BUSINESS PLAN · INDIA

Market-Research and Insights Firm

Surveys, studies and competitive intelligence

CONSULTING

AISEVAK.IN · BY ABL DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

August 2026

1. Executive Summary

This plan sets out a **Market-Research & Insights Firm** in India — a professional-services business that designs & delivers quantitative & qualitative research (surveys, focus groups, product/concept tests, brand & customer studies, competitive intelligence) that helps companies make evidence-based decisions. It earns project fees on study design, fieldwork & analysis, monetising the constant corporate need for consumer, market & competitor insight — a project-based, expertise-/fieldwork-/panel-driven professional-services business.

Brands, startups, corporates & institutions constantly need to understand consumers, markets, competitors & the impact of decisions — and buy research to reduce risk. A market-research firm is a **study-design, fieldwork & analysis business**: modest capital, driven by methodology expertise, fieldwork/panel reach, data quality & the ability to turn data into actionable insight. Unlike pure advisory, it carries real **variable fieldwork cost** (field teams, panels, incentives) alongside people cost. Revenue is project-based (with tracker/retainer studies for recurrence); success rests on methodology & insight quality, fieldwork/panel capability, turnaround, client relationships & a repeatable BD engine — it is expertise-, fieldwork- & project-flow-dependent, moderately working-capital-light.

This is a professional-services business — funded largely by promoter equity (modest capex), with a working-capital line (fieldwork + receivables; services-MSME eligible). This plan models a market-research firm requiring **₹42 lakh** (₹30 lakh promoter + ₹12 lakh bank/WC finance), targeting **₹1.5 crore** revenue in Year 1 and **₹3.6 crore** by Year 3. *(Market research; project-based studies + trackers/retainers, methodology-/fieldwork-/panel-/insight-driven, variable field cost.)*

2. Business Description, Vision & Legal Structure

Concept: A market-research & insights firm - surveys, focus groups, product/brand/customer studies & competitive intelligence turning data into actionable decisions, via projects & tracker/retainer studies.

Vision: To be a trusted insight partner that de-risks business decisions.

Mission: Deliver rigorous, unbiased research & sharp insight - data clients can act on with confidence.

Legal structure options

- **LLP** — common for a research practice.
- **Private Limited** — recommended for scale, corporate clients, panel/tech investment & funding.

> **Regulatory anchor:** a market-research firm is a professional-services business (company/LLP, GST on services, engagement contracts/NDAs, data-privacy/DPDP for respondent data, research ethics/consent, ESOMAR-style standards). Methodology & insight quality, fieldwork/panel capability, data quality, turnaround & a repeatable BD engine determine success; it is expertise-, fieldwork- & project-dependent, with variable field cost & receivables the main WC.

3. Promoter & Ownership

Led by a promoter with market-research, insights, analytics or brand/consumer expertise & client relationships. The team includes research managers (design/analysis), field/operations (fieldwork/panel), data/analytics analysts & BD/support; field teams often variable/outsourced. Methodology, insight quality, fieldwork capability & turnaround are the differentiators. Ownership & stakes are editable inputs.

4. Market Analysis — India

India's market-research demand grows with consumer-market complexity, brand competition, digital, startups & data-driven decision-making, across FMCG, retail, BFSI, tech, pharma, media & public sector. Demand is decision-/launch-/competition-driven & economy-linked. The market rewards methodology & insight quality, fieldwork/panel reach, data quality, turnaround, sector depth & a repeatable engine; it is expertise-, fieldwork-, project-flow- & competition-sensitive, met with methodology, fieldwork, insight & BD.

Demand drivers

- **Consumer/market complexity** & competition.
- **Product launches & brand** decisions.
- **Startups & digital** (customer/market validation).
- **Data-driven decision-making** & CX.
- **Sector research** (FMCG/BFSI/pharma/public).

Market sizing (illustrative framing)

Layer	Definition	Indicative scale
TAM	Market research/insights in India	Large & growing
SAM	Sector/method & geography	Substantial
SOM (Yr 1–3)	Studies / clients	Scaling

Target segments

- Brands & FMCG/consumer companies.
- Startups (validation/CX).
- Corporates/BFSI/pharma/media.
- Agencies, PE/VC & public sector/NGOs.

5. Competition & Competitive Advantage

Landscape: global research majors (Nielsen/Kantar/Ipsos), boutique/specialist firms, DIY survey tools & freelancers/analytics firms. The firm competes on methodology & insight quality, fieldwork/panel reach, turnaround, sector depth, relationships & value (vs. majors).

The business's edge

- **Methodology & insight quality** (actionable).
- **Fieldwork/panel reach & data quality.**
- **Turnaround & agility.**
- **Sector depth & relationships.**
- **Value-for-money vs. majors.**

6. Products & Revenue Model

Stream	Model	Basis
Custom quantitative studies (surveys)	Project fee (+ field cost)	Core
Qualitative (FGDs/IDIs/ethnography)	Project fee	Margin
Tracker / syndicated / retainer	Recurring	Recurring
Competitive intelligence / desk	Project fee (high-margin)	Margin
Analytics / dashboards / CX	Project / subscription	Scale

> Custom quant studies are the core (fee + variable fieldwork cost); qualitative & competitive intelligence are higher-margin; tracker/syndicated/retainer studies add recurrence; analytics/CX scale. Economics = studies × fee × margin (net of field cost) × utilisation; methodology, fieldwork, insight, turnaround & BD drive it — the decisive research levers.

7. Go-to-Market — Marketing & Sales

- **Client BD** (brands/corporates/startups/agencies).
- **Thought leadership** (reports, insights, sector POVs).
- **Referrals & track record** (repeat studies).
- **Sector specialisation & agility.**
- **Trackers/retainers** (recurring relationships).

Sales approach

Build credibility (methodology, sector POVs) → win studies via proposals, agility & value → deliver quality insight fast → convert to repeat/tracker/retainer → grow referrals & sector base. Methodology, insight, fieldwork & a repeatable engine build the practice; trackers/retainers add recurrence to project flow.

8. Operations Plan

- **Delivery model:** research-manager-led studies (design → fieldwork → analysis → insight), with field/panel operations (own + outsourced field teams, online panels) & analytics.
- **Process:** brief → design/methodology → sampling → fieldwork (survey/FGD/panel) → data processing/QC → analysis → insight/report/presentation → (tracker next wave).
- **Fieldwork & quality:** field/panel capability, sample quality, data validation & turnaround are central; field cost is variable.
- **Tech:** survey/CATI/CAPI/online tools, panels, data-processing/analytics, dashboards, project/CRM.
- **Ethics/privacy:** respondent consent, DPDP, research standards.

Study workflow

Stage	Activity	Metric
Design	Methodology/sample	Fee/rigour
Field	Survey/FGD/panel	Field cost/quality

Process	Data/QC	Data quality
Analyse	Insight	Actionability
Deliver	Report/present	Turnaround/repeat

9. Regulatory, Licences & Compliance (India)

- **Entity:** LLP/company; GST on services; PAN/TAN.
- **Data privacy:** DPDP Act; respondent consent; data security.
- **Ethics/standards:** research ethics; ESOMAR-style codes; no misrepresentation.
- **Contracts:** engagement/NDA; IP/confidentiality; field-vendor agreements.

10. Organisation & Manpower Plan

Role	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Promoter / research director	1	2	3
Research managers & analysts	4	8	13
Field / operations & data processing	3	6	10
BD, admin & support	2	4	6
Total (core; field teams variable)	**10**	**20**	**32**

11. Implementation Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Setup	Month 0–2	Entity, tools/panels/field network, team, first studies
Ramp	Month 2–7	Study flow, quality/turnaround, first trackers
Traction	Month 7–12	Clients & repeat; ₹1.5cr revenue
Expand	Year 2	More sectors, panels, analytics, retainers
Scale	Year 3	₹3.6cr revenue; brand & recurring base

12. Financial Plan (Illustrative)

All figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian context, shown so the promoter can replace them with live rates. They are not projections of guaranteed results. Market research; project-based + trackers/retainers; carries variable fieldwork cost alongside people cost, modest capex.

12.1 Project cost & means of finance

Capital requirement	₹
Office, IT, survey/analytics tools & panel setup	14,00,000

Working capital (fieldwork + salaries + receivables)	21,00,000
Panels, data, methodology & tools	4,00,000
Brand, BD & pre-operative	3,00,000
Total project cost	**42,00,000**
Promoter contribution	30,00,000
Bank / WC finance (services MSME)	12,00,000

12.2 Projected Profit & Loss (3 years)

Particulars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Custom quant & qual studies	90,00,000	1,70,00,000	2,10,00,000
Trackers / syndicated / retainers	35,00,000	75,00,000	1,05,00,000
Competitive intelligence, analytics & other	25,00,000	50,00,000	45,00,000
Total revenue	**1,50,00,000**	**2,95,00,000**	**3,60,00,000**
Fieldwork / panel / variable cost	45,00,000	88,00,000	1,05,00,000
Salaries (core team)	55,00,000	1,05,00,000	1,32,00,000
Tools, panels, office & overheads	28,00,000	50,00,000	62,00,000
Interest & other	3,00,000	5,00,000	6,00,000
Total expenses	**1,31,00,000**	**2,48,00,000**	**3,05,00,000**
Net profit (before tax)	**19,00,000**	**47,00,000**	**55,00,000**
Net margin	12.7%	15.9%	15.3%

12.3 Unit economics & break-even

- **Studies × fee × margin (net of field cost) × utilisation:** quant carries variable fieldwork/panel cost; qual & competitive intelligence are higher-margin (less field); trackers/retainers add recurring flow; utilisation & realisation are base levers.
- **Fieldwork & insight:** fieldwork/panel capability, data quality & actionable insight drive win-rate, repeat & premium pricing; managing variable field cost protects margin.
- **Break-even:** at a study-flow threshold covering salaries, field & overheads; margins moderate (field cost), scaling with utilisation, mix (qual/CI/trackers) & recurrence.

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

Particulars (₹)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Opening balance	3,00,000	2,70,000	2,80,000	3,10,000
Fee collections	30,00,000	36,00,000	40,00,000	44,00,000
Fieldwork, salaries & operating	30,30,000	35,90,000	39,70,000	43,30,000
Closing balance	**2,70,000**	**2,80,000**	**3,10,000**	**3,80,000**

> Research carries upfront variable fieldwork cost (paid before client collection) plus salaries & receivables — the main WC. Advances on projects, milestone billing, field-vendor terms, trackers (recurring), a WC line & project-flow management maintain cash; the key risks are project-flow gaps, field-cost overruns, receivable delays & data-quality issues — met with pipeline, field discipline, advances & QC.

12.5 Key Performance Indicators to Monitor

- **Delivery:** study utilisation; turnaround; data quality; repeat.
- **Revenue:** study mix (quant/qual/CI/tracker); recurring share; win-rate.
- **Cost:** field cost %; gross margin; field-vendor efficiency.
- **Finance:** revenue/consultant; net margin; receivable days.

13. Funding Requirement & Bankability

Total ask: **₹12 lakh bank/WC finance** against ₹30 lakh promoter contribution — a working-capital line (upfront fieldwork + salaries + receivables) on a modest-capex base, services-MSME eligible. Bankability rests on methodology, client base, trackers/recurring flow & healthy margins; the firm is capital-light with variable field cost. Year-1 profit ~₹19 lakh growing to ₹55 lakh supports servicing; utilisation, field-cost discipline & project flow are key. Methodology, fieldwork/panel capability, insight quality & a repeatable engine underpin the model.

13.1 Funding utilisation

Use of funds	₹	% of total
Working capital (fieldwork + salaries + receivables)	21,00,000	50%
Office, IT, survey/analytics tools & panel setup	14,00,000	33.3%
Panels, data, methodology & tools	4,00,000	9.5%
Brand, BD & pre-operative	3,00,000	7.1%
Total	**42,00,000**	**100%**

14. Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Project-flow gaps / lumpiness	Trackers/retainers, pipeline, sector spread, BD
Field-cost overruns / quality	Field-vendor terms, QC, panel management, buffers
Data quality / bias	Methodology rigour, validation, ethics, sample quality
Receivable delays / upfront field	Advances, milestone billing, WC line, terms
Competition (majors/DIY) / talent	Specialisation, agility, value, retention, insight quality

15. SWOT Analysis

Strengths Growing insight demand; methodology/fieldwork capability; agility/value vs. majors; trackers add recurrence; scalable.	**Weaknesses** Variable field cost & upfront WC; project-flow lumpiness; talent/fieldwork-dependent; data-quality-critical.
Opportunities Startups/digital/CX; sector specialisation; analytics/CI; panels/online; trackers/retainers; public-sector research.	**Threats** Global majors & DIY tools; economic cycles (research cut early); talent war; data-privacy (DPDP) burden.

16. Recommended AiSevak Tools for This Business

This market-research firm would use AiSevak's Consulting vertical tools in delivery:

- **Delivery ops:** study-design/sampling & survey/fieldwork, data-processing/QC & analytics/insight, tracker & competitive-intelligence tools.
- **Firm ops:** engagement/NDA & GST/DPDP, field-vendor & receivable/field-cost-management tools (with Legal & Finance verticals).
- **Practice:** Business Plan, utilisation/field-margin and Break-even tools to model the firm — and research/analytics clients pay for.

17. Key Assumptions & Notes

- Market research: surveys, FGDs, product/brand/customer studies & competitive intelligence via projects + trackers/retainers; methodology-/fieldwork-/insight-driven, carries variable field cost.
- Studies × fee × margin (net of field cost) × utilisation decisive; methodology, fieldwork/panel capability, data quality, insight & a repeatable engine are the levers; trackers add recurrence.
- Largely equity-funded (modest capex) + WC line (upfront fieldwork/receivables), services-MSME eligible; LLP/company, GST-on-services, DPDP/research ethics.
- Utilisation, study mix, field-cost discipline, recurrence & project flow drive economics; figures illustrative, exclude GST.

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