Nursery tie-ups, plant holding & acclimatisation area	14,00,000
Design studio, CAD & IT	10,00,000
Site tools, irrigation testing & soil equipment	9,00,000
Brand, portfolio, photography & website	7,00,000
Team, training & recruitment	4,00,000
Legal, registrations & launch	3,00,000
Total project cost	75,00,000
Promoter contribution	40,00,000
Working-capital finance	23,00,000
Term loan	12,00,000

12.2 Projected Profit & Loss (3 years)

Particulars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Softscape execution (planting, lawns, irrigation)	78,00,000	1,35,00,000	2,10,00,000
Hardscape execution (paving, walls, water features)	65,00,000	1,10,00,000	1,68,00,000
Landscape design fees	62,00,000	98,00,000	1,52,00,000
Maintenance contracts (AMC)	42,00,000	92,00,000	1,75,00,000

Terrace, podium & vertical gardens	33,00,000	55,00,000	90,00,000
Total revenue	2,80,00,000	4,90,00,000	7,95,00,000
Plant material, hardscape material & irrigation	1,10,00,000	1,89,00,000	3,01,00,000
Salaries (designers, horticulturists, site, admin)	68,00,000	1,12,00,000	1,72,00,000
Site labour, gardeners & maintenance crew	38,00,000	66,00,000	1,05,00,000
Plant replacement & establishment losses	22,00,000	32,00,000	44,00,000
Studio, nursery, overheads & insurance	20,00,000	30,00,000	44,00,000
Site travel, transport & vehicle	15,00,000	24,00,000	36,00,000
Marketing, portfolio, photography & BD	12,00,000	18,00,000	26,00,000
Depreciation, interest & other	9,00,000	13,00,000	18,00,000
Total expenses	2,94,00,000	4,84,00,000	7,46,00,000
Net profit / (loss) before tax	(14,00,000)	6,00,000	49,00,000
Net margin	(5.0%)	1.2%	6.2%
Gross margin (revenue – material)	60.7%	61.4%	62.1%
Maintenance (AMC) as % of revenue	15.0%	18.8%	22.0%
AMC renewal rate	62%	74%	85%
Plant survival at 12 months	78%	86%	92%
Soil tested & drainage designed before planting	44%	68%	88%
Native / adapted species share of planting	38%	55%	70%
Plant replacement as % of revenue	7.9%	6.5%	5.5%
Area landscaped (lakh sq ft) / Projects	~2.4 / ~34	~4.2 / ~55	~6.8 / ~82

12.3 Unit economics — and how the interior vertical's arc closes

Across the ten plans in this vertical, four economically distinct models appear, and each is governed by a different number. Read together, they are the vertical's summary:

Business	Model	The number that decides it
Interior design studio	Fee design	Utilisation & revision recovery
Lighting design	Technical fee design	Performance spec & measured commissioning
Modular kitchen & wardrobe	Product manufacturing	Survey before production
Bespoke furniture	Prototype manufacturing	Estimate accuracy
Turnkey contracting	Project risk	Variations billed & retention released
Office fit-out	Corporate contracting	Live-building productivity & repeat clients
Ceiling & partition	Specialist trade	Measurement basis & sq ft per man-day

Home decor brand	Consumer trading	Cohort payback & SKU discipline
Materials supply	B2B trading	Bad debts as % of gross profit
Landscape design	Living design	Plant survival & maintenance renewal

- **Maintenance is the business.** Rising to 22% of revenue at 85% renewal, it is high-margin, recurring, and simultaneously the mechanism that keeps the portfolio improving. **No other plan in this vertical has an annuity that also protects the reputation of past work.**
- **Plant survival drives everything else.** Moving from 78% to 92% cuts replacement cost from 7.9% to 5.5% of revenue *and* raises renewal, because clients renew maintenance on gardens that are thriving.
- **Native and adapted planting at 70% is a cost decision as much as an ecological one** — lower irrigation, lower replacement, lower maintenance labour, and survival that does not depend on a tanker arriving.
- **Price hardscape and softscape separately:** one is predictable contracting, the other carries biological risk, and bundling lets the predictable margin be competed away.
- **Break-even: Year 2. Year 1's loss reflects establishment losses on a young book, crews being trained, and a maintenance base that has not yet accumulated.**

12.4 Projected Cash Flow — Year 1 (quarterly, illustrative)

Particulars (₹)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Opening balance	34,00,000	16,00,000	9,00,000	4,00,000
Collections	60,00,000	65,00,000	68,00,000	72,00,000
Plant material, wages, crew, replacement & overheads	78,00,000	72,00,000	73,00,000	68,00,000
Closing balance	16,00,000	9,00,000	4,00,000	8,00,000

Cash here has a seasonal shape driven by biology rather than by commerce, which is unusual in this library. Planting is done in defined windows — post-monsoon and pre-summer — because plants installed in peak summer die at rates no amount of watering prevents. That means **execution work concentrates into a few months and the practice pays for plant material, crews and preparation in a compressed period**, while collections follow completion. The monsoon itself is largely unbillable for planting though useful for hardscape and preparation. **The maintenance annuity is what smooths this**, and that is a further argument for building it deliberately: **AMC bills monthly, in advance, all year round, and by Year 3 it covers a meaningful share of fixed costs during the off-season**. Two further disciplines: **take plant material advances**, since nursery stock is bought outright and cannot be returned, and **never plant outside the season to suit a client's handover date** — the plants will die, the replacement will be at the practice's cost, and the client will remember the failure rather than the deadline they insisted on.

12.5 Key Performance Indicators to Monitor

- **Survival: plant survival at 12 months;** replacement cost by cause; establishment-period losses by responsibility; stock health on receipt.
- **Discipline: soil tested and drainage designed before planting design;** topsoil depth achieved; **native/adapted species share;** irrigation commissioned by zone.
- **Annuity: AMC renewal rate;** maintenance revenue as % of total; projects converting from build to maintenance; sites lost to a competing gardener.

- **Practice:** designer utilisation; hardscape vs. softscape margin separately; maturity photographs added to portfolio; projects declined on soil-preparation grounds.

13. Funding Requirement & Bankability

Total ask: **₹23 lakh working-capital finance plus ₹12 lakh term loan** against ₹40 lakh promoter contribution. Four points frame the credit. **First, the maintenance book is the most valuable asset and does not appear on the balance sheet** — by Year 3, ₹1.75 crore of recurring, high-retention revenue, which is a far better indicator of durability than the project pipeline and should be presented as such. **Second, working capital funds a seasonal compression:** plant material and crews are paid in the planting windows while collections follow completion, so the facility should be sized to the peak season rather than the annual average. **Third, security is thin** — tools, vehicles and a holding nursery — making this an MSME/CGTMSE proposition assessed on the annuity and the promoter. **Fourth, and specific to this discipline, plant replacement is a real and recurring cost that a lender should expect to see and be concerned if it does not:** a landscape business reporting negligible replacement is either not executing softscape, not following up its projects, or absorbing the cost somewhere less visible.

13.1 Funding utilisation

Use of funds	₹	% of total
Working capital (salaries, plant material float & receivables)	28,00,000	37.4%
Nursery tie-ups, plant holding & acclimatisation area	14,00,000	18.7%
Design studio, CAD & IT	10,00,000	13.3%
Site tools, irrigation testing & soil equipment	9,00,000	12.0%
Brand, portfolio, photography & website	7,00,000	9.3%
Team, training & recruitment	4,00,000	5.3%
Legal, registrations & launch	3,00,000	4.0%
Total	75,00,000	100%

14. Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Judged on the handover photograph	A landscape is the only design in this vertical incomplete on handover day — the photograph shows the WORST it will ever look. Present three- and five-year projections as standard; photograph completed gardens at maturity; sell the fifth year, not the opening day
Soil failure destroying good design	Most Indian landscape failures are soil failures — debris backfill, no topsoil, compacted subgrade, no drainage — and a beautiful planting plan over 200mm of builder's rubble dies regardless of design quality. Soil test and drainage design BEFORE planting design (44% → 88%); decline projects where soil preparation will not be funded
Plant deaths during establishment	Define ownership contractually: the practice warrants survival ONLY where it also holds the maintenance contract for the establishment period — the party that controls the watering carries the risk. Where maintenance is declined, warrant workmanship and stock health but state plainly that survival of plants the practice is not permitted to look after cannot be warranted

Unmaintained landscape reverting	Unlike a kitchen without an AMC or an unmaintained lighting install, an unmaintained garden becomes visibly worse than bare ground within a season — and the client concludes the DESIGN was wrong. Offer maintenance in the original proposition; renewal 62% → 85%
Water-hungry planting the client cannot afford to run	Tanker rates, not municipal tariffs, are the honest benchmark (per the water-conservation plan) — a landscape needing daily tanker water has a running cost the client was never told about . Hydrozoned design, native/adapted species to 70%, treated-wastewater reuse where available, running costs stated at proposal
Planting outside season to meet a handover date	Plants installed in peak summer die at rates no amount of watering prevents ; refuse, and explain — the client will remember the failure, not the deadline they insisted on
Waterproofing failure under a podium garden	The most expensive failure mode in the trade — a leak means dismantling the entire landscape. Protection and drainage layers, load limits and warranty responsibility agreed in writing before any work starts
Hardscape margin competed away in a bundled price	Price, warrant and review hardscape and softscape separately — bundling a predictable contracting margin with an open biological risk loses the predictable one
Maintenance lost to a cheaper gardener	Report on what was done and why; measure and share survival; make renewal a service decision rather than a price decision; train crews so quality is visible
Unauthorised tree cutting or transplanting	Municipal or forest-department permission before any tree work; unauthorised felling is an offence and regularly catches residential projects

15. SWOT Analysis

Strengths The strongest recurring-revenue story in the vertical — maintenance at 22% of revenue, 85% renewal, and it protects the portfolio as well as the P&L; green-building and municipal norms make landscape a compliance deliverable; 62% gross margin; portfolio improves with age rather than deteriorating; horticultural depth is hard for a gardener with a van to match.	Weaknesses Incomplete on handover day and judged on a photograph taken before the design exists; plant replacement is a permanent 5.5–7.9% cost; dependent on soil the practice often does not control; seasonal planting windows compress cash; thin security; establishment disputes where responsibility is undefined.
Opportunities Corporate campus and hospitality maintenance contracts; green-building certification driving native planting and water efficiency; terrace, podium and vertical gardens in dense cities; township common-area contracts; treated-wastewater reuse as a defensible water strategy; climate-adapted planting as a genuine specialism.	Threats Nurseries offering free design against plant supply; facility-management firms bundling garden upkeep cheaply; clients cutting maintenance in a downturn — the first budget removed and the one whose removal is most visible; water restrictions; extreme weather events destroying young planting; a podium waterproofing failure.

16. Recommended AiSevak Tools for This Business

This landscape design business would use AiSevak's Interior and Environment vertical tools in operations:

- **Survival: plant survival tracking at 3, 6 and 12 months**, replacement register by cause and responsibility, stock-health-on-receipt log.
- **Design discipline: soil-test-before-planting-design gate**, drainage and topsoil-depth records, **native/adapted species share tracker**, hydrozone and irrigation commissioning log.
- **Annuity: AMC renewal dashboard**, build-to-maintenance conversion rate, maintenance schedule and service reporting, sites lost to competitors.
- **Client expectation**: three- and five-year maturity projection templates, running-cost disclosure at proposal, maturity photography schedule.
- **Commercial**: hardscape vs. softscape margin separation, seasonal working-capital planner, plant-material advance tracking (with Finance vertical).

17. Key Assumptions & Notes

- Landscape & outdoor design: site and soil assessment, planting and hardscape design, irrigation design, softscape and hardscape execution, terrace/podium and vertical gardens, and long-term maintenance contracts; residential, corporate campus, hospitality, township and institutional clients.
- **△ CLOSING THE INTERIOR VERTICAL. THE THIRD FEE-BASED DESIGN MODEL BUT THE ONLY ONE WHOSE MEDIUM IS ALIVE — AND A LANDSCAPE IS THE ONLY DESIGN IN THIS VERTICAL THAT IS INCOMPLETE ON THE DAY IT IS HANDED OVER.** An interior designer hands over a finished room; a lighting designer commissions and measures; **a landscape designer hands over what is essentially a CONSTRUCTION SITE WITH SMALL PLANTS IN IT, and the design only becomes itself over 3-5 years → THE HANDOVER PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS THE WORST THE LANDSCAPE WILL EVER LOOK, and it is the photograph the client sees, the portfolio carries and the next prospect judges;** clients respond by under-buying plant size and **the designer's portfolio then suffers for years for a decision made on cost → presenting three- and five-year projections alongside the handover state is NOT presentation polish, it is the CORE OF SELLING THIS SERVICE. SELL THE FIFTH YEAR, NOT THE OPENING DAY.**
- **PLANTS DIE — AND NO OTHER DISCIPLINE IN THIS VERTICAL CARRIES A MAINTENANCE DEPENDENCY OF THIS KIND.** A modular kitchen without an AMC still works; an unmaintained lighting installation still lights; **an unmaintained landscape reverts to something VISIBLY WORSE THAN BARE GROUND within a single season — weeds, dead plants, failed irrigation — and the client concludes THE DESIGN was wrong → MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS ARE THE BUSINESS, NOT AN AFTERTHOUGHT (15.0%→22.0% of revenue, renewal 62%→85%), the strongest recurring-revenue story in the entire vertical — stronger than modular AMC or lighting commissioning, because the alternative to maintenance here is not degraded performance but VISIBLE FAILURE, and no other plan in this vertical has an annuity that also PROTECTS THE REPUTATION OF PAST WORK.** Hence the SOM is defined as **projects RETAINED INTO MAINTENANCE rather than projects executed:** a practice that builds and walks away has **a portfolio that deteriorates behind it, where every completed job becomes within two years EVIDENCE AGAINST the firm rather than for it.** Maintenance crew is **59% of headcount — a design practice with a service business attached, and the service business is the larger half.**
- **SOIL, DRAINAGE AND WATER ARE THE REAL CONSTRAINTS AND NO RENDERING SHOWS THEM. MOST INDIAN LANDSCAPE FAILURES ARE SOIL FAILURES —** construction debris backfill, no topsoil, compacted subgrade, no sub-surface drainage — **and A BEAUTIFUL PLANTING PLAN LAID OVER 200mm OF BUILDER'S RUBBLE WILL DIE REGARDLESS OF HOW GOOD THE DESIGN IS, and the designer will be blamed → soil testing and drainage design PRECEDE planting design (44%→88%), and DECLINE PROJECTS WHERE THE CLIENT WILL NOT FUND SOIL PREPARATION — the hardest and most valuable refusal in this trade, because soil prep is invisible,**

unglamorous, generates no photograph and is the SINGLE LARGEST DETERMINANT OF SURVIVAL; a client who pays for imported specimen plants but not topsoil **is buying a landscape that will fail SLOWLY ENOUGH that the practice is blamed long after the decision has been forgotten.**

- **NATIVE/ADAPTED vs IMPORTED ORNAMENTAL IS THE HONEST COST-AND-SURVIVAL QUESTION MOST INDIAN LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS AVOID** — imported ornamentals look good in a rendering and need irrigation, feeding and replacement forever, while native/adapted species survive on rainfall after establishment. **The water-conservation plan's discipline applies directly: TANKER RATES, NOT MUNICIPAL TARIFFS, ARE THE HONEST BENCHMARK** — and **A LANDSCAPE DESIGNED TO NEED DAILY TANKER WATER HAS A RUNNING COST THE CLIENT WAS NEVER TOLD ABOUT** → native/adapted share 38%→70%, hydrozoned planting, treated-wastewater reuse where available, running costs stated at proposal. Native planting is **a COST decision as much as an ecological one** (lower irrigation, replacement and maintenance labour).
- **THE ESTABLISHMENT PERIOD CONTAINS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRACTUAL QUESTION IN THIS TRADE AND MOST CONTRACTS LEAVE IT UNANSWERED: WHO OWNS THE PLANTS WHILE THEY ARE ESTABLISHING?** For 6-12 months plants die for reasons that may be the practice's (poor stock, wrong species, bad planting) or the client's (irrigation switched off, gardener dismissed, watering by a security guard), and **if responsibility is undefined every death becomes an argument and the practice usually replaces the plant to preserve the relationship, absorbing a cost it may not have caused** → workable structure: **THE PRACTICE WARRANTS SURVIVAL ONLY WHERE IT ALSO HOLDS THE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR THAT PERIOD — THE PARTY THAT CONTROLS THE WATERING CARRIES THE RISK**, which aligns the incentive AND converts establishment from a dispute source into **the natural on-ramp for the maintenance annuity**; where maintenance is declined, warrant workmanship and stock health and state plainly that **survival of plants the practice is not permitted to look after cannot be warranted.**
- **HARDSCAPE AND SOFTSCAPE ARE TWO DIFFERENT BUSINESSES SHARING A SITE.** Hardscape (paving, walls, decks, water features) is **ordinary contracting — measurable, predictable, and it either works or does not on the day it is finished**; softscape is where the design lives and where **EVERY risk sits — unfinished at handover, dependent on soil the practice may not have controlled, weather-vulnerable, and able to fail six months later for reasons nobody observed** → price, warrant and review them SEPARATELY, because **a single "landscape package" price bundles a predictable contracting margin with an open biological risk, and the contracting margin is invariably the one competed away.**
- **CASH HAS A SEASONAL SHAPE DRIVEN BY BIOLOGY RATHER THAN COMMERCE — unusual in this library.** Planting happens in defined windows (post-monsoon, pre-summer) because plants installed in peak summer die at rates no amount of watering prevents, so execution compresses into a few months with plant material, crews and preparation paid in that window while collections follow completion → **the MAINTENANCE ANNUITY is what smooths it (bills monthly, in advance, all year round, covering a meaningful share of fixed cost in the off-season)**, take plant material advances since nursery stock is bought outright and cannot be returned, and **NEVER PLANT OUTSIDE THE SEASON TO SUIT A CLIENT'S HANDOVER DATE — the plants will die, replacement is at the practice's cost, and THE CLIENT WILL REMEMBER THE FAILURE RATHER THAN THE DEADLINE THEY INSISTED ON.**
- Compliance: municipal green-space norms and **IGBC/GRIHA credits make landscape a COMPLIANCE DELIVERABLE, not an amenity**; tree cutting/transplanting requires municipal or forest-department permission and unauthorised felling is an **OFFENCE that regularly catches residential projects**; groundwater rules and treated-wastewater reuse standards; **terrace/podium work sits on someone else's WATERPROOFING WARRANTY — the most expensive failure mode in the trade, since a leak means DISMANTLING THE ENTIRE LANDSCAPE**; phytosanitary requirements for imported species. Nursery "free design" mirrors the lighting plan's manufacturer case: **a nursery has an interest in selling MORE and LARGER plants while an independent practice has an interest in the garden SURVIVING — and those diverge most on species suited to the site**

rather than available in the yard, appropriate spacing rather than instant density, and soil preparation, **WHICH SELLS NO PLANTS AT ALL**. Lender note: **the maintenance book is the most valuable asset and does not appear on the balance sheet** (₹1.75cr recurring by Y3), size WC to the **PLANTING SEASON not the annual average**, and **expect to see plant replacement as a real recurring cost — be CONCERNED if it is absent, since a landscape business reporting negligible replacement is either not executing softscape, not following up its projects, or absorbing the cost somewhere less visible**. ₹75L, ~2.4→6.8 lakh sq ft, ~34→82 projects, rev 2.8→7.95cr, Y1 →₹14L → Y3 ₹49L. Figures illustrative, exclude GST.

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