

NIDHI Indo-German InnoXchange Programme

Guidelines for Indian Delegation to Germany

1. Programme Overview

The NIDHI Indo-German InnoXchange Programme is a bilateral initiative of the **Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India**, and the **German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)** represented through the German Centre for Research and Innovation (DWIH), New Delhi and will be executed by SINE on behalf of DST.

The programme aims to establish a systematic exchange format between the Indian and German deep-tech startup and entrepreneurship ecosystems, fostering collaboration among startups, incubators, accelerators, universities, and research institutions.

2. Objectives of the Programme

The key objectives include:

- Facilitating bilateral exchange and exposure visits for incubator leaders and startup founders
 - Increase knowledge sharing for incubation managers on good practices of each other's innovation ecosystem.
 - Exploring market access opportunities or any other potential collaborations.
 - To promote knowledge exchange on deep-tech commercialization, joint technology development, funding mechanisms, incubation management, international market access, and IP strategies.
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3. Program Structure

The delegation from India to Germany under NIDHI Indo-German InnoXchange Programme would consist of **10 innovators/ startups/ deep-tech founders/ early-stage entrepreneurs/ incubation heads/ incubation managers**, along with officials from the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India; for a series of meetings, workshops with incubators, start-ups and ecosystem enablers, visit to start-up centers and research labs in Germany and other relevant networking events; along with participation in a related DeepTech startup event in Germany; for 5 days (excluding journey time).

The delegation visit from India to Germany is proposed to be scheduled tentatively in June 2026. The final dates and details of the visit will be shared with the selected participants post the selection.

4. Selection process

- The call for application will be announced for the incubators
- The incubators will nominate their representative for participation in the Indo-German InnoXchange Programme
- The startup selection in the program will take place via nomination from incubators, followed by selection by an expert committee.
- The incubators will nominate 2 to 3 deep tech startups supported under any of DST programs or under their incubation.
- The first level sanity check and fit to program assessment for incubators and its nominated representative and startups will be done by SINE internal committee
- The final selection of the incubators and startups will be done by the expert committee.

5. Eligibility Criteria

For Incubators/Incubators Representative to be part of the delegation

- The incubators (DST supported and others) with a prior experience of 7 years and proven track record for incubation will be eligible to apply.
- Preference will be given to the incubators
 - Supported deep tech startups.
 - Well-formed team
 - Managed various funding programs
 - Participation in any cross-border / bilateral or international programs
- The incubator will nominate their representative basis on the following –
 - The nominated representative should have a minimum of 5–7 years of experience working in startup/incubation ecosystem.
 - Should have closely worked /engaged/ mentored startups, led collaborations, managed programs etc.
 - Preference will be given if the representative has been a part of any cross-border / international / soft landing programs

For Startups to be part of the delegation

- The nominated startups should be from TRL 4 to 6 and preferably to have some relevance in terms of the exposure to the German ecosystem.
- The primary focus shall be on deep-tech startups.
- The nominated founder must hold a minimum of 51% shareholding in the startup.
- The startup's age must be in accordance with the norms prescribed by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- The startups nominations should be broadly from the domains like Energy, Climate, Health tech Semiconductor, Quantum computing, and other relevant deep tech innovations.

Terms & conditions

- The selected participants (incubator representatives & startups) will have to pay the refundable deposit of INR 30,000 per participant. Upon successful completion of the program the same will be refunded to the participants.
- The participants should hold a valid Indian passport, with minimum validity of six months from the travel dates.
- Selected incubators and startups should demonstrate the ability to contribute meaningfully to bilateral cooperation through workshops, networking, and ecosystem development.
- DST, through SINE would be providing the round-trip airfare, visa and medical insurance charges for the selected participants of the delegation.
- German Counterpart (DAAD) would be providing the local hospitality, including accommodation, local transport and food, during the delegation visit in Germany.
- Any additional expenditure (including stay beyond the days approved by the DST visit) therein should be borne by the participant.
