
Talent Meets Opportunity | ONDC Sabbatical Program

The Context

Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) has embarked on the journey that will lead to a paradigm shift in how digital commerce operates. The groundwork for this journey has been undertaken by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and a Section 8 Company has been incorporated with participation from around 18 banks and financial institutions both from the private and public sectors. The shareholding has been structured to provide the company necessary flexibility and agility of a private company. The entities investing in ONDC include HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Kotak Bank, IDFC First Bank, Axis Bank, State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), National Stock Exchange (NSE), Central Depository Services Ltd (CDSL), Protean (erstwhile NSDL-EGov), National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Quality Council of India (QCI), and CSC SPV.

To guide the project, DPIIT has established an advisory council with eminent personalities including Nandan Nilekani, R S Sharma, Adil Zainulbhai, Anjali Bansal, Dilip Asbe, Suresh Sethi, Arvind Gupta, Kumar Rajagopalan and Anil Agarwal.

In the last few months, ONDC has proceeded with a demonstration of cascading transactions across multiple entities. As of now, around 80 entities are in various stages of technology adoption to be part of the network with a soft launch scheduled for April 2022. For the success of this network, adoption from a wide cross-section of buyers and sellers from across the country with a variety of complementary services will need to be designed and established. Many industry participants who have understood the possibilities of this emerging network, have connected with ONDC to participate in this journey as active contributor.

ONDC now proposes to take this idea of collaborative development forward through a sabbatical program as explained in this document. Under the sabbatical program, ONDC welcomes talented resources in the areas of technology, law, policy, marketing, social science, information security and administrative spheres to be seconded to be part of the ONDC team to drive specific themes. This program provides an opportunity to be involved specific projects and themes curated across multiple tracks that “ONDC Change Maker” can choose from for period ranging from 12 to 24 months.

1. What is ONDC?

ONDC is being established as a first-of-its-kind initiative globally to pave the way for reimagining digital commerce in India and establishing it as a global pioneer. This will be an open network developed on open protocols based on open-source specifications with established registries, enabling wide-scale participation by digital commerce ecosystem players in India through multiple gateways.

ONDC has been set up with the following objectives:

- Be scale efficient and enable for population-scale adoption
- Promote interoperability among participant's platforms and software applications to create an open, inclusive, and competitive marketplace
- Establish public digital infrastructure on which the industry participants can develop and implement a variety of services
- Make digital commerce, small-business friendly
- Pave the way to unlock innovation for reimagining digital commerce
- Ensure rapid digitalization of MSMEs and adoption of digital commerce by both rural and urban consumers with equal ease and convenience.

ONDC is a network that enables location-aware, local e-commerce stores across industries to be discovered and engaged by any network-enabled applications. It is neither a super aggregator app nor a hosting platform. All existing e-commerce apps and platforms can voluntarily choose to adopt and be a part of the ONDC network. In addition, the responsibility for onboarding of sellers and buyers and the management of the end-to-end order lifecycle will also continue to reside with the network-enabled applications. ([Refer strategy paper available at www.ondc.org](http://www.ondc.org)).

2. What are the targets ONDC is aspiring for?

ONDC is striving for national-level adoption of the network with a set of clearly defined milestones:

- I. Make ONDC network onboard buyers and sellers in every pin code of India
- II. Bring 300 Mn shoppers onto ONDC network via diverse buyer side platforms by end of 2024
- III. Bring 30 Mn sellers (seller catalogues) onto the ONDC network via hundreds of seller side platforms by end of 2024

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- IV. ONDC must generate an average of 300 Mn orders per month by end of 2024

3. Why should you join the program?

This will provide the organisation participating in this program and the resources seconded to take up specific assignments with ONDC covering a variety of opportunities.

- I. An opportunity of a lifetime to become an “ONDC Change Maker” to participate in the largest population-scale digital transformation in the country
- II. Opportunity to be part of the team that shall pioneer the new model of commerce across sectors including retail, travel & tourism, agriculture, logistics, among others
- III. Diverse and complex problem sets across policy, strategy, marketing, ecosystem building, technology, information security and capacity building
- IV. Opportunity to work with a team of change agents that have a track record of building population-scale solutions in various sectors including national ID, digital finance, education, urban mobility, financial services to name a few.
- V. Creating an impact at population scale by building the foundational digital infrastructure that leverages cutting edge technologies and bringing them to mainstream and leave a legacy for all
- VI. Be a torchbearer in defining and implementing an unchartered and first of its kind concept
- VII. Meaningful work with adequate support and supervision from the ONDC team

4. What will be the scope of participation?

- I. Professionals with demonstrated expertise and experience in the area of digital transformation, development of protocols, retail commerce, design of business process, change management, communication strategy and user experience design are welcome to participate
- II. Onboarding the professional to the program shall be based on a well-defined assessment by the Program Management team at ONDC
- III. Professionals can get started immediately after completion of the onboarding
- IV. Depending of the specific projects in which the resources will join the sabbatical period will normally range from 12 to 24 months with a minimum period of six months and may operate primarily out of location as guided by ONDC.

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- V. The participating organisations can nominate a maximum of 5 resources to the program, subject to the following:
- The professional continues to be the employee of the parent organization but seconded to work full-time on ONDC
 - ONDC shall manage the work charter for the employee for the program period
 - Should the employee exit the employment, employer shall notify ONDC and manage the exit process from ONDC Changemaker program as per the guidelines provided by ONDC
 - The parent organisation shall maintain strict independence and declare no conflict of interest in doing business with ONDC while associating their employees with the program
 - During the tenure, professionals shall adhere to the policies and guidelines of ONDC
 - The seconded employees shall be issued a ONDC email ID which shall be used by these onboarded professional for all communication relating to the project
 - ONDC may, on a case-by-case basis, issue job titles to certain professionals who have roles that carry specific responsibility and have a component of interaction with third parties. The titles will reflect the work that the professional does and should enable these specific professionals to represent themselves to third parties on behalf of ONDC as required in order to fulfil their responsibilities to the network.
- VI. Organisations keen on participation may forward the details of the resources by mail to careers@ondc.org with subject title "Sabbatical Program". The details should include the CV of each professional along with a covering letter from the organisation endorsing their participation.

5. Conflict of Interest and Non-Disclosure requirements

- i. Professionals are bound by the ONDC's conflict of interest and Non-Disclosure Agreement policies. A declaration of No Conflict of Interest and Non-Disclosure Agreement between ONDC and Persons shall be executed.

6. Remuneration and benefits

- i. ONDC shall not provide any remuneration (financial/otherwise) to the professional for the volunteering efforts.
- ii. Professional shall continue to receive the pay and benefits from their parent organisation during the sabbatical.
- iii. All the travel and out of pocket expenses incurred by the professional for the business activities of ONDC shall be reimbursed as per the defined policies

7. Rewards and Recognition

- i. ONDC may provide a Certificate to the professional duly signed by the CEO, ONDC for the voluntary services rendered.
- ii. ONDC may acknowledge the work of professionals, through a reward and recognition program, subject to the satisfaction of the performance as determined by ONDC.
- iii. ONDC shall recognise and acknowledge the contribution of participating entities

8. Termination

- i. Either the professional or ONDC may terminate the relationship under any one of the following situations:
 - o ONDC may disengage the professional if it is of the view that the services of the professional are no more required.

- If the professional decides to disengage from ONDC, he/she should provide four weeks' prior notice. The notice period may be waived by the supervisor depending on the role of the professional.
- Upon termination, the professional must hand over to ONDC, any papers, equipment or other tangible assets which might have been given to the professional by the company in course of his work with ONDC. This will include any badges or ID Cards that may have been issued to the professional.
- If it comes to the notice of ONDC that the professional whose services have been terminated by ONDC, but the professional continues to act in a manner that gives the impression that the professional is still working as a professional for ONDC, the parent organization shall be free to take appropriate legal action against such person.

9. Code of Conduct

The onboarded professionals by ONDC shall observe the following Code of Conduct, which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. The professionals shall follow the **policies of ONDC** that are in general applicable to employees of the company.
- ii. The professionals shall follow the confidentiality protocol of the company and shall not reveal to any person or organisation confidential information of ONDC, its work and its policies.
- iii. Professionals are neither 'Officials' of the ONDC nor they can substitute the 'Officials' of the ONDC during their interaction with others.
- iv. In general, a professional may not represent ONDC vis-a-vis third parties. Some professionals may specifically be authorised to interact with third parties on behalf of ONDC depending on the nature of their roles and responsibilities.
- v. Professional interaction with third parties should be need-based; in particular, no professional shall interact with or represent ONDC to the media (print and electronic).

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- vi. Professionals may, only after the prior written permission of ONDC present their work to academic bodies and at seminars and conferences. However, even for this purpose information that is confidential to the company cannot be revealed under any circumstances.
 - vii. Professionals shall follow the advice given to them by ONDC regarding representations to third parties.
 - viii. Any papers and documents written and/or published by the professionals should carry the caveat that the views are the personal views of the professional and do not represent or reflect the views of ONDC.
 - ix. Professionals shall develop work plans and work schedules in consultation with the ONDC officials and shall adhere to the same.
 - x. ONDC shall retain all rights, title and interest and Intellectual Property Rights in any ONDC Intellectual Property created, conceived, developed, contributed to or improved upon by the professional during the course of his Engagement, shall vest with the ONDC upon such creation, conception, development, contribution or improvement.
 - xi. Professional, if provided access to any sensitive or confidential information with respect to ONDC, shall abide by ONDC's Information security and Privacy Policy and such other policies and guidelines as intimated by ONDC.
 - xii. Professional shall be required to submit a report of their work prior to leaving the ONDC. This may be waived off as per the requirements of the ONDC.
 - xiii. Professionals shall conduct themselves professionally in their relationship with ONDC and the public in general.
 - o Examples of behaviour that contributes to creating a positive environment include:
 - Using welcoming and inclusive language
 - Being respectful of differing viewpoints and experiences
 - Gracefully accepting constructive criticism
 - Focusing on what is best for the community
 - Showing empathy towards other community members
 - o Examples of unacceptable behaviour by participants include but note limited to:
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- The use of sexualized language or imagery and unwelcome sexual attention or advances
 - Trolling, insulting/derogatory comments, and personal or political attacks
 - Public or private harassment
 - Publishing others' private information, such as a physical or electronic address, without explicit permission
 - Other conduct which could reasonably be considered inappropriate in a professional setting
- xiv. Instances of abusive, harassing, or otherwise unacceptable behaviour may be reported by contacting the project team at escalations@ondc.org. All complaints will be reviewed and investigated and will result in a response that is deemed necessary and appropriate to the circumstances. The project team is obligated to maintain confidentiality with regard to the reporter of an incident. Further details of specific enforcement policies may be posted separately.
- xv. This Code of Conduct applies within all project spaces, and it also applies when an individual is representing the project or its community in public spaces. Examples of representing a project or community include using an official project e-mail address, posting via an official social media account, or acting as an appointed representative at an online or offline event.

This Code of Conduct is adapted from the Contributor Covenant, version 1.4, available at <https://www.contributor-covenant.org/version/1/4/code-of-conduct.html>

10. Power to Remove Difficulties

- i. ONDC shall have the power to remove any difficulty which comes in the way of the implementation of these Guidelines.