

Institute Innovation and Startup Policy

National Institute of Technology Agartala

1. Introduction

Centre for Innovation & Design, NIT Agartala is a nonprofit centre at NIT Agartala to promote Innovation and Entrepreneurship. It provides a platform for start-ups by budding Entrepreneurs and Intrapreneurs to convert their innovative ideas into commercially viable products. It also provides services related to patenting and commercialization.

2. Vision

To be a centre of excellence as Innovation & Startup Centre and to build innovative ecosystem with interdisciplinary knowledge, human values, professional ethics and self reliance among the students and technocrats and contributing to both regional & national economy & society.

3. Mision:

- i) To be a centre of excellence in supporting Startup and innovation ecosystem in the region.
- ii) To nurture and sustain an academic ambience and entrepreneurship among students & technocrats for sustainable development in the region and to accomplish its integration globally.

4. Objectives: -

Centre for Innovation & Design, NIT Agartala has listed the following objectives:

- i) To build a strong innovation culture and atmosphere for innovation at NIT Agartala.
- ii) Interfacing and Networking between academic, R & D institutions, industries and financial institutions.
- iii) To set up incubator facilities, provide cost effective infrastructural support and value-added services to startups like mentoring, legal, financial, technical and intellectual property.

- iv) To support NIT Agartala in creating a platform to nurture creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial skills of faculty and students.
- v) To facilitate the dissemination of information by organizing conferences, seminars, lecture series, workshops and boot-camps, hackathons etc.

5. Resource mobilization

For supporting pre-incubation and incubation infrastructure and facility, funds to be managed from both Institute fund and external funding agency.

- i) Minimum 1% fund of the total annual budget of the institution will be allocated for funding and supporting innovation and startups related activities through creation of separate 'Innovation fund' as recommended by National Innovation and Startup policy 2019, MHRD.
 - ii) Options of all sources of external funds from government (state and central) such as DST, DBT, MHRD, AICTE, TDB, TIFAC, DSIR, CSIR, BIRAC, NSTEDB, NRDC, Startup India, InvestIndia, MeitY, MSDE, MSME, etc. and non-government sources should be encouraged.
 - iii) To approach private and corporate sectors to get fund under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as per Section 135 of the Company Act 2013.
 - iv) Institute may also raise fund through sponsorships and donations. Institute should actively engage alumni network for promoting Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E).
6. **Governing Council:** Centre for Innovation & Design will have a Governing Council which will serve for a period of three years and can be re-appointed for further periods. The Council would consist of following members:
- i) Director, NIT Agartala – Chairperson
 - ii) Dean, Research and Consultancy - Member
 - iii) Convener/Coordinator of Centre for Innovation & Design – Member & Convener
 - iv) Faculty members associated with Startup & Innovation cell - Member
 - v) Any two internal/external members nominated by the Institute - Member

7. **Start-up Eligibility:** Companies are eligible for start-up facility at NIT Agartala Incubation Centre provided its shareholders, Faculty members or partners are from the following categories:

- i) Students of NIT Agartala
- ii) Alumni of NIT Agartala

- iii) Regular Faculty members of NIT Agartala
- iv) Individuals partnering with regular faculty members/alumni of NIT Agartala
- v) Universities/Institutions having R&D collaboration with the Host Institution

8. Start-up Admissibility Procedure: The applications shall be processed once the applicant(s) has taken due recommendation from respective HoD and approval from Dean of Faculty Welfare for Faculty members & Dean Academic for full-time students. An Internal Review Committee (IRC) constituted by the Chairperson, Governing Council would be setup to evaluate and carry out the selection procedure. Companies or Institutions applying which are not related to NIT Agartala, they will directly address the application to 'The Coordinator, Centre for Innovation & Design, NIT Agartala'.

At the initial level, the potential incubatees for admission in Centre for Innovation & Design will be required to submit an application. The application should include

- i) Business Plan
- ii) Details of IP/ technology based on which a company is proposed to be promoted/ founded.

In case the IP/ technology is developed at NIT Agartala, a copy of the letter of approval from NIT Agartala for transfer of /licensing of/ permission to use IP in favour of prospective incubate companies.

The business plan must cover all aspects including: company description, value proposition, products and services, market and competition analysis, revenue model, milestones and timelines, development and marketing plan, organizational structure, core team, risk analysis, funding requirements and projected financials. Applicants may give additional information as they think would help in the assessment of their proposal.

If the initial evaluation of the business plan / executive summary is positive, Centre for Innovation & Design will arrange a meeting with the company founders, during which the company will be expected to present a PowerPoint presentation describing critical aspects of the business plan to IRC. The presentation will be followed by Q&A session. After the presentation, a final decision will be made regarding the acceptance of the company as a start-up. The presentation through video conferencing is also permitted.

9. Agreement: The Company will enter into an agreement with Centre for Innovation & Design once their business plan has been approved by IRC. The Company will not be allowed to commence its operation till the agreement is signed between both the parties.

10. Infrastructure

Upon admission to incubation centre, the following infrastructural facilities will be offered to the incubatee companies on an individual basis, apart from a set of shared/

common infrastructure mentioned hereinafter:

- i) Office space
- ii) Internet connection
- iii) Personal Computers (as per availability)

Besides, NIT Agartala will facilitate the incubatee companies to access departmental laboratories and other resources of Host Institution for their product's development purposes. Access to departmental resources is possible through Dean (Research and Consultancy) of NIT Agartala and usage of such resources should be with permission of the concerned department to avoid conflict with departmental activities and objectives. Further usage of such resources shall be in conformity with the policies of the Host Institution.

Apart from the specific infrastructures as stated above, Centre for Innovation & Design will provide certain facilities that will be shared by all incubatee companies which would include:

- i) Laser Printing
- ii) 3D Printing
- iii) Photocopier
- iv) Scanner
- v) Teleconferencing facilities
- vi) Meeting/Conference room with projection equipment
- vii) NIT Agartala Library facilities
- viii) Pantry facilities

11. Services

In addition to physical infrastructure, NIT Agartala intends to provide other support and services including:

- i) Company registration and filings
- ii) HR services
- iii) Legal
- iv) Intellectual Property (Copyrights, Trade Marks, Patent) filings
- v) Training/Conferences/Workshops
- vi) Seed Funding support
- vii) Governmental Agency funding
- viii) Networking and linkages with NITA Alumni for mentorship, funding, technical expertise and market access
- ix) Venture capitalists / Angels / Investors Introductions

- xi) Showcasing NITA incubated companies through networking and events
- xii) Entrepreneurship meets

12. Periodic Assessment

NITA incubation center will evaluate the performance of incubatee companies, who will be required to submit information on a ~~quarterly~~ basis in a prescribed format. Additionally, incubatee companies may also be subjected to annual assessments.

13. Tenure in Incubation Centre

Companies will be permitted to stay in the incubation centre, to begin with, for a period of 24 months that may be extended to another 12 (6+6) months after review at each stage. A nominal monthly charge will be levied to a company for this period of 36 months. NIT Agartala may, at its own discretion, permit companies to extend their stay further for a maximum period of another 12 months, for which they will have to pay the charges at the prevailing market rate decided by NITA.

14. Rent

Rent for the incubatee companies will be guided by the following norms:

- i) Office space with seating facility & furniture for two person – Rs. 1000/- pm
- ii) Office space with seating facility & furniture with three person – Rs 1500/-pm
- iii) Additional seating facility & furniture for each person – Rs 500/- pm

15. Exit

Incubatee companies will leave the incubator under the following circumstances:

- i) Completion of stay for 36 months, unless the stay is extended by NIT Agartala
- ii) Under performance of the business proposition: Criteria for the same will be decided and applied by NIT Agartala on case to case basis. The company may be asked for exit in case of poor performance.

16. Equity

In lieu of support and services to be provided, the incubatee companies will be charged in the form of equity and/or revenue sharing . The percentage of equity and revenue sharing will be decided by NIT Agartala. NIT Agartala will hold the equity of 3% for the service provided if the incubatee stay for initial two years and 5% if the company stays more than 2 years.

17. **Mentoring and Advisory Services:**

Specialized mentors may be made available, based on demand, to the companies to assist with strategic areas or to provide project-oriented consultation. In such case mentor has to be compensated by the company either by equity sharing or by providing fees.

An incubated company may avail the consulting services by empanelled professionals at their end. Hiring of any consultant from outside NIT Agartala directly by the Incubatee Company shall have to be paid directly with prior information to NITA incubation centre.

18. **Member's engagement with Start-ups**

Faculty member involvement

- i) Full Time: Faculty member may avail Sabbatical / EOL as per the prevailing NIT Agartala leave rules and may work full time for the Company. Alternatively, they can devote full time by keeping lien with NIT Agartala. Compensation offered to the Faculty member through shares and/or cash, must be declared by the **member** to NIT Agartala. Member must not involve himself / herself in any capacity with the company except as shareholder on re-joining NIT Agartala after sabbatical / EOL. In case, he / she is involved as a mentor, consultant or any other form other than a shareholder after sabbatical / EOL, rules applicable will be same as that of part-time.
- ii) Part time: A Faculty member can participate in a Start-up on a part time basis there is no conflict of interest as per point-21. They will do their normal teaching & other activity in their departments / centres and can spend only one day per week for the entrepreneurship activities. The compensation to the faculty member may be as per NIT Agartala norms for consultancy projects. As an alternative, a Faculty member can obtain shares of the Start-up company as compensation for the engagement with the company. In such a case, the Faculty member must apply for approval for engagement with the Start-up. Further, the faculty member will offer 20%, or as decided by NIT Agartala, of the shares/revenue offered to them to NIT Agartala.

19. **Research Scholars' / Students' Involvement**

i) Full time: A research scholar / student can seek permission from NIT Agartala to take special leave for a semester, or an additional period for which formal permission is granted by NIT Agartala, to work for a Start-up on a full-time basis. This may be treated as withdrawal under permission from NIT Agartala for the specified period for which such special leave is formally granted. The Research Scholar/Student, on returning, must satisfy all norms (including maximum duration norms of his/her respective programme of study) to earn a degree.

- ii) **Part time:** A research scholar / student can seek permission from NIT Agartala to work for a start-up on a part-time basis. The NIT Agartala part-time engagement norms in projects during a semester/vacation period will apply. Students who are under incubation, but are pursuing some entrepreneurial ventures while studying should be allowed to use their address in the institute to register their company with due permission from the institution
- iii) Attendance relaxation up to 50% may be provided (i.e. 50% attendance) to the student entrepreneur with prior approval from the Institute.

20. Pedagogy and learning Interventions for Entrepreneurship Development

Diversified approach should be adopted to produce desirable learning outcomes which should include cross disciplinary learning using mentors, labs, case studies, games, etc in place of traditional lecture-based delivery

- i) Student clubs/ bodies/ departments should organize competitions, bootcamps, workshops etc. These bodies should involve in institutional strategy planning to ensure enhancement of students thinking and responding ability.
- ii) Institute will provide “Annual Innovation & Entrepreneurship Award” to recognize outstanding ideas, successful enterprises and contributes for promoting innovation and enterprises ecosystem within institute.
- iii) Innovation champion will be nominated from the students for each department/stream of study in each academic year.
- iv) In the beginning of the academic year, Start up and Innovation cell will conduct an induction programme about importance of I&E so that freshly inducted students are made aware of the entrepreneurial agenda of the Institute and available support system.

21. **Conflict of Interest:** Certain situations leading to the conflict of interests are explained herein below. However, the list is not exhaustive, and hence situations having actual or potentials for conflicts of interest though not covered in this document may also come under conflict of Interest.

- i) An NIT Agartala member is able to influence a departmental decision for acquisition of laboratory and other equipment which could benefit an incubatee company in which he/ she is an interested person.
- ii) An NIT Agartala member in a position to circumvent prevailing policies for making use of NIT Agartala’s facilities for the benefit of an incubatee company in which he/ she is an interested person.

- iii) An NIT Agartala member in a position to make use of the suppliers and service providers of NIT Agartala for undue advantage of an incubatee company in which he/ she is an interested person.
- iv) An NIT Agartala member procures consultancy assignments or other business in name of NIT Agartala and outsources them to the incubatee company in which he/ she is an interested person.
- v) Use of NIT Agartala students or employees to perform a work for an incubatee company without any compensation when the work is not related in any way for their academic pursuits.
- vi) A person who is interested in one incubatee company and involved in a decision-making process also affecting other incubatee companies leads to a situation of conflict of interest.
- vii) When an incubatee company, its promoters, employees and staff or any interested person acts in manner to benefit the incubatee company at the disadvantage of NIT Agartala.
- viii) When NIT Agartala members are neglecting their respective commitments to NIT Agartala for their association with incubatee companies.
- ix) NIT Incubation Centre employees and associates are in position to use sensitive information pertaining to incubatee companies for their personal advantage.
- x) Conflict of interest of any sort not limited to blood relations, spouse, etc. should be avoided.

Others

- i) NIT Agartala Incubation Centre does not guarantee success and/or feasibility of the technology transferred from the Institute. NIT Agartala or any person representing them shall not be liable for any acts or omissions of the incubated company.
- ii) The above policy is subject to periodic review and amendment at any time.
- iii) Any/all disputed between the parties shall be referred for arbitration to the Director, NIT Agartala or person so nominated by him/her, whose decision will be final and binding upon the parties. The place of arbitration shall be Agartala