

Sentient India Strategy 2026-2030

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Executive Summary

Sentient India's strategy for 2026 to 2030 is based on a research process conducted in 2025 that examined the investigative landscape in the country. Through consultations with nineteen investigators and advocates, and a review of existing literature, Sentient identified major gaps in training, safety systems, equipment access, legal support, mental health resources, and collaboration across organisations. The research also revealed that investigators often work alone with very limited support and that much of the evidence they collect does not reach campaigns, media platforms, or legal pathways in a meaningful way. These insights highlighted the need for long-term investment in investigative capacity and strong supporting infrastructure.

This strategy outlines how Sentient will help build a reliable and professional investigative ecosystem in India while also conducting its own investigations and campaigning work. Sentient will follow a combined approach that includes strategic investigations carried out directly by the organisation along with a balanced model of demand driven and supply driven investigations. Demand driven investigations will respond to the needs of Indian organisations that currently lack the capacity, training, or safety systems required for investigative work. Supply driven investigations will be based on national movement priorities and will bring visibility to sectors that remain neglected or undocumented. Together, these approaches help repair the broken pipeline between evidence generation and its use in advocacy by ensuring that investigations support campaigns, media engagement, legal action, and public awareness.

Alongside its own investigative work, Sentient will expand national investigative capacity by training new investigators, strengthening safety and wellbeing systems, offering legal and mental health support, creating a national equipment bank, and building partnerships with NGOs, journalists, legal actors, and advocacy groups. Through these efforts, the organisation aims to enable evidence to flow consistently and responsibly across the

movement, ensuring that organisations have access to credible material for their campaigns and that neglected farmed animal sectors receive greater attention.

The strategy focuses on four key priorities. These include building a professional workforce of investigators, establishing strong support systems for safety and wellbeing, producing a consistent pipeline of high-quality investigations and campaigning content, and strengthening collaboration across the movement. These priorities are delivered through programs such as the investigator training program, the masterclass, mentoring, commissioned investigations, evidence-based campaigning, the national equipment bank, conferences, webinars, and structured partnership building. Together, they help strengthen the animal protection movement as a whole by improving evidence, increasing NGO effectiveness, supporting media and legal work, and enabling a more coordinated national response to cruelty in farmed animal systems.

Five-year indicators track progress in workforce development, support systems, investigations, campaigning, and ecosystem growth. Annual indicators will be updated each year to maintain flexibility while ensuring accountability. The financial strategy includes a [confirmed 2026 budget](#) and [projected budgets for 2027 to 2030](#), supported by a plan to gradually develop a revenue stream through commissioned investigative work for other organisations.

By the end of the five-year period, Sentient India aims to help establish a professional, safe, and collaborative investigative ecosystem that produces credible evidence, strengthens campaigning and advocacy, supports media and legal efforts, and contributes to longterm improvements for animals across the country. Through this strategy, Sentient seeks to ensure that investigations become a central driver of change within the Indian animal protection movement and that the evidence generated leads to sustained impact for animals at scale.

1. Background

This strategy is informed by a detailed research process carried out by Sentient during 2025 (April to September) to understand the investigative landscape in India. The research included an extensive review of existing literature and a structured consultation process with 19 investigators, advocates, and organisational representatives across India. These conversations were held confidentially to allow participants to speak openly about their experiences, challenges, and needs.

The findings from this research were compiled in the report titled [Uncovering Cruelty: The Investigative Landscape in India](#). The report served as the foundation for identifying the major gaps in the investigative field, the barriers investigators face, and the opportunities for strengthening the ecosystem. It provided a clear picture of the conditions inside farms, slaughter facilities, wet markets, transport networks, and other environments where cruelty is widespread. It also highlighted the challenges related to equipment, safety, legal uncertainty, psychological stress, and the lack of strong institutional support.

Through this process we learned that investigators in India often work alone and with very limited resources. Many do not have access to professional training, reliable equipment, or legal and mental health support. Evidence that is collected is frequently not connected to campaigns or media work and is sometimes never used at all. These insights helped shape the understanding that the investigative ecosystem in India is not only small but also structurally fragile and in need of long-term investment.

This background research provided the evidence base for Sentient India's strategy. It confirmed that investigations are a powerful tool for exposing cruelty but can only be effective when supported by strong systems, trained investigators, and a collaborative environment. The findings guided the development of the strategic priorities, program design, support systems, and the long-term vision outlined in this document.

2. Organisational Overview

2.1 Mission

Our mission is to strengthen animal protection in India by conducting impactful investigations and by building a strong and professional investigative ecosystem. We aim to develop skilled investigators, provide essential legal and mental health support, ensure access to reliable equipment, and create partnerships that help transform evidence into powerful media, advocacy, and policy outcomes. Through this combined approach, we work to make investigations a respected and sustainable career path that drives meaningful and lasting change for animals.

2.2 Vision

A future where evidence-based investigations in India are carried out safely, professionally, and consistently, leading to informed advocacy, stronger legal protections, and meaningful reduction in animal suffering.

2.3 Our Global Background

Sentient began as an international investigations organisation focused on documenting cruelty against animals around the world. Through extensive experience we learned that investigations cannot thrive without a strong and well-supported workforce and without stable infrastructure. This led Sentient to evolve into an organisation that strengthens investigations globally through training, support systems, and ecosystem building.

2.4 Why India is Our Strategic Focus

India is the first and primary country where Sentient is building a complete investigative ecosystem program. This decision reflects the very large population of farmed animals, a

fragmentary investigative landscape, widespread unregulated and illegal practices in farming and slaughter, high media interest, and strong opportunities for collaboration with national organisations. The presence of our global leadership in India further strengthens execution and partnership building.

2.5 Sentient India's Unique Role

Sentient India serves as the anchor organisation that carries out strategic investigations and simultaneously builds a long-term investigative ecosystem. This role includes training new investigators, offering mental and legal support systems, establishing an equipment bank, building partnerships with national organisations, developing pathways for investigator careers, and ensuring that evidence is consistently used for media, legal, and advocacy outcomes. Through this combined model, Sentient India strengthens the investigative field and supports the broader animal protection movement.

2.5 Values

- **Integrity & Safety** — Upholding high ethical and safety standards in investigations.
- **Collaboration** — Strengthening investigator and NGO networks through trust.
- **Impact Orientation** — Ensuring evidence drives meaningful advocacy outcomes.
- **Professionalism** — Building investigations into a viable, respected career path.
- **Wellbeing & Care** — Prioritizing mental, legal, and social support for investigators.

3. Problem Statement

India's investigative ecosystem is small, scattered, and under-resourced. Core weaknesses in infrastructure, safety, training, and strategic alignment limit the ability of investigators and organisations to document cruelty and convert evidence into meaningful change. Consultations with nineteen investigators and advocates across India reveal several deeply rooted and interconnected problems.

3.1 Equipment Shortages and Limited Access to Tools

Investigators lack reliable cameras, audio devices, protective gear, and transport support. Most equipment is outdated or purchased with personal funds, which reduces the quality of footage and increases the risk of technical failure during investigations. The absence of a shared national equipment bank raises the cost and difficulty of entry for new investigators and creates wide inconsistencies in investigative output.

3.2 Human Resource Constraints and Lack of Professional Identity

India has very few trained investigators and almost no full-time career pathways. Recruitment is difficult and retention is low because there is no financial stability, little professional recognition, and limited institutional protection. Women face additional barriers related to safety concerns, cultural norms, and the absence of gender responsive support systems. The field remains fragile because investigators often work independently without guidance or long-term career prospects.

3.3 Weak Support Systems and High Personal Risk

Investigators work in unsafe conditions with inadequate legal and mental health support. They frequently face intimidation, physical threats, hostility from farm owners, and potential detention or equipment confiscation. The changes in India's criminal and

evidence laws have created uncertainty about legal exposure and the value of footage in court. Mental health challenges including burnout, stress, trauma, and isolation remain widespread and unaddressed.

3.4 Disconnection Between Investigations and Advocacy Outcomes

Evidence collected in the field often remains in raw form and does not reach media outlets, NGOs, or legal advocates. Many national organisations do not have clear pathways to use investigative material in campaigns or litigation. Several sectors including ducks, pigs, camels, aquaculture, and ritual slaughter are entirely undocumented. Without strong conversion of evidence into strategic outputs, investigations have limited impact on public opinion, corporate reform, or policy change.

3.5 Limited Collaboration and Structural Barriers

The investigative community operates in silos. Trust between investigators and NGOs is low and communication channels are weak. Because investigations are not integrated into advocacy planning, organisations often rely on older evidence or do not use investigations at all. Enforcement of animal protection laws remains inconsistent and authorities often ignore unregulated slaughter, illegal transport, and other violations, increasing risk for investigators attempting to document such practices.

3.6 Inconsistent Access to Facilities and Growing Suspicion

While entry into farms, dairies, and markets remains possible, investigators report increasing suspicion from workers and owners. Former ease of access through roles such as student or journalist is declining, especially in politically sensitive or rural areas. Without strategic planning, legal guidance, and safety systems, the work becomes more dangerous and less predictable.

4. Desired State (2030)

By the end of 2030 India has a professional, resilient, and well-supported investigative ecosystem that is capable of consistently exposing systemic cruelty across farmed animal sectors. Investigators are trained, protected, and integrated into a wider advocacy network that uses evidence to drive media attention, campaign outcomes, and policy reform. The field is no longer fragile or fragmented. Instead, it functions with clarity, safety, collaboration, and long-term sustainability.

4.1 A Professional and Stable Workforce of Investigators

Investigative work becomes a respected and sustainable career path. Sentient India has five full time investigators and a wider national pool of trained individuals supported through structured training, masterclasses, mentoring, and volunteer pathways. Investigators work with safety, training, and support systems that allow them to remain in the field long-term.

4.2 Effective Support Systems that Ensure Safety and Wellbeing

Investigators have reliable access to legal guidance, mental health care, social community building, and safe equipment. A national equipment bank that is fully functional. Risk is reduced, burnout declines, and investigators feel protected, supported, and connected rather than isolated.

4.3 A Steady and High-Quality Investigations Pipeline with Strong Media Presence

Investigations take place regularly and across many sectors including dairy, poultry, aquaculture, pigs, goats, camels, ducks, and wet markets. Evidence is packaged effectively

and used in media coverage, campaign materials, and public communication. Investigations are widely recognised as credible sources of information.

4.4 Strong Integration Between Investigations and Advocacy Outcomes

Evidence reliably supports the work of national NGOs, journalists, lawyers, and campaigners. Findings are used to influence corporate behavior, improve enforcement of animal protection laws, and strengthen policy reform efforts. Investigations become a central driver of advocacy and public awareness in India.

4.5 A Collaborative and Growing Investigative Ecosystem

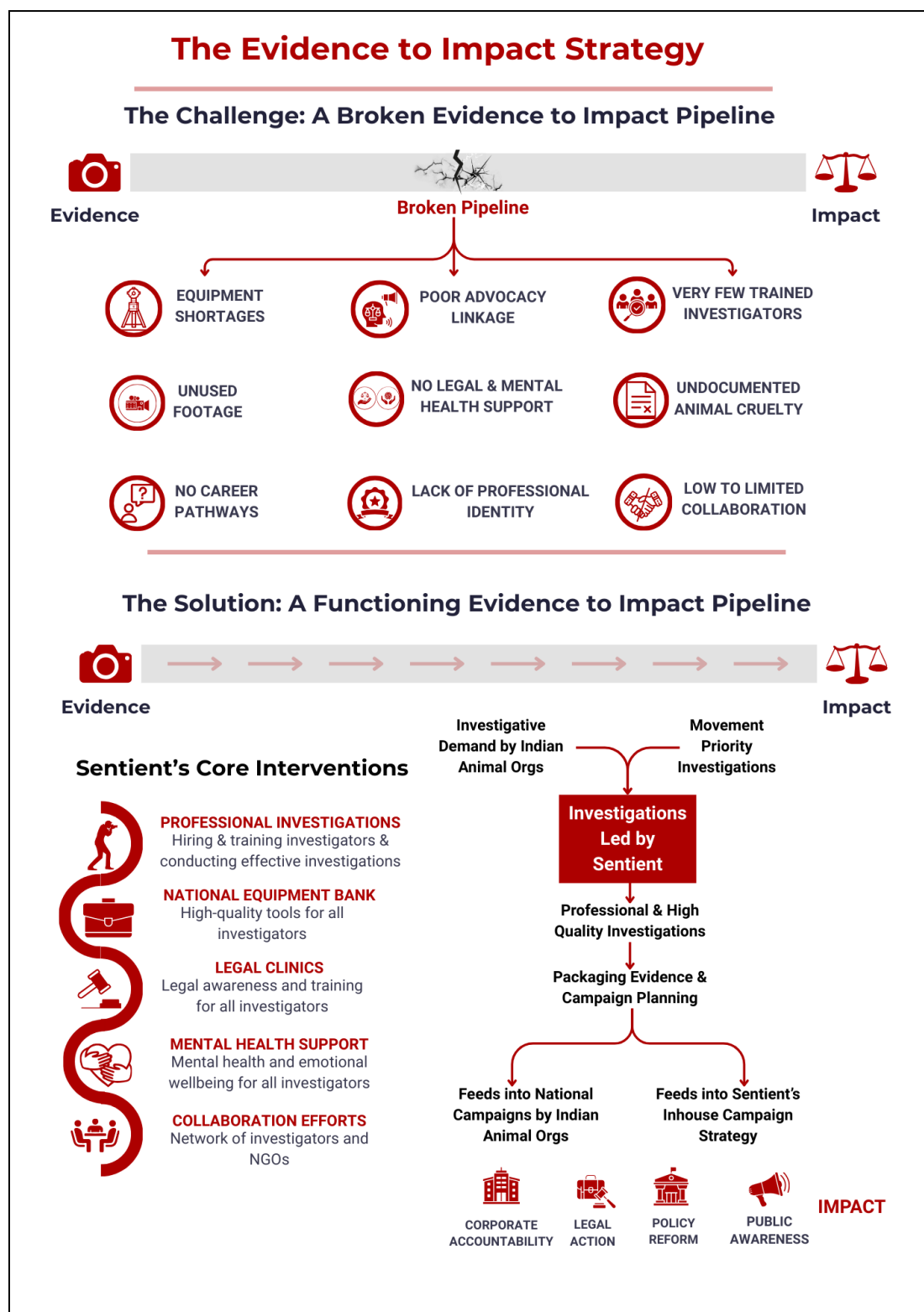
India has several organisations and independent teams involved in investigative work. Trust-based networks and regular collaboration improve quality and reduce fragmentation. Sentient India serves as a central anchor, but the ecosystem continues to expand beyond a single organisation. Investigations become a permanent and essential part of the animal protection movement.

4.6 Movement-level Change Enabled by this Strategy

Sentient India's strategy is designed not only to strengthen investigative capacity but also to help transform the wider animal advocacy movement in the country. By building a professional investigative workforce, establishing rigorous support systems, and integrating evidence with campaigning and legal pathways, the strategy repairs one of the most significant structural weaknesses in India's advocacy landscape, which is the absence of a reliable, safe, and high-quality evidence pipeline. This transformation enables NGOs, journalists, and legal actors to operate with stronger credibility, better documentation, and more consistent access to sector-wide insights.

The strategy shifts the movement from reactive and fragmented responses to a coordinated and evidence-informed approach. As more organisations gain access to reliable investigative material, campaigns become more impactful, media engagement becomes more sustained, and policy discussions become more grounded in real-world conditions. By focusing on both major and neglected farmed animal sectors, the strategy expands the scope of issues addressed by the movement and brings visibility to groups that historically received little to no attention. Ultimately, this work strengthens the movement's collective power, deepens public understanding, and helps drive long-term improvements in the treatment of animals across India.

5. Theory of Change



India's investigative landscape currently suffers from a broken evidence-to-impact pipeline. As shown in the above infographic in the uploaded file, the pipeline breaks because investigators lack the tools, support, and pathways needed to consistently produce and use high-quality evidence. This results in unused footage, undocumented cruelty, inconsistent advocacy impact, and very limited movement-wide reform.

Sentient's theory of change focuses on repairing this broken pipeline and transforming it into a functioning system that reliably connects evidence to real-world change for animals. The first part of the model recognises the core problems: equipment shortages, poor advocacy linkage, lack of legal and mental health support, very few trained investigators, undocumented animal cruelty, low collaboration, and the absence of career pathways or professional identity. These issues prevent investigations from translating into meaningful impact.

The second part of the model shows how Sentient's interventions directly address each point of failure. By hiring and training investigators, creating a national equipment bank, offering legal clinics and mental health support, and building collaboration networks across NGOs and investigators, Sentient lifts the quality, safety, and consistency of investigative work in India. These interventions ensure that evidence is reliable, strategically collected, safely produced, and ready for advocacy use.

Investigations then move through two pathways. One stream responds to investigative demand from Indian animal organisations that need credible evidence for their campaigns. The second stream consists of movement-priority investigations led by Sentient in sectors where cruelty is widespread but under-documented. Together, these streams ensure that evidence reflects both grassroots needs and national movement priorities.

Once produced, this evidence flows into impact channels across the movement. Investigations feed directly into national campaigns by Indian organisations and into

Sentient's own inhouse campaign strategy. Through these pathways, evidence contributes to legal action, corporate accountability, policy reform, and public awareness.

The theory of change therefore presents a coherent journey: fix the pipeline, strengthen investigators, support them with safety and wellbeing, generate high-quality evidence, and ensure that this evidence is consistently used for impactful action across the animal protection movement. Over the five-year period, this approach builds a stable investigative ecosystem that can reliably drive policy influence, public narrative change, and reform across farmed animal sectors in India.

6. Strategic Priorities for 2026 to 2030

Sentient India's five-year strategy focuses on four major priorities that address the core weaknesses in the investigative landscape and create the conditions needed for a safe, professional, and impactful ecosystem. Each priority is designed to be mutually reinforcing so that progress in one area strengthens the others. Together they form the foundation for both direct investigative output and long-term ecosystem development.

6.1 Strengthen and Professionalise the Investigator Workforce

Sentient India will recruit, train, and support a professional team of investigators who are equipped to carry out high-quality investigations across multiple sectors. The organisation will establish clear pathways for new entrants through training programs, masterclasses, mentoring, and volunteer opportunities. The goal is to create a respected and sustainable career path with stability, safety, and continuous development.

Key focus areas include:

- Full-time investigator recruitment and retention
- A structured investigator training program
- An advanced masterclass for emerging investigators
- Ongoing mentoring and performance support
- Volunteer mechanisms and introductory pathways
- Women-friendly and region-sensitive approaches to safety
- Clear career pathways and long-term professional identity

6.2 Build Strong Legal, Mental, Social, and Operational Support Systems

Investigations in India carry significant physical, legal, and emotional risks. To ensure investigator safety and wellbeing, Sentient India will build comprehensive support systems

that reduce burnout, minimise exposure, and provide clear guidance for fieldwork. These systems will serve both Sentient investigators and the broader community.

Key focus areas include:

- Access to dedicated legal experts and legal strategy
- Mental health and wellbeing support with trained practitioners
- Social support and community building events
- Online networks for peer connection
- A national equipment bank that ensures access to safe and reliable tools
- Consistent safety protocols and risk reduction procedures

6.3 Produce a Consistent Pipeline of High-Quality Investigations

Sentient India will conduct and publish a growing number of investigations each year. This pipeline will cover both priority sectors and neglected sectors such as aquaculture, ducks, camels, pigs, and ritual slaughter. Investigations will be high in quality, strategically selected, and aligned with advocacy needs so that evidence directly fuels campaigns, media work, and legal action.

Key focus areas include:

- Annual targets for published investigations
- Sector-specific planning and regional understanding
- Packaging evidence for media, advocacy, and legal partners
- Strengthening links to national NGOs and journalists
- Ensuring investigations support movement-wide outcomes

6.4 Build a Connected and Collaborative Investigative Ecosystem

A sustainable investigative field cannot rely on individual actors. Sentient India will play a central role in building collaboration, trust, and shared capacity across organisations and independent investigators. Through community events, conferences, partnerships, and knowledge resources the ecosystem will become more integrated and capable.

Key focus areas include:

- Annual investigator conference in India
- Regular webinars and learning sessions
- Production of knowledge documents
- Strengthening partnerships with national organisations
- Facilitating communication and trust across investigators and NGOs
- Encouraging collective use of evidence for campaigns and legal work
- Promoting long-term ecosystem growth beyond Sentient

7. Program Strategy

The program strategy describes how Sentient India will implement its four strategic priorities through a set of structured programs. Each program contributes to both direct investigative output and long-term ecosystem development. The programs are designed to be mutually reinforcing and together they form a comprehensive national model for investigative work in India.

7.1 Program 1: Investigator Workforce Development

To build a professional and sustainable workforce, Sentient India will implement a set of training and development programs that prepare investigators at different stages of their journey. These activities grow the talent pipeline and strengthen the investigative community.

Key components include:

- A structured training program for Sentient investigators that includes theory and practical components
- An investigations masterclass for selected participants from across India
- A mentoring program that gives new investigators long-term guidance and support
- A volunteering mechanism for individuals to gain introductory field experience
- Learning materials including knowledge documents and contextualised content through the Animalist platform
- Gender sensitive and region-aware safety planning to support women investigators

This program directly responds to the shortage of trained investigators and creates clear career pathways.

7.2 Program 2: Direct Investigations, Evidence Production & Campaigning

Sentient India will conduct a steady and growing number of strategic investigations each year. These investigations will expose cruelty across major and neglected animal sectors and will be closely connected to campaigning so that evidence leads to visible public impact and institutional pressure. Evidence will be converted into media stories, campaign materials, advocacy briefs, and legal recommendations.

Sentient India will adopt a dual approach to determining investigative priorities through a combination of demand-driven and supply-driven investigations. Demand-driven investigations will respond directly to requests from Indian animal protection organisations that currently lack, or have limitations in terms of, the investigative capacity, professionalisation, or safety systems to conduct this work themselves. Many NGOs rely on sub-optimal evidence due to resource constraints, which limits the effectiveness of their campaigns, media work, and legal strategies. Sentient India will create a structured system for capturing and assessing investigative requests from organisations, ensuring that collaborations are formalised, roles are clearly defined, and the expected impact of the investigation on the organisation's campaign strategy is understood in advance.

Alongside this, supply-driven investigations will be initiated by Sentient India based on national movement priorities, evidence gaps, and sector-wide needs. These investigations will focus especially on under-documented and neglected farmed animal sectors, such as ducks, pigs, camels, and aquaculture, where the movement currently lacks visibility and actionable evidence. Supply-driven investigations will be published and campaigned through Sentient's own campaigning team, helping fill systemic gaps and ensuring that large-scale issues receive the attention and advocacy pressure required to drive change.

Key components include:

- Systematic investigations across dairy, poultry, aquaculture, pigs, goats, camels, ducks, and wet markets
- Annual publication targets that grow throughout the five-year period

- Careful selection of regions and facilities based on sector needs, opportunity, and risk
- Campaign planning linked directly to investigative findings
- Packaging of evidence for media outreach, social media campaigns, policy engagement, and legal actors
- Coordination with journalists, NGOs, and campaign teams to ensure strong public visibility
- Safety planning, legal risk reduction, and ethical standards for all fieldwork
- Creation of narratives and campaigning outputs that amplify investigative findings

This program ensures that India has a consistent flow of evidence that directly fuels advocacy, awareness, and change.

7.3 Program 3: Investigator Support Systems for Safety, Wellbeing, and Operational Strength

Investigators require strong support to work safely and remain in the field. Sentient India will establish a comprehensive system that protects investigators, reduces burnout, and improves the quality of their work.

Key components include:

- Legal support provided by a dedicated expert who understands the Indian legal environment
- A legal awareness strategy to guide safe practices in fieldwork, equipment use, and facility entry
- Mental health and wellbeing services tailored to the needs of investigators
- A strategy for mental health support including regular check-ins and access to trained professionals
- Social events and community gatherings that reduce isolation and build trust

- An online community network for day-to-day peer connection
- A national equipment bank that offers safe and reliable investigative tools
- Operational protocols for safety, preparedness, and crisis response

This program creates the protective foundation that investigators need to work consistently and confidently.

7.4 Program 4: Ecosystem Building and Sector Collaboration

Sentient India will strengthen the broader investigative ecosystem by facilitating collaboration among national organisations, independent investigators, journalists, legal advocates, and other allies. This builds long-term field capacity and ensures that India has a sustained evidence pipeline.

Key components include:

- An annual investigator conference to bring the community together for learning and collaboration
- Regular webinars that cover investigative techniques, legal issues, mental health, sector knowledge, and advocacy planning
- Production of knowledge documents that provide research insights and practical guidance
- Creation of trust-based networks among investigators and NGOs
- Facilitation of partnerships for joint investigations, advocacy campaigns, and regional efforts
- Support for organisations that wish to incorporate investigative approaches into their work
- Promotion of evidence-based advocacy across campaigns, media work, and legal actions

This program ensures that the investigative field grows beyond Sentient and becomes a national movement asset. Throughout the development of this strategy, Sentient India has engaged extensively with organisations across the country, many of whom expressed strong support for a structured investigative ecosystem and indicated clear willingness to collaborate. Several NGOs shared their specific investigative needs, highlighted the lack of capacity to produce high-quality evidence internally, and confirmed that they would actively use footage and findings generated by Sentient in their campaigns, media outreach, and legal interventions. This input reinforces a key insight: India's current evidence-to-impact pipeline is broken, with most organisations lacking access to timely, credible, and strategically packaged documentation. The ecosystem model that Sentient is building directly addresses this gap by reconnecting evidence with advocacy, thereby ensuring that investigations translate into tangible change rather than remaining under-utilised or siloed.

7.5 Integration Across Programs

Each program is designed to support the others. For example:

- Training leads to stronger investigations
- Investigations provide material for conferences and learning sessions
- Support systems reduce burnout and improve the quality of investigations, documentation, and decision-making
- Partnerships expand the reach and impact of evidence
- The equipment bank strengthens both investigators and NGOs

The unified program strategy ensures that progress in one area benefits the entire ecosystem.

8. Five Year Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The following KPIs represent the major achievements that Sentient India aims to reach by the end of the strategy period from 2026 to 2030. These indicators measure progress across workforce development, support systems, investigative output, and ecosystem growth. They reflect the desired long-term state of the investigative ecosystem in India and provide clear accountability for the strategy.

8.1 Workforce and Training KPIs

These indicators measure the growth and professionalisation of the investigator workforce.

- Five full-time investigators employed by Sentient and trained to a professional standard
- One complete investigator training program delivered every year for new recruits
- One masterclass delivered each year with selected participants from across India
- Continuous mentoring support for investigators and trained participants
- A functional volunteer pathway to introduce new individuals to investigative work
- Ten knowledge documents produced across five years
- India-relevant content delivered through Animalist for investigators and partners

These indicators ensure that India develops a strong talent pipeline and that investigators receive ongoing support.

8.2 Investigations, Evidence, and Campaigning KPIs

These indicators measure the quantity and quality of investigations and the reach of evidence.

- A total of 30 investigations published by the end of 2030

- Investigations conducted across a broad range of sectors including dairy, poultry, aquaculture, pigs, goats, camels, ducks, and wet markets
- Evidence packaged for media, social media campaigns, legal actors, and national NGOs
- A rising number of high visibility media publications each year
- Strong integration of investigative findings into campaigns and advocacy efforts

These indicators show the direct production and public impact of evidence.

8.3 Support Systems KPIs

These indicators measure the establishment and effective use of protection and wellbeing structures.

- A fully functional national equipment bank used by Sentient investigators and eligible partners
- A legal support system in place with a dedicated expert available for guidance and crisis response
- A complete legal awareness strategy used by investigators for safe fieldwork
- A mental health and wellbeing support program with trained professionals
- Annual social gatherings to strengthen community and reduce isolation
- A stable online community network for regular communication and peer support

These indicators ensure that investigator safety and wellbeing improve steadily across the five-year period.

8.4 Ecosystem Building KPIs

These indicators measure collaboration, participation, and growth of the wider investigative field.

- One investigator conference held each year
- Four webinars conducted each year
- A growing network of investigators, journalists, legal practitioners, and NGOs
- Regular collaboration between Sentient and national organisations for investigations and advocacy
- Increased number of organisations using investigative material in their campaigns
- Clear evidence that investigations strengthen cross movement advocacy and policy efforts

These indicators demonstrate the expansion and improved functioning of India's investigative ecosystem.

8.5 Organisational Capacity KPIs

These indicators measure Sentient India's ability to deliver the strategy responsibly and sustainably.

- A stable leadership and operations team that supports program delivery
- Annual budgets fully aligned with program activities
- Strengthened financial systems and staff development processes
- Continued presence of a reliable administrative and logistical framework
- Annual review and adjustment of strategy implementation to ensure quality and accountability

These indicators ensure that the organisation remains capable of sustaining long-term ecosystem building.

9. Annual KPIs and 2026 Objective and Key Results (OKRs)

Annual KPIs guide year-to-year implementation and clarify the specific achievements required to remain aligned with the five-year strategy. They reflect the organisation's annual priorities across recruitment and training, investigations, support systems, ecosystem engagement, and organisational learning. These KPIs ensure that Sentient India maintains accountability while allowing flexibility to adapt to field realities, emerging opportunities, and lessons from ongoing work.

Because annual KPIs evolve based on learning and program performance, Sentient will develop detailed OKRs for each year to translate these KPIs into operational targets. OKRs serve as the yearly execution tool, outlining the concrete objectives and measurable results that teams work toward within that calendar year.

For 2026, the OKRs have been fully drafted and approved, reflecting the foundational nature of the first year of implementation. They provide clear operational targets for workforce development, investigation production, support systems, collaboration initiatives, and organisational capacity building. OKRs for subsequent years (2027 to 2030) will not be pre-defined at this stage. Instead, they will be created annually based on progress made, insights from monitoring and evaluation, changes in investigative demand, and shifts in the wider movement landscape. This ensures that OKRs remain responsive, realistic, and aligned with the evolving needs of the investigative ecosystem.

A link to the 2026 OKRs sheet is added [here](#).

10. Financial Strategy

The financial strategy for Sentient India supports the long-term development of a professional investigative ecosystem and the delivery of high-quality investigations, campaigning, and support systems across the five year period from 2026 to 2030. The strategy ensures predictable resourcing for core programs while allowing flexibility for future adjustments, learning, and growth.

10.1 Overview of the Five-Year Budget Framework

Sentient India has prepared a complete multiyear budget covering the period from 2026 to 2030. This budget aligns with the four strategic priorities and the program structure in this strategy. The budget includes all program costs, investigator salaries, support systems, campaigning activities, operational expenses, travel, and contingency needs.

A detailed budget sheet is maintained separately and outlines annual allocations for all activities across the five years.

A link to the separate public facing budget sheet for 2026 is [here](#) and for 2027-2030 [here](#).

10.2 Confirmed Budget for 2026

The 2026 budget is confirmed and reflects the first year of program implementation. It covers the launch of the training program, establishment of the equipment bank, hiring of support experts, initial investigations, first year campaigning, and all operational needs. This year also includes the cost of developing new systems and preparing for deeper activities in later years.

10.3 Prospective and Projected Budgets for 2027 to 2030

The budgets for 2027 to 2030 are prospective and represent projected financial needs based on the expected expansion of programs, growth of the investigator team, and increase in investigative output. These projections reflect the scale up of training, support systems, investigations, and ecosystem building activities.

Sentient India anticipates that annual budget requirements for 2027 to 2030 may vary by a positive or negative ten percent, depending on the external environment, partnerships, and the pace of growth. However, the organisation does not expect changes that exceed this range. This projected variation allows for sensible financial planning while maintaining stability for program commitments and organisational capacity.

10.4 Allocation of Resources Across Programs

Across the five-year period, the majority of resources will be directed toward program delivery, including:

- Direct investigations, evidence production, and campaigning
- Investigator training, masterclasses, mentoring, and volunteer pathways
- Legal, mental health, social, and operational support systems
- The national equipment bank
- Annual investigator conferences and regular webinars
- Knowledge documents and ecosystem building activities

Operational needs including staff leadership, financial systems, technology, and administration will continue to receive essential support to enable reliable delivery of all programs.

10.5 Financial Sustainability and Multiyear Planning

Sentient India will pursue multiyear funding commitments and partnerships that match the duration and scope of the strategy. The organisation will focus on building long-term

relationships with funders and on diversifying sources of support across institutional donors, philanthropic partners, and movement-aligned contributors.

Yearly reviews of the budget will ensure that financial resources remain aligned with program needs, lessons from fieldwork, staffing patterns, and changes in the investigative landscape.

11. Fundraising Strategy

The fundraising strategy provides the financial foundation for Sentient India to deliver investigations, campaigning, training, and support systems from 2026 to 2030. The approach focuses on securing stable multiyear donor support while gradually introducing a revenue stream that allows the organisation to reduce long-term dependency on external funding. This balanced model strengthens financial resilience and positions Sentient India for continued growth beyond the five-year strategy period.

11.1 Five-Year Fundraising Goals

Sentient India aims to secure predictable funding that supports its core programs while gradually building a new revenue stream. Over the five-year period the organisation will work toward the following goals.

- Consistent funding for investigator salaries, training programs, support systems, and operational capacity
- Long-term support for investigations, evidence production, and campaigning activities
- Resources for ecosystem activities including conferences, webinars, and knowledge documents
- A reduction in exclusive reliance on donors by creating a revenue stream for investigative services
- A shift from complete donor funding to a balanced model where donors contribute 80% of annual costs and revenue covers the remaining 20%

This blended model strengthens financial sustainability and promotes long-term independence.

11.2 A Two Path Fundraising Approach

Sentient India will follow a dual fundraising approach that combines donor funding with a new earned revenue pathway.

Path 1. Donor support for long-term field building: Donations will continue to be the primary funding source during the initial years, covering core programs and operational needs.

Path 2. Revenue from investigative services for other organisations: Sentient India will gradually offer investigative services to NGOs in India who need evidence for their campaigns, legal work, and corporate outreach. These commissioned investigations will be conducted by Sentient investigators as project-based assignments. This revenue stream will not begin immediately. It requires time to build credibility, trust, and a demonstrated record of safe and high-quality investigations. Once established, this pathway will generate resources that reduce donor dependency and strengthen organisational resilience.

11.3 Implementation of the Revenue Stream

The revenue stream will develop in three stages.

Stage 1. Foundation building: Sentient India establishes its investigator team, strengthens its training systems, and publishes its own investigations to build a strong reputation.

Stage 2. Pilot partnerships: Once credibility is established, a small number of NGOs will engage Sentient India to carry out targeted investigations for campaign or legal purposes. These will be billed as project-based assignments.

Stage 3. Sustained revenue generation: By the later years of the strategy, revenue from commissioned investigations will cover up to 20% of annual program costs. Donor support will cover the remaining 80%.

This model offers stability and diversifies funding sources while keeping the organisation fully mission aligned.

11.4 Financial Risk Management

Sentient India will continue to manage financial risk responsibly.

- Annual budgets will include a ten percent flexibility margin for projected years from 2027 to 2030
- Revenue from commissioned investigations will be developed gradually and responsibly
- Aim for not having a single funder dependency for the entire strategy
- Buffer planning will support investigator salaries and safety systems during unexpected changes

11.5 Five-Year Sustainability Goal

By the end of 2030, Sentient India aims to operate as an organisation where donor funding provides 80% of the annual budget and revenue from investigative services provides 20%. This shift will improve long-term sustainability, reduce vulnerability to donor fluctuation, and strengthen the capacity of the organisation to support investigators and partners well beyond the current strategy period.

12. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy

The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning strategy ensures that Sentient India delivers high-quality work, remains accountable to its mission, and adapts to the realities of investigative work in India. The framework is designed to measure progress toward the 2030 desired state while supporting continuous improvement, safety, and organisational learning. It focuses on understanding both how well programs are being implemented and how effectively investigative evidence contributes to advocacy and change.

12.1 Monitoring Approach

Monitoring focuses on the regular assessment of program activities and systems. Sentient India will track progress in several areas that reflect both the internal functioning of the organisation and the broader influence of its work.

First, monitoring will examine the delivery of all core programs, including training, investigations, campaigning, support systems, and ecosystem building. This ensures that activities take place as planned and that they meet quality expectations.

Second, the framework will monitor the safety and wellbeing of investigators. This includes reviewing the use of legal and mental health services, assessing the strength of operational protocols, and understanding how effectively risks are being managed.

Third, monitoring will focus on the production of evidence and campaigning outputs. Sentient India will track the number and quality of investigations, the sectors covered, and how evidence is presented and shared with partners.

Fourth, the organisation will monitor how evidence is taken up by NGOs, journalists, lawyers, and advocacy partners. This helps assess whether investigative findings are influencing public conversation, media narratives, corporate behaviour, and policy discussions.

Finally, monitoring will include financial alignment between budgets and program delivery to ensure responsible use of resources.

12.2 Evaluation Approach

Evaluation focuses on understanding outcomes and impact rather than only counting activities. Sentient India will conduct an internal evaluation every year to assess the influence of investigations, the quality of training and support systems, and the effectiveness of partnerships. These evaluations will help identify changes in the investigative ecosystem and will highlight opportunities to strengthen programs.

Special attention will be given to evaluating investigator skill development, adherence to safety practices, and personal wellbeing. The quality and influence of materials used in campaigns, media, and legal contexts will also be assessed to understand the visibility and reach of evidence.

Feedback from partners, funders, and program participants will play an important role in evaluation and will be incorporated into improvements.

12.3 Learning and Adaptation

Learning is central to this strategy. Sentient India will organise quarterly reflection sessions to discuss recent investigations, challenges in the field, partner feedback, and operational realities. These sessions will inform adjustments to training, safety protocols, equipment needs, and legal guidance.

Learning will also be shared with the wider investigative community through webinars, conference discussions, and knowledge documents. This approach helps build the ecosystem while ensuring that lessons are not limited to one organisation.

Every year the organisation will review progress against five-year KPIs and will adjust implementation plans based on lessons from the previous year. This ensures that the strategy remains responsive and grounded in real experience.

12.4 Tools and Systems

Monitoring, evaluation, and learning will be supported by a set of tools that ensure consistency and accuracy. These include the annual KPI sheet, investigation tracking forms, training and mentoring assessment tools, mental health and legal support records, media tracking systems, feedback forms, and internal review documents. Together these systems create a reliable flow of information for decision making.

12.5 Reporting and Accountability

Sentient India will share progress through annual reports, donor updates, and communication with partners. These reports will include investigation highlights, campaign outcomes, program achievements, and financial summaries. Clear reporting strengthens trust with donors and partners and demonstrates responsible use of resources.

12.6 Contribution to Long-Term Impact

By combining rigorous monitoring, thoughtful evaluation, and regular learning, Sentient India ensures that it stays aligned with its long-term goal of building a strong and influential investigative ecosystem. This framework allows the organisation to improve quality, respond to emerging challenges, and make decisions that support sustainable progress beyond the five-year strategy period.

13. Risks and Mitigation

The work of building a national investigative ecosystem carries several inherent risks. These risks relate to safety, legal exposure, operational uncertainty, financial stability, and the broader landscape in which investigations take place. Sentient India recognises these risks and has developed mitigation approaches that prioritise investigator safety, organisational resilience, and long-term continuity.

13.1 Legal and Safety Risks for Investigators

Investigations in India involve direct interactions with farms, markets, transport hubs, and other environments where suspicion and hostility can arise. Investigators face the possibility of intimidation, physical harm, equipment confiscation, and interaction with authorities who may not be sympathetic to investigative work.

Mitigation: Sentient India will maintain strong legal guidance, ensure consistent risk assessments for each investigation, strengthen safety protocols, and provide direct legal support before and after fieldwork. Training will include legal awareness modules, and investigators will have access to mental health support when safety incidents occur.

13.2 Emotional and Psychological Risks

Investigative work exposes individuals to difficult environments, cruelty, risk, and isolation. Without structured support, investigators may experience burnout, stress, or trauma, which reduces their ability to remain in the field.

Mitigation: Sentient India will maintain a mental health support system, provide regular wellbeing check ins, and ensure that investigators have access to peer spaces and social support. Mentoring and community engagement activities will help reduce isolation.

13.3 Operational and Logistical Risks

Investigations depend on equipment, travel, planning, and reliable operational systems. Equipment failures, unexpected conditions in the field, or limitations in local infrastructure can disrupt investigations or compromise safety.

Mitigation: Sentient India will maintain a national equipment bank and operational protocols that guide preparation, travel, communication, and crisis response. Feedback from investigators will guide regular improvements in equipment and planning processes.

13.4 Limited Organisational Collaboration or External Resistance

The success of ecosystem building relies on collaboration between investigators, NGOs, journalists, legal experts, and other partners. Barriers such as mistrust, competing priorities, or organisational silos can limit the use of evidence and reduce collective effectiveness. External stakeholders including industry actors or local authorities may also respond negatively to investigative work.

Mitigation: Sentient India will invest in relationship building through conferences, webinars, shared initiatives, and regular communication. Trust-based networks will encourage cooperation and reduce fragmentation. Clear communication strategies will help manage external responses.

13.5 Financial Risks and Funding Fluctuations

As an organisation that is expanding its programs and building a national ecosystem, Sentient India depends on stable funding. Variations in donor support or changes in the external environment may pose challenges. The organisation also plans to transition from complete donor funding to a model where revenue supports 20% of annual costs by the end of the strategy period. Delays in building credibility or demand for commissioned investigations could affect this transition.

Mitigation: Sentient India will follow a diversified fundraising approach, cultivate multiyear donor partnerships, and develop revenue streams gradually and responsibly. The organisation will maintain budget flexibility and reserves where possible to protect core salaries and safety systems. Clear financial planning will support predictable and sustainable growth.

13.6 Changes in the Policy or Legal Environment

Investigative work may be affected by shifts in the legal landscape, government policy, or law enforcement practices. Such changes can increase uncertainty or alter the feasibility of investigative approaches.

Mitigation: Sentient India will maintain close communication with legal experts who understand the evolving legal environment. The organisation will review legal requirements regularly and update guidance for investigators accordingly. Scenario planning will support adaptation to potential changes.

14. Conclusion

This five-year strategy sets out a clear and ambitious plan for building a professional and impactful investigative ecosystem in India. It recognises the significant challenges that investigators face and responds with a comprehensive approach that includes training, support systems, ecosystem collaboration, and a sustained pipeline of high-quality investigations and campaigning work.

Through this strategy, Sentient India commits to strengthening the investigative field by creating safe and professional pathways for investigators, ensuring that evidence is consistently connected to advocacy outcomes, and fostering collaboration across organisations and individuals who share a commitment to animal protection. The strategy also supports long-term sustainability through a balanced financial model that combines donor support with a developing revenue stream for commissioned investigative work.

By the end of 2030, Sentient aims to help establish a functional, resilient, and respected investigative ecosystem in India. This ecosystem will generate credible and regular evidence, support the work of NGOs and journalists, influence public awareness and policy conversations, and create lasting improvements for animals across the country. The strategy offers a practical and forward-looking plan that positions Sentient India as a central contributor to the long-term growth and effectiveness of animal protection investigations in India.