# NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR DEVELOPING AND HARNESSING INNOVATIONS
# (NIDHI)

## (NIDHI-ACCELERATOR)

GUIDELINES
AND
PROFORMA FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Government of India
Ministry of Science & Technology
Department of Science & Technology
National Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board
Technology Bhawan, New Mehrauli Road New Delhi-110016
(June 2023)

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**National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI)**

**Background**

**National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI)** is an umbrella programme conceived and developed by the Innovation & Entrepreneurship division, Department of Science & Technology, Government of India, for nurturing ideas and innovations (knowledge-based and technology-driven) into successful startups. The programme would work in line with the national priorities and goals and its focus would be to build an innovation driven entrepreneurial ecosystem with an objective of socio-economic development through wealth and job creation.

NIDHI aims to nurture start-ups through scouting, supporting and scaling of innovations. The key stakeholders of NIDHI include various departments and ministries of the central government, state governments, academic and R & D institutions, mentors, financial institutions, angel investors, venture capitalists and private sectors. NIDHI is developed keeping in line the new national aspirations and on the basis of DST's experience of three decades, in promoting innovative start-ups.

The key components of NIDHI are –

1. NIDHI-PRomotion and Acceleration of Young and Aspiring technology entrepreneurs (NIDHI-PRAYAS) - Support from Idea to Prototype;

2. NIDHI-Entrepreneur In Residence (NIDHI-EIR) - Support system to reduce risk;

3. NIDHI-Technology Business Incubator (TBI) - Converting Innovations to start-ups;

4. **NIDHI-Accelerator - Fast tracking a start-up through focused intervention;**

5. NIDHI-Seed Support System (NIDHI-SSS)- Providing early stage investment;

6. NIDHI Centres of Excellence (NIDHI-CoE) - A World class facility to help startups go global.

**NIDHI-Accelerator Guidelines**

## 1.0 Introduction

Most of the well-known start-ups in the world, including many unicorns, have been through an accelerator program at some point in their growth journey. Start-up accelerator offerings like capital, community, mentorship, and training, to name a few – are invaluable for early-stage companies.

National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board (NSTEDB) of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Govt. of India, in its quest to accelerate growth-stage companies, supports NIDHI Accelerator programs every year. NIDHI Accelerators are positioned as post-incubation initiatives linked with the existing incubators to supplement, complement the scaling up of the start-up value chain.

NSTEDB, DST would encourage its existing TBIs and other incubators to extensively adopt and evolve the accelerator model. NIDHI Accelerator is aimed to help aspiring entrepreneurs in the country, including the ventures already being incubated at TBIs, to be guided in a rigorous and more structured manner, through a deep mentoring process and access to funding and market networks. NIDHI accelerators are positioned for accelerating startups that have made significant progress in terms of market validation and are at the ***growth and scale-up stage.***

## 2.0 Objectives of NIDHI-Accelerators
➢ To fast track the growth of potential startups through rigorous mentoring and networking support in a short span through existing TBIs.
➢ To attract subject matter experts, mentors, and angel investors get associated with TBIs through the structured accelerator programs.
➢ To build a vibrant startup ecosystem, by establishing a network between academia, financial institutions, industries, and other institutions.
➢ To act as a hub for several incubators in the region, so that high-potential startups can be fast-tracked for increased exposure and validation.
➢ Accelerators should employ a "fail fast" approach: ideas or prototypes that are not getting traction should be abandoned (or modified) quickly, allowing founders to redeploy resources to other projects or even new companies at a rapid pace.

**3.0 Characteristics of NIDHI -Accelerator Program**

It is envisaged that 2 broad types of Accelerator Programs will be supported by NSTEDB under this scheme: Sector-specific and sector-agnostic. Marching ahead to achieve the vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat, the following focus areas for sector-specific and sector-agnostic programs will be given priority (however proposals with other focus areas can also be submitted under the "any other" category):

| S.No. | Priority sectors for sector-specific programs |
|---|---|
| 1. | Agritech (including but not limited to remote monitoring, disease prediction, and precision farming) |
| 2. | Environment (including but not limited to pollution control, circular economy, water conservation, solar and renewable energy) |
| 3. | Fintech (including but not limited to payment, lending, investment, and neo-banking) |
| 4. | Health Care(including but not limited to clinical trials, regulatory approvals, medical devices, and biotech ) |
| 5. | Manufacturing (including but not limited to design & development, automation, and 3D printing) |
| 6. | Strategic sectors for Atmanirbhar Bharat |
| 7. | Any other |

| S.No. | Focus areas for sector agnostic programs |
|---|---|
| 1. | Applications of AI and ML across the sectors |
| 2. | Make in India-Make for the World ( Startups with potential to access the international markets ) |
| 3. | Social ventures |
| 4. | Inclusion and diversity: Women led entrepreneurship, Socially Challenged groups, Physically challenged groups, etc. |
| 5. | Any other |

**4.0 Structure & Location of the Program –**

While the applicant TBI will have the flexibility to be creative and propose innovative and new structures for the Accelerators, it should leverage the extensive experience created by accelerators across the world. NSTEDB will consider the support of 1 accelerator program every year (with a 3-9-month duration) for every TBI.  The Accelerator Program is likely to have the following stages –

**a. Phase 1** – Outreach & Application- During this phase, the TBI and Accelerator partners will carry out marketing and attract applications through the online portal(Including website and social media handles) also must be hyperlinked to NSTEDB website and startups India portal, with a view to attract a larger base of startups and incubator audience.

**b. Phase 2** – Evaluation and Shortlisting – During this phase, the applications will be evaluated by experts through an online process and the top ones will be chosen out of all the applicants

**c. Phase 3** – Accelerator – During this phase, the selected entrepreneurs will be provided active mentoring support through the "Accelerator" program. Along with promoting a hybrid (on-site + virtual) model, *a special focus should be given to personalized mentoring*. Typically, at the end of this program, the TBI may provide access to capital, networks, and customers as a part of the demo-day.

**5.0 Targets from NIDHI-Accelerator**

It is envisaged that NIDHI-Accelerator will help achieve the following goals in promoting high-quality technology-based entrepreneurship in India. Through NIDHI-Accelerator around 150 startups are expected to be provided with active and structured coaching, training, and mentoring support across 10-15 accelerator programs every year. *Only startups at the growth and scale-up stage should be considered for the accelerator program. Idea stage companies should not be entertained.*

**6.0 Guidelines for Applying for NIDHI –Accelerator**

**a. Who can apply? -** Below are the eligibility criteria:
   1) TBIs previously funded or currently funded by DST or any other central or state government agencies are eligible to apply, with a minimum 3 years in existence, having nurtured and incubated at least 20 startups in multiple domains.

**b. Budget -** The NSTEDB's contribution towards the overall Budget for running accelerators shall not exceed 40 Lakh/program of one cohort. The budget should be divided into the following 2 categories:

   I.    **Accelerator Program** (Upto 30 lakh) - This budget category shall include manpower, logistics, travel, mentoring, infrastructure, training, and all other costs.

   II.   **Demo Day Award** (Upto 10 lakh) – May be considered to award to top 3 to 5 startups of the batch on the basis of their performance/ achievements during the accelerator program as recommended by the evaluation committee on the basis of defined parameters and the same may be given as a reward grant during the demo day.

**c. Structure -** One to one session of startups with mentors should be preferred as compared to classroom training. ***At Least 70% of the total mentoring should be one to one sessions.*** Ideally, the program must have a minimum of 20 hours of training in a one-to-many format for startups in the acceleration batch and a minimum of 50 hours of dedicated mentoring in a one-to-one format with the relevant mentors for the startup in the acceleration batch.

**d. Accelerator Partner/s-** It is recommended that the TBI may consider engaging an external partner to professionally manage the accelerator program so that the program can be implemented in a structured manner, through a deep mentoring process and startup acceleration must get access to funding and market networks. A maximum of 40% or up to 15 lakh (whichever is lesser) of the total budget sanctioned for the accelerator program can be outsourced to external partners. This engagement should be a Capability transfer model where members of the TBI team are expected to get trained by the external partner. Partnersmust be engaged from outreach to selection, screening and implementation and future support. Roles and responsibility must be defined as per the norms of formal partnership. For identifying such professional accelerator partners, TBIs can check competent accelerator partners' profiles on www.startupindia.gov.in. Alternatively, competent accelerator partners can also reach out to TBIs, where TBIs must execute a proper due-diligence for selecting the accelerator partner/s.

*e.* **Evaluation and Mentoring Expertise –** Running an Accelerator program requires operational expertise as well as evaluation and mentoring experience, both in-house as well as externally. At the time of application, TBI will provide a tentative list of internal team members expected to be involved in running the program as well as a list of external mentors proposed to be associated with the program. ***Selected external mentors should have strong industry-specific expertise as well as past investment experience.***

**f. Award to startups -** Top 3 or Top 5 potential startups may be considered to be provided a grant during the demo day, where a quantum of amount can be decided by the evaluation committee on the basis of defined parameters such as: the need, stage and potential of the startups.

**7.0 Submission of Proposal**

A proposal in the prescribed proforma along with the necessary enclosures is to be submitted at the department's online portal http://onlinedst.gov.in

For any further information, you may contact:

**Shri Praveen Roy,**
**Scientist-F, Head-NEB & Member Secretary**
**National Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board**
**Innovation and Entrepreneurship Division (NEB Division)**
**Department of Science & Technology,**
**Technology Bhawan,**
**New Mehrauli Road,**
**New Delhi-110016**
**Telefax: 011 – 26590316,**
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**Er. Ravinder Gaur**
**Scientist- E/Director**
**Innovation and Entrepreneurship Division (NEB Division),**
**Department of Science and Technology**
**Ministry of Science & Technology**
**Technology Bhawan, New Mehrauli Road**
**New Delhi-110016**
**Tel: 011- 26590373, E-mail: rgaur@nic.in**
**(m) 9818385649**

**8.0 Acceptance and Processing of Application**

The proposals are received against the call for proposals will be evaluated through the National Expert Advisory Committee (NEAC) constituted by the Department for this purpose. The last date for submitting the application is 3rd July 2023 till 5:00 pm, IST.

**9.0 Evaluation of Proposal**

The proposals shall be evaluated based on the merit and the capability of the TBI in helping achieve the objectives of NIDHI-Accelerator, in efficiently managing the programs, and supporting technology-based startups. The evaluation is done by the NEAC, and the Department shall take a final decision to support the Accelerator Program based on the recommendation of the NEAC.

The following broad parameters are used for evaluation of the proposals –
a) Design of the program preparedness and experience of the TBI and its team to run the program
b) Quality of the Evaluators and Mentors associated with running the program
c) Strength of the Program Partner (s) to attract and add value to the startups
d) Ability of the Accelerator Program to achieve the overall objectives and targets
e) Experience of the TBI to provide prototyping grants and seed-support, help startups get external funding

f) Case studies of TBI supporting its existing / graduate incubates in the acceleration of the startup

**10.0 Monitoring**

The implementing TBI will be required to provide regular updates to NSTEDB on the progress of the program. During and after the program, the TBI will closely track the following parameters and provide a monthly report during the program and for a 12-month period from the end of the program –

1) Number of startups scouted and crystallized through the application process
2) Number of startups evaluated and provided feedback
3) Number of startups provided mentoring support
4) Number of startups provided acceleration support through the program
5) Details and Number of investors present on the demo day and feedback report of the investors on startups presented.
6) Number of startup supported in personnel development
7) Number of startups supported in securing target customer/market validation/traction
8) Number of startups successfully graduated from the program
9) Quantum of capital raised by the startups within 12 months of graduation from the program.
10) Number and details of the startups awarded on demo day.
11) Number of startups supported in securing funding/capital

Following the completion of the abovementioned 12-month period, the TBI will continue providing periodic details of the progress of the startups supported as a part of the Accelerator Program – along with details of other incubatee, required to be provided to NSTEDB on a regular basis as per the norms defined by NSTEDB

*Number of startups which raised funds within 12 months of the completion of the NIDHI accelerator program will be the key performance indicator for the incubators. This will be the key parameter for assessing the Incubators for awarding subsequent accelerator programs. Details should also be updated on the TBI website preferably on a 6-monthly basis.*

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

(i) As per the latest instruction by Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Government of India, the grantee institution is required to register at CGA website (http://pfms.nic.in) to facilitate release of funds.

(ii) All implementing TBIs are required to execute a Bond on a non-judicial stamp paper (in prescribed proforma) before any grants-in-aid are released to them.

(iii) The TBI would put in place a proper mechanism for ensuring proper implementation and execution of Accelerator Programs, and provide timely monitoring report as envisaged earlier in these guidelines.

(iv) The grant being released should be exclusively spent for the specified purpose for which it has been sanctioned within the stipulated time. Any unspent balance out of the amount sanctioned, including interest accrued, would be refunded to the Govt. of India in Bharat Kosh.

(v) The grantee shall furnish to Department of Science and Technology, utilization certificate and an audited statement of accounts pertaining to the grant as per the prevalent financial rules of Government of India.

(vi) The grantee is required to send two copies each of following to Department of Science and Technology at the end of each financial year as well as at the time of seeking further installments of the grant, if any.
    a.   Progress report (hard & soft copy);
    b.   Audited statement of accounts relating to the amount sanctioned; and
    c.   Utilization certificate, in the prescribed proforma,

(vii) All the assets acquired or created from the grant shall be installed in the premises of the TBI and not in any other department/Division of the host institute, unless specifically approved by the Department of Science and Technology on the recommendation of the NEAC. All returns generated by the TBI out of risk-capital provided to participants of the accelerators as a part of this scheme shall be used by the TBIs at its discretion for supporting future accelerator programs.

(viii) Assets acquired wholly or substantially out of government grant, except those declared as obsolete and unserviceable or condemned in accordance with the procedure laid down in the General Financial Rules (GFR), shall not be disposed off without the prior approval of the Department of Science and Technology.

(ix) TBI would maintain a record of all the capital equipment procured and once these are unserviceable/obsolete/unusable they should be disposed with a prior permission for assets more than Rs.1.00 lakh from the Department of Science and Technology. The fund thus generated from disposal of capital equipment should be flowed back for TBI activities.

(x) The Controller and Auditor General (CAG) of India at his discretion shall have the right of access to the books of account for the grant received from the Government.

(xi) The grantee will maintain separate Zero Balance Subsidiary Account (ZBSA) for the grant in Union bank of India branch, the interest earned should be reported to the Department of Science and Technology. The interest thus earned will be treated as a credit to the organization and needs to be mandatorily deposited in Govt. of India Bharat kosh Account. A receipt of which need to be submitted to the Department.

(xii) The grantee must not entrust the implementation of the work for which the grant is being sanctioned to another institution and divert the grant receipts as assistance to the latter institution unless approved by the committee. In case the grantee itself is not in a position to execute or complete the project, it may be required to refund forthwith the Department of Science and Technology, the entire amount of grants-in-aid received by it.

(xiii) NSTEDB reserves the right to terminate support to the project at any stage, if it is convinced that the grant is not being utilized properly or that appropriate progress in the project work is not being made.

(xiv) Where support has been provided by NSTEDB under specific conditions accepted by a grantee institution and if it does not comply with these conditions, it will be liable to refund the grant already received in such a manner as may be required by the Government and no further NSTEDB grant will be allowed to such an institution.

(xv) NSTEDB will not have any liability towards the manpower appointed by the grantee institution for implementation of the project.

(xvi) NSTEDB will have no responsibility in case of any loss is caused to any life or property due to accident, fire or any other reasons. The TBI is required to take appropriate safety and insurance measures to safeguard against any loss to human life and property related to the Accelerator Program.

(xvii) The NSTEDB will have no liability on account of any omission or commission of regulatory/statutory requirement by the TBI or its incubatee and their companies, as a part of the Accelerator Program.

(xviii) The Grantee will indemnify, defend and hold harmless the Department of Science and Technology (Grantor) from and against, and in respect to, any and all losses, expenses, costs, obligations, liabilities and damages, including interest, penalties and attorney's fees and expenses, that the Grantor may incur as a result of any negligent or willful acts or omissions of the Grantee.

**ANNEXURE - 1**
**PROFORMA FOR SUBMISSION OF NIDHI-ACCELERATOR PROGRAM PROPOSAL**
Please fill up the proforma completely, incomplete proposals are liable to be rejected. Even if the information is not available for a particular point please record that information is not available. Proposal must be attached with the endorsement letter, forwarding letter and conflict of interest as per the format in Annexure (A)

1. **Details of the Technology Business Incubator/Incubator:**
   Name :
   Address :
   E-mail :
   Website :

2. **Details of the CEO of the TBI**
   CEO details-
   Name :
   Address :
   Mobile:
   Landline:
   E-mail :

3. **Details of the Accelerator Program:**
   Name:
   Type (sector specific/sector agnostic):
   Sector/Focus area (as mentioned in section 3.0):
   Target Cohort Size:
   Duration of program:

4. **Executive Summary:** [Brief Description of the Program]

5. **Bank Account Details of the TBI:**
   Name as given in Union Bank of India ZBSA Account:
   ZBSA Account No.:
   IFSC Code:
   MICR Code:
   Name of the bank with complete branch address:

6. **Program/Accelerator Partner**
   I. Names and brief profiles of the proposed Program/Accelerator Partner (s)
   II. Details of in-kind and cash commitments being made by the Program/Accelerator Partner (s) (along with a letter of intent/commitment letter)
   III. Role and responsibility of the Program/Accelerator Partner (s).

6. **Preparedness to run NIDHI-Accelerator Program**
   a. Details of the TBI's experience of running large-scale programs involving scouting, outreach, and training support.
   b. Details of the tentative team proposed to be involved in running the Accelerator Program, including details of the program lead who will spend substantially all-time in running the program smoothly.
   c. Tentative list of expert evaluators and mentors expected to be involved in running the program.
   d. Details of experience of providing seed-fund to startups and success stories
   e. Case studies of TBI supporting it's existing / graduate incubate in the acceleration of the startup (max 5)
   f. ***Number of startups which raised funds after completing the NIDHI Accelerator (For TBI's which have previously been awarded a NIDHI Accelerator):***

## 7. NIDHI-Accelerator Program Design and Structure

Provide details of different aspects of the program including –

a) Tentative dates and timelines of the program

b) Details of different phases of the program

c) Proposed targets by the TBIs for the program:

    1) Number of startups scouted and crystallized through the application process

    2) Number of startups evaluated and provided feedback

    3) Number of startups provided mentoring support

    4) Number of startups provided acceleration support through the program

    5) Number of startups supported in securing funding/capital

    6) Number of startup supported in personnel development

    7) Number of startups supported in securing target customer/market validation/traction

    8) Number of startups successfully graduated from the program

    9) Quantum of capital raised by the startups within 12 months of graduation from the program.

    10) Number and details of the startups awarded in the demo day.

    11) Details and Number of investors present on the demo day and feedback report of the investors on startups presented.

d) Experience of the TBI to run accelerator programs, provide prototyping grants, and seed-support (in case Seed Fund is sought as a part of the application to NSTEDB)

## 8. Month-wise work plan for the program (a separate time linked activity chart to be provided along with the detailed work plan.

**9. Total Budget (including non-DST contribution) across Phases of the program**

| S. No. | Item of Expenditure* | | | | Total Cost | DST Contribution | HI Contribut-ion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Phase-1** | **Phase-2** | **Phase-3** | | | |
| Accelerator Program (DST Contribution Upto 40 lakh) | | | | | | | |
| | | Phase-1 | Phase-2 | Phase-3 | | | |
| | **Proposed Timeline:** | | | | | | |
| 1 | Marketing and Promotion(Agency and Paid Marketing) and Publicity - For Call for Application and Pubilicy of the Program, Suggested: Paid Campaigns on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn | ✓ | | | | | |
| 2 | Evaluation of received startup applications (to be conducted by industry experts/ investors) | | ✓ | | | | |
| 3 | Mentoring Cost (Such as honorarium for mentors for one to one mentoring engagement, engagement with accelerator parner, etc.) | | | ✓ | | | |
| 4 | Training Cost (Educational Series by Webinars and Workshops, paid to Trainers and per participants MOOC/Template cost, engagement partner engagement, etc) | | | ✓ | | | |
| 5 | Online Platform for training (Website/ application portal/ video conferencing tools etc.) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 6 | Networking Event/ Demo Day/ Travel/ Printing etc. | | | ✓ | | | |
| 7 | Miscellaneous and Contingencies | | | | | | |
| A | **Total Accelerator Program Cost (1+2+3+4+5+6+7) (DST contribution Upto 30 lakh):** | | | | | | |
| B | **Demo Day Award (DST Contribution Upto 10 lakh):** | | | | | | |
| C | **Total (A+B) (DST contribution Upto 40 lakh):** | | | | | | |

*\* Budget to be submitted along with the justification of each item and a list indicating cost along with the justification on a separate sheet.*

*\* Upper Limit of the budget is assumed based on the cohort size of 15+ startups.*
*\* Subject to recommendation by NEAC of the department.*
*11. Means of Financing:*

| | Means of Financing | Amount |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Contribution of DST towards Accelerator Program | |
| 2 | Contribution of Incubator towards Accelerator Program | |
| 3 | Revenue Generation from Accelerator Program (if any) | |
| | Total: | |

*Name & Signature on behalf of TBI (with seal)*

*Date:*
*Place:*

*Annexure A*

## ENDORSEMENT FROM THE CEO OF ORGANIZATION
## (TO BE GIVEN ON LETTER HEAD)

PROJECT/ PROGRAM TITLE:  *(Title/ Name of the accelerator Program)*

1.  Certified that the Institute welcomes participation of Dr./Shri/Smt./Km._____ as the  Principal  Investigator/CEO  and  Dr./Shri/Smt./Km. _____ as the Co-Investigator /Project Manager for the project and that in the unforeseen event of discontinuance by the Principal Investigator, the Co-Investigator/Project Manager will assume the responsibility for the fruitful completion of the project/ program (after obtaining consent in advance from DST).

2.  Certified that the equipment, other basic facilities and such other administrative facilities as per terms and conditions of the grant, will be extended to investigator (s) throughout the duration of the project/ program.

3.  Institute assures financial and other managerial responsibilities of the project/ program.

4.  Certified that the organization has never been blacklisted by any department of the State Government or Central Government.

Name and Signature of Head of Institution/ CEO of TBI

Date: ………………

Place:………………

# CERTIFICATE FROM THE CEO
## (TO BE GIVEN ON LETTER HEAD)

PROJECT/ PROGRAM TITLE: *(Title/ Name of the accelerator program)*

1.   We agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the DST grant.

2.   We did not submit this or a similar project proposal elsewhere for financial support.

3.   We have explored and ensured that equipment and basic facilities will be available as and when required for the purpose of this online project. We shall not request financial support under this project, for procurement of these items.

4.   We have enclosed the following materials:

|  | ITEMS | NUMBER OF COPIES |
|---|---|---|
| (a) | Endorsement from the CEO (On Letterhead) | One |
| (b) | Certificate from CEO | One |
| (c) | Certificate from CEO regarding conflict of interest | One |
| (d) | Copies of the proposals | One |

Date : ………………

Name & Signature of          Name & Signature Of

Principal Investigator/CEO      Co-Investigator(s)/Project Manager

Place:………………..

**DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**
**POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

**FOR REVIEWER & COMMITTEE MEMBER or APPLICANT or DST OFFICER**
**ASSOCIATED/ DEALING WITH THE SCHEME/ PROGRAM OF DST**

Issues of Conflicts of Interest and ethics in scientific research and research management have assumed greater prominence, given the larger share of Government funding in the country's R & D scenario. The following policy pertaining to general aspects of Conflicts of Interest and code of ethics, are objective measures that are intended to protect the integrity of the decision making processes and minimize biases. The policy aims to sustain transparency, increase accountability in funding mechanisms and provide assurance to the general public that processes followed in award of grants are fair and non-discriminatory. The Policy aims to avoid all forms of bias by following a system that is fair, transparent and free from all influence/ unprejudiced dealings, prior to, during and subsequent to the currency of the programme to be entered into with a view to enable public to abstain from bribing or any corrupt practice in order to secure the award by providing assurance to them that their competitors will also refrain from bribing and other corrupt practice and the decision makers will commit to prevent corruption, in any form, by their officials by following transparent procedures. This will also ensure a global acceptance of the decision making process adopted by DST.

**Definition of Conflict of Interest**:

Conflict of Interest means "any interest which could significantly prejudice an individual's objectivity in the decision-making process, thereby creating an unfair competitive advantage for the individual or to the organization which he/she represents". The Conflict of Interest also encompasses situations where an individual, in contravention to the accepted norms and ethics, could exploit his/her obligatory duties for personal benefits.

1. **Coverage of the Policy**:

   a) The provisions of the policy shall be followed by persons applying for and receiving funding from DST, Reviewers of the proposal and Members of Expert Committees and Programme Advisory Committees. The provisions of the policy will also be applicable on all individuals including Officers of DST connected directly or indirectly or through intermediaries and Committees involved in evaluation of proposals and subsequent decision-making process.

   b) This policy aims to minimize aspects that may constitute actual Conflict of Interests, apparent Conflict of Interests and potential Conflict of Interests in the funding mechanisms that are presently being operated by DST. The policy also aims to cover, although not limited to, Conflict of interests that are Financial (gains from the outcomes of the proposal or award), Personal (association of relative / Family members) and Institutional (Colleagues, Collaborators, Employer, persons associated in a professional career of an individual such as Ph.D. supervisor etc.)

2. **Specifications as to what constitutes Conflict of Interest**.

Any of the following specifications (non-exhaustive list) imply Conflict of Interest if,

(i) Due to any reason by which the Reviewer/Committee Member cannot deliver fair and objective assessment of the proposal.

(ii) The applicant is a directly relative# or family member (including but not limited to spouse, child, sibling, parent) or personal friend of the individual involved in the decisionmaking process or alternatively, if any relative of an Officer directly involved in any decision making process / has influenced interest/ stake in the applicant's form etc..

(iii) The applicant for the grant/award is an employee or employer of an individual involved in the process as a Reviewer or Committee Member; or if the applicant to the grant/award has had an employer-employee relationship in the past three years with that individual.

(iv) The applicant to the grant/award belongs to the same Department as that of the Reviewer/Committee Member.

(v) The Reviewer/Committee Member is a Head of an Organization from where the applicant is employed.

(vi) The Reviewer /Committee Member is or was associated in the professional career of the applicant (such as Ph.D. supervisor, Mentor, present Collaborator etc.)

(vii) The Reviewer/Committee Member is involved in the preparation of the research proposal submitted by the applicant.

(viii) The applicant has joint research publications with the Reviewer/Committee Member in the last three years.

(ix) The applicant/Reviewer/Committee Member, in contravention to the accepted norms and ethics followed in scientific research has a direct/indirect financial interest in the outcomes of the proposal.

(x) The Reviewer/Committee Member stands to gain personally should the submitted proposal be accepted or rejected.

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\# The Term "Relative" for this purpose would be referred to in section 6 of Companies Act, 1956.

3. **Regulation**:

The DST shall strive to avoid conflict of interest in its funding mechanisms to the maximum extent possible. Self-regulatory mode is however recommended for stakeholders involved in scientific research and research management, on issues pertaining to Conflict of Interest and scientific ethics. Any disclosure pertaining to the same must be made voluntarily by the applicant/Reviewer/Committee Member.

4. **Confidentiality**:

The Reviewers and the Members of the Committee shall safeguard the confidentiality of all discussions and decisions taken during the process and shall refrain from discussing the same with any applicant or a third party, unless the Committee recommends otherwise and records for doing so.

## 5. Code of Conduct

### 5.1 To be followed by Reviewers/Committee Members:

(a) All reviewers shall submit a conflict of interest statement, declaring the presence or absence of any form of conflict of interest.

(b) The reviewers shall refrain from evaluating the proposals if the conflict of interest is established or if it is apparent.

(c) All discussions and decisions pertaining to conflict of interest shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

(d) The Chairman of the Committee shall decide on all aspects pertaining to conflict of interests.

(e) The Chairman of the Committee shall request that all members disclose if they have any conflict of interest in the items of the agenda scheduled for discussion.

(f) The Committee Members shall refrain from participating in  the decision making process andleave the room with respect to the specific item where the conflict of interest is established or is apparent.

(g) If the Chairman himself/herself has conflict of interest, the Committee may choose a Chairman from among the remaining members, and the decision shall be made in consultation with the Member Secretary of the Committee.

(h) It is expected that a Committee member including the Chair-person will not seek funding from a Committee in which he/she is a member. If any member applies for a grant, such proposals will be evaluated separately outside the Committee in which he/she is a member.

### 5.2 To be followed by the Applicant to the Grant/Award:

(a) The applicant must refrain from suggesting referees with potential Conflict of Interest that may arise due to the factors mentioned in the specifications described above in Point No. 2.

(b) The applicant may mention the names of individuals to whom the submitted proposal should not be sent for refereeing, clearly indicating the reasons for the same.

### 5.3 To be followed by the Officers dealing with Programs in DST:

While it is mandatory for the program officers to maintain confidentiality as detailed in point no. 6 above, they should declare, in advance, if they are dealing with grant applications of a relative or family member (including but not limited to spouse, child, sibling, parent) or thesis/ post-doctoral mentor or stands to benefit financially if the applicant proposal is funded. In such cases, DST will allot the grant applications to the other program officer.

## 6. Sanction for violation

### 3.1 For a) Reviewers / Committee Members and b) Applicant

Any breach of the code of conduct will invite action as decided by the Committee.

### 3.2 For Officers dealing with Program in DST

Any breach of the code of conduct will invite action under present provision of CCS (conduct Rules), 1964.

7. **Final Appellate authority**:

Secretary, DST shall be the appellate authority in issues pertaining to conflict of interest and issues concerning the decision making process. The decision of Secretary, DST in these issues shall be final and binding.

8. **Declaration**

**I have read the above "Policy on Conflict of Interest" of the DST applicable to the Reviewer/ Committee Member/ Applicant/ DST Scheme or Program Officer # and agree to abide by provisions thereof.**

I hereby declare that I have no conflict of interest of any form pertaining to the proposed grant *

I hereby declare that I have conflict of interest of any form pertaining to the proposed grant *

* & # (Tick whichever is applicable)

**Name of the Reviewer/ Committee Member or Applicant or DST Officer**
*(Strike out whichever is not applicable)*

(**Signature with date**)

**Documents to be submitted:**

1.  Biodata/CV of CEO and Project manager
2.  Conflict of interest
3.  Certificate from PI/Certificate from CEO
4.  Endorsement from CEO
5.  Complete Project proposal including:
    - Proposal as per annexure 1
    - Budget as per guideline
    - Activity Schedule - Month-wise work plan with detailed structure of the program
    - CV of CEO and Project manager
    - List of internal team member, with designation and contact details
    - List of empanelled fulltime and parttime mentors and trainers
    - List of empanelled Partners with commitment letters.
    - Details about current infrastructure of the company
    - Details about the space, and equipment including equipment and online platforms for networking and equipment for prototyping and research
    - Cancelled cheque, bank details, PAN card and Darpan details
6.  Registration Certificate of the TBI
7.  Memorandum of Association and Article of Association of the TBI
8.  Audited Statement of Accounts for the last 2 Years
9.  Annual Reports for the last 2 Years

<h1 style="text-align:center"><u>DST - NIDHI Accelerator Program - One Pager</u></h1>

### 1. About the Project

To promote and strengthen Science & Technology Entrepreneurship, the NSTEDB, DST has been funding various programmes and projects on a regular basis. NIDHI Accelerators are positioned as post-incubation initiatives linked with the existing incubators to supplement, complement the scaling up of the start-up value chain.

NSTEDB, DST would encourage its existing TBIs and other incubators to extensively adopt and evolve the accelerator model. NIDHI Accelerator is aimed to help aspiring entrepreneurs in the country, including the ventures already being incubated at TBIs, to be guided in a rigorous and more structured manner, through a deep mentoring process and access to funding and market networks. NIDHI accelerators are positioned for accelerating startups that have made significant progress in terms of marketvalidation and are at the growth and scale-up stage.

Therefore, to run this programme it is proposed to provide funding support upto INR. 40 lakh for conducting acceleration programs for startups to existing TBI's and incubators supported/funded by DST or any other government agencies. Proposals are invited for the above program.

### 2. Who are eligible:
This programme will be mainly conducted by various TBIs and incubators which are
- TBIs previously funded or currently funded by DST or any other central or state government agencies are eligible to apply, with a minimum 3 years in existence, having nurtured and incubated at least 20 startups in multiple domains.

### 3. DST- NIDHI ACCELERATOR PROGRAM: 2023-24: Call for Proposals
Proposals are invited from eligible TBIs and incubators interested in conducting above programme during the <u>financial year 2023-24</u> under the aegis of NSTEDB, Department of Science & Technology, Government of India. Interested eligible TBIs and incubators need to submit proposals as per the prescribed format uploaded on the website (https://onlinedst.gov.in).
**Last date of receiving proposals: 3rd July, 2023 till 5:00 PM, IST**

### 4. Steps to follow for submission of proposal;
Please check **Annexure C**
*Important: For providing funding support, only one proposal per institution/organization will be accepted. The proposal may be submitted for conducting the Programme/Activity. Multiple proposals received for conducting the same Programme/activity from the same institution/organization are liable for rejection. For FAQ, Annexure B may be referred.*
For any further information, may contact:
**Er. Ravinder Gaur**
**Director & Scientist E**
Innovation & Entrepreneurship Division, DST, Ministry of
Science & Technology,Technology Bhawan, New Mehrauli
Road
New Delhi-110016 Tel: 011- 2690373 (M) 9818385649
E-mail: rgaur@nic.in

**Annexure B - Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Q1. What is this NIDHI Accelerator Program funded by NSTEDB during 2023-24?**

NSTEDB, DST would encourage its existing TBIs and other incubators to extensively adopt and evolve the accelerator model. NIDHI Accelerator is aimed to help aspiring entrepreneurs in the country, including the ventures already being incubated at TBIs, to be guided in a rigorous and more structured manner, through a deep mentoring process and access to funding and market networks. NIDHI accelerators are positioned for accelerating startups that have made significant progress in terms of marketvalidation and are at the growth and scale-up stage.

**Q2. Who can apply and what is the maximum funding support DST will provide?**

TBIs previously funded or currently funded by DST or any other central or state government agencies are eligible to apply, with a minimum 3 years in existence, having nurtured and incubated at least 20 startups in multiple domains.

**Q3. How to apply for funding support?**
Eligible TBIs/Incubators having interest in conducting **the program** during the financial year 2023-24 under the aegis of NSTEDB, Department of Science & Technology, need to submit their online proposal(s) as per the prescribed format on or before the last date of receiving proposals. The prescribed format can be downloaded from https://onlinedst.gov.in

**Q4. How to submit the Proposal?**

Please check **Annexure C.**

**Q5. Can more than one Department of the same Institution/Organization apply for the Same Programme?**

For a particular programme only a single proposal per institution/organization will be accepted for conducting the programme. Therefore, multiple proposals received for conducting the same Programme from the same institution/organization are liable for rejection.

**Q6. What are the documents to be submitted after completion of the programme?**
Following documents are to be submitted after successfully completion of programme;

✔ Post Programme Report hardcopy as well as soft copy (PDF format)
✔ Statement of Audited Expenditure, Utilization Certificate; GFR 12-A

**Q7. Where can I read more about NSTEDB, DST?**

The National Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board (NSTEDB), established in 1982 by the Government of India under the aegis of Department of Science & Technology, is an institutional mechanism to help promote knowledge driven and technology intensive enterprises. The Board, having representatives from socio-economic and scientific Ministries/Departments, aims to convert "job-seekers" into "job-generators" through Science & Technology (S&T) interventions. You can visit www.nstedb.com for more information about NSTEDB.

**Annexure - C**

**General Instructions Manual for Incubators/Institutions for online proposal submission:**

**To apply for the scheme by National Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board (NSTEDB), Department of Science and Technology, Govt. Of India.**

   a. Please use the following steps;

   1. Visit www.onlinedst.gov.in
   2. To download the Guidelines & Proposal Format visit the "Schemes And Formats" tab, check NSTEDB schemes under "Innovation and Entrepreneurship" tab, click on download button of the respective scheme to download scheme guidelines.



   3. Register under tab "New PI Registration" and create the account for filling up the application form online, in case you already have an account, directly login in with details.

   4. After Registration Sign In with the Login id and password to fill the application form online.

   5. Please read the form questions carefully and answer them with the best knowledge to avoid any conflict in the application/proposal.

   6. Please note that the online application form is different from the proposal which is to be prepared by the Incubators/Institutions.

7. Online application form is the standard form for various schemes implemented by the DST. Govt. of India, thus many fields/questions will seem irrelevant in respect to the NIDHI Programs, in that case please mention NIL/ZERO/NA for such fields.

8. Please note that in the online application form for the question/field under "Financials" for NIDHI Accelerator please mention
    - Fill NIL/ZERO/NA under the equipment or any other capital expense head/category as NIDHI-Accelerator is of "Recurring Grant" nature and does not hold any component of Capital expenditure. In budget section only relevant field for NIDHI - Accelerator is-
    - Recurring Head:-
    a. Project Staff -
        1. Evaluation Cost
    2. Mentoring Cost
    3. Training workshop Cost
    b. Consumables(Logistics/Mooc/Startup Kit)
    c. Contingencies
    d. Any other head
    1. Marketing and promotion
    2. Online platform including website
    3. Networking event such as demo day
    4. Startup grant - demo day award
    e. Total Recurring Cost/DST Support Sought For

    - For fields/questions not relevant to the NIDHI-Accelerator please mention NIL/ZERO and move forward with the application.

9. Please make sure to upload the proposal prepared at the end of the online application to complete the application.

10. Please note that applications submitted online are only considered valid. Applications submitted via mail/hardcopy etc. will not be considered valid.

11. In addition to the above please check https://onlinedst.gov.in/Documents/UserGuideDocs/epms_FAQ.pdf or email to pmso.dst@nic.in for any further query

12. Upload the scanned proposal duly signed by head of the organization along with enclosures in **PDF form** (https://onlinedst.gov.in)

13. **Incomplete proposals are liable for rejection.**

b. Online form format with data to be filled in the respective field for NIDHI - Accelerator

**General Information**
1. Division- (Select - Innovation and Entrepreneurship Division)
2. Programme - (Select Scheme - NIDHI ACCELERATOR)
3. Principal Investigator - Please fill name of the CEO of the incubator
4. Institute - Please fill name of the Incubator
5. Address - Please fill address of the Incubator
6. Type of Organization - Please select Incubator registration type - Society/ Academic Institution/Incase of Section 8, Please select - Private Sector Company
7. Darpan ID(If Any)
8. PAN No.
9. Category - Please fill category of the CEO(SC/ST/OBC/GENERAL)
10. Project Title - Please fill the proposal title" Application for NIDHI Accelerator by "TBI name" on "Thrust Area"
11. Project Summary - Please fill summary of the proposal
12. Project duration - Please fill duration of the program
13. Academic Area - Please fill thrust area of the Incubator
14. Application Area - Please fill Proposed Accelerator Focus Sector
15. Government National Initiative : Suggested - Make in India, Startup India, Digital India, Atmanirbhar Bharat
16. Project Keyword - Please fill important keyword from the proposal

Principal Investigator - Add New PI - Please fill Incubator CEO details.
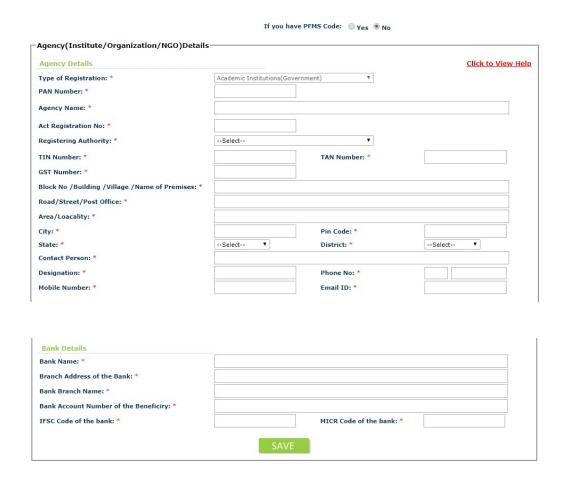1. Title
2. Name
3. Designation
4. Institute - Name of the Incubator
5. Date Of Birth
6. Gender
7. State
8. District
9. City
10. Category
11. Address
12. Pin
13. Mobile
14. Landline
15. Identity Proof
16. Identity Proof Number
17. Communication Email
18. Alternate Email

Financial Details

- Recurring Head:-

      a. Project Staff - Please fill details under below head
         1. Evaluation Cost
         2. Mentoring Cost
         3. Training workshop Cost
      b. Consumables(Logistics/Mooc/Startup Kit)
      c. Contingencies
      d. Any other head
      1. Marketing and promotion
      2. Online platform including website
      3. Networking event such as demo day
      4. Startup grant - demo day award
      e. Total Recurring Cost/DST Support Sought For

**PFMS Details:**
**If you have a PFMS Code: Yes/No.**
**PFMS Unique Code agency Registration**

**Submission:**
1. Biodata/CV of CEO and Project manager
2. Conflict of interest
3. Certificate from PI/Certificate from CEO
4. Endorsement from CEO
5. Complete Project proposal including:
   - Proposal as per annexure 1
   - Budget as per guideline
   - Activity Schedule - Month-wise work plan with detailed structure of the program
   - CV of CEO and Project manager
   - List of internal team member, with designation and contact details
   - List of empaneled fulltime and part-time mentors and trainers
   - List of empaneled Partners with commitment letters.
   - Details about current infrastructure of the company
   - Details about the space, and equipment including equipment and online platforms for networking and equipment for prototyping and research
   - Cancelled cheque, bank details, PAN card and Darpan details
6. Registration Certificate of the TBI
7. Memorandum of Association and Article of Association of the TBI
8. Audited Statement of Accounts for the last 3 Years
9. Annual Reports for the last 3 Years

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*End of the document*