MAHARASHTRA STARTUP, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION POLICY - 2025

Department of Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation
Government of Maharashtra

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1. Introduction

India has emerged as the world's third-largest startup ecosystem, demonstrating rapid growth in innovation and entrepreneurship. Building on the momentum of the 2018 policy, the Maharashtra Startup Policy 2025 aims to reinforce the state's leadership in this dynamic landscape. As of 31st May 2025, Maharashtra is home to 29,147 Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)-recognized startups, accounting for 18% of India's total - the highest in the country.

Maharashtra stands out as a powerhouse of innovation, driven by supportive government policies, robust infrastructure, and an active network of stakeholders. This policy provides a futuristic framework focused on scaling funding access, enhancing infrastructure, and offering systemic support to consolidate Maharashtra's position as a resilient, inclusive, and execution-driven startup ecosystem.

With its unmatched concentration of talent, resources, and entrepreneurial energy, Maharashtra aims to play a leading role in helping India become the global leader in entrepreneurship and innovation. The state is poised to attract significant foreign investment in transformative technologies and business models. This policy reaffirms Maharashtra's commitment to being a prime global destination for innovators, entrepreneurs, and investors alike.

2. Policy Vision

Maharashtra envisions becoming the most preferred and dynamic startup destination in India, with the highest concentration of startups in the country. The policy aspires to create a vibrant, inclusive, and innovation-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem that nurtures startups from ideation to scale.

By fostering a culture of innovation, the state aims to position itself as a global hub for next-generation entrepreneurs. Through this policy, Maharashtra will empower startups across all sectors and regions, with a special focus on future technologies, social impact, sustainability, and inclusive growth.

3. Objectives

The Maharashtra Startup Policy 2025 aims to transform the state into a national and global leader in innovation and entrepreneurship. It aims to establish Maharashtra as the leading startup state in India by nurturing up to 1,25,000 entrepreneurs and recognizing up to 50,000 startups over the next five years, thereby generating widespread employment and innovation across sectors and regions.

4. Scope of the Policy

This policy outlines incentives and support mechanisms in addition to incentives provided by the state government under various policies and programs of various departments. The Government will strive to bring these benefits in a coordinated manner for all the stakeholders. This policy will remain in effect for next 5 years from the date of issue or till the new policy is announced.

5. Policy Pillars

The policy aims to create a strong startup and innovation ecosystem in Maharashtra focusing on leveraging and upgrading the existing infrastructure with the world class facilities for entrepreneurs. The main pillars of the policy are:

a) Promoting Innovation through cutting edge research and emerging technologies
b) Providing Mentorship through experts
c) Promoting Youth & Rural Entrepreneurship
d) Facilitating Regulatory Compliance
e) Promoting Women Entrepreneurship
f) Leveraging National and International Partnerships
g) Startup Procurement and Market Access
h) Fiscal Incentives

6. Governance Framework:

With the advent of new technologies and innovations in governance and public service delivery systems across all the departments and institutions, there is a need for cohesive and coordinated efforts to align resources, policies and programs. For this purpose, Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSInS) has been created in 2017 under the aegis of Department of Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation. This will be strengthened to effectively function as the apex agency for overall coordination related to entrepreneurship and innovation within the state.

The governance structure will consist of a General Body (GB), chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra for providing strategic direction, interdepartmental coordination, and oversight. The members of General Body will comprise of Secretaries of all the key departments including Industries, Planning, Finance, Agriculture, Public Health, Medical Education, Information Technologies, Urban development, Environment, Transport, School Education, Higher & Technical Education etc. This body will also have members from Industry Associations, Industry Leaders, and Experts from various sectors. Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSInS) will serve as the nodal authority for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all schemes and programs under this policy. All Departments will bring their proposals related to startups, innovation, or emerging technologies through MSInS to ensure alignment, synergy, and effective delivery across the ecosystem.

The Governing Council (GC) of the Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSInS) will oversee the implementation of the decisions undertaken by the General Body (GB)

Budgetary Provision:

Each department in the state will provide 0.5% of its outlay for promotion of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The departments will prepare action plan of its programs and policy which will be presented before the General Body chaired by Hon. Chief Minister. This will help to bring convergence of the resources and alignment with this policy. This pooling of the resources will also be useful for implementation of flagship projects such as creation of Innovation Hubs, Labs, and other components in the policy.

Data Repository:

To create an effective ecosystem for knowledge partnership, an online system for registration with the unique ID will be created to map all startups, incubators, accelerators, innovation hubs/labs/centre, investors and mentors/experts. This unique ID will be mandatory for availing any benefits, concessions under government policies and programs. Furthermore, all state government departments intending to establish or support incubators, accelerators, or related entities shall be required to obtain this unique ID from MSInS prior to operationalizing such initiatives. This system will enable centralized validation, avoid duplication, and ensure accountability, transparency, and effective coordination across the ecosystem.

7. Building a Strong Startup Ecosystem

7.1 A strong and interconnected infrastructure ecosystem forms the foundation of a thriving startup environment. To foster innovation and entrepreneurial growth, the Government of Maharashtra will strategically mobilize and enhance existing resources across the state to build a unified network of incubation centres, accelerators, startup hubs, micro-incubators, innovation labs, co-working spaces, and startup cafes. This integrated network will support startups across all stages - offering access to mentorship, prototyping, collaboration, and go-to-market resources. These hubs will also be designed to drive regional innovation and create localised opportunities across urban, semi-urban, and rural areas.

7.2 In parallel with physical infrastructure, the state will place strong emphasis on building cutting-edge digital infrastructure to ensure startups have seamless access to tools, services, and knowledge networks. Key initiatives will include the expansion of high-speed internet connectivity, cloud computing platforms, AI sandboxes, cybersecurity infrastructure, and smart digital platforms that facilitate access to schemes, mentorship, funding, and collaboration. These digital enablers will play a critical role in ensuring equitable and scalable access for startups regardless of geography.

7.3 To align infrastructure development with market and technological trends, Maharashtra will also adopt a sector-focused approach to ecosystem building. High-potential sectors such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Fintech, Agritech, Medtech, Semiconductors, Cybersecurity, Biotech, Spacetech, Blockchain, Quantum Computing, Smart Infrastructure, Mobility, Deeptech, Manufacturing, Sustainability, Defence, and Aviation will be prioritized. Tailored programs, dedicated zones, and specialized facilities will be created to nurture innovation in these areas, making Maharashtra a launchpad for future-ready startups and breakthrough technologies.

7.4 Government will focus on development and adoption of green technologies and circular economy to promote sustainability. Government shall also support incentivizing innovation, facilitating Research and Development, industry collaboration and enabling market access for startups and innovators focused on sustainable technologies.

7.5 To promote social inclusion, a special focus with budgetary allocation will be provided for the vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities, transgenders, and others in all the policy initiatives and schemes for entrepreneurship and innovation. Similarly, targeted efforts will be made to provide incubation, market access, mentoring and technical support to startups and entrepreneurs from vulnerable groups.

8. Key Focus Areas

8.1 Micro Incubators

To foster a widespread and decentralized support system for startups across all regions of the state, the government will establish a network of Micro Incubators in creating a hub-and-spoke model for comprehensive incubation services. With a dedicated corpus, these Micro Incubators will be strategically set up throughout Maharashtra, enabling aspiring entrepreneurs to access essential resources and guidance in their local communities. These micro incubation centres will serve as interconnected nodes, providing startups with access to mentorship, infrastructure, industry linkages, and a conducive environment to nurture their ideas and ventures. These centres will be established in ITIs, Polytechnics and Colleges.

8.2 Incubation Support

The government of Maharashtra aims to support incubation centres across the state with funding assistance of up to ₹5 crore per centre. This initiative is designed to foster a robust regional entrepreneurial ecosystem, accelerating startup growth. A dedicated capacity-building program will also be launched to enhance the capabilities of these incubation centres.

The state government will collaborate with private incubators to support cutting-edge incubation centres. To further encourage performance, an Incubator Ranking Framework will be implemented to recognize and evaluate the success of various incubators. This framework will also focus on process based KPIs to ensure development of Innovation and Entrepreneurship ecosystem in the state.

To enhance collaboration and learning, Maharashtra will form a strong incubators network connecting all operational incubators in the state for collaboration and knowledge sharing. MSInS will play a key role in mapping the incubators and accelerators of Maharashtra for working in collaboration with the entire ecosystem and startups.

Incubation Centres will provide the below support,
1. **Technology Commercialization:** Startups will receive assistance in transforming their research and technological innovations into commercially viable products and services. Incubation centres will offer guidance on product development, market entry strategies, intellectual property management, and connecting with potential customers and partners to bring innovative ideas to market successfully.
2. **Research Grants for Registered Startups:** Startups will have access to research grants to foster innovation and development. These grants will enable startups to conduct R&D activities, test

prototypes, and explore new technologies that can address pressing challenges across various sectors.

3. **Seed Funds:** Incubation centres will provide startups with seed funding, giving them the financial foundation to build and grow their businesses. This early-stage capital will help startups cover initial operational costs, develop prototypes, hire talent, and scale their ventures. By connecting startups with seed funds, the centres will play a crucial role in supporting entrepreneurs during their critical early stages of growth.

4. **Financial Assistance (Based on Assessment):** Startups will be eligible for financial assistance that will be granted based on an assessment of their potential, market impact, and growth trajectory. This assistance will be tailored to the specific needs of each startup, ensuring that they have the financial resources necessary to overcome challenges, scale their operations, and expand their market reach.

5. **Resource/Lab Support:** Incubation centres will offer access to state-of-the-art laboratories, equipment, and other technical resources essential for product development and innovation. Startups working in sectors like biotechnology, electronics, or manufacturing will particularly benefit from lab facilities, enabling them to conduct research, test prototypes, and refine their technologies in a supportive environment.

6. **Mentoring:** The incubation centres will create a mentor pool where they will support the incubated startups with the mentors.

These incubation centres will act as a vital hub for startups, providing them with the mentorship, resources, and funding needed to grow and succeed. In addition to the specific areas listed above, other forms of support will be made available as required, ensuring a holistic approach to fostering a thriving startup ecosystem in the state. These activities will be undertaken by all the departments including Higher and Technical Education, Agriculture, Public Health, Urban Development Department, etc.

8.3 Accelerators

The state government will support accelerators to scale the growth stage startups in the state. Government will also partner with key ecosystem stakeholders to set up or support existing accelerators. These Accelerators would coach, mentor and incubate all types of startups irrespective of product, sector, and stage of start-up. Support will also be extended to acceleration centres in partnership with academic institutions including IITs, IIMs, Skills universities, and industry.

8.4 Regional Innovation & Entrepreneurship Hubs

8.4.1 The organisational setup

Maharashtra government will create dedicated Regional Innovation & Entrepreneurship Hubs taking into consideration the fact that in some regions the ecosystem has evolved organically over the years. These hubs will serve as innovation hotspots, offering essential resources and infrastructure with the support from local governments, Academic Institutions, and the private sector. By creating and nurturing these hubs, the government aims to strengthen the regional innovation ecosystem, boosting the overall startup environment and driving sustainable development. These Innovation & Entrepreneurship Hubs will offer:

A) **Technology Integration:** The lab will offer the facilities on the latest emerging technologies such as Augmented Reality, Artificial Intelligence (AI), 3D printing, Robotics, Genomics, Quantum Computing, Image Lab and Interactive simulations to create immersive learning experiences and knowledge bank.

B) **Data Centre Analytics**: Utilize data analytics and learning analytics to track and assess the performance of learners, identifying areas for improvement and personalized interventions.

C) **Innovation Labs**: Establish innovation labs or maker spaces where innovators can co-work, experiment, prototype, and develop innovative solutions to real-world challenges along with working spaces.

D) **Industry Partnerships**: Forge strong partnerships with industry leaders and local businesses to ensure that the skills taught are aligned with current industry needs and trends.

E) **Global Perspective**: Encourage international collaborations, exchange programs, language labs to expose startups to a diverse range of markets.

F) **Entrepreneurship Programs**: Offer programs that teach entrepreneurship skills, encouraging students to develop their own innovative solutions and businesses.

G) **Research and Development**: Invest in research and development activities to remain at the forefront of the latest technologies to be utilised by startups.

H) **Cross-disciplinary Learning**: Encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration and learning to foster innovation through the intersection of different fields.

I) **Sustainability Focus**: Integrate sustainability and environmental awareness into the curriculum and operations, emphasizing the importance of sustainable innovation.

J) Maharashtra will provide subsidized access to high-performance computing (HPC) clusters, cloud AI resources, and High performing GPUs for startups.

8.4.2 Administrative mechanisms

This will be created with due delegation of powers for fast decision making and nurturing innovations at regional level.

8.5 Provision of Government Open Data Sets

8.5.1 The Government will create a mechanism to improve the access to the datasets and models from various sectors and sources to catalyse AI based innovation and applications. The Government will attempt to curate and simplify the data for usage of startups.

8.5.2 The Government will facilitate workshops and hackathons / Grand challenges that will be use these prepared datasets to solve tangible local problems. This will transform passive data repositories into active resources and will provide invaluable material for emerging startups. It will offer practical, real-world training opportunities for aspiring data analysts and AI practitioners, effectively using public resources to build advanced skills.

8.5.3   Promote ethical, inclusive, and transparent use of data for citizen centric applications.

9. Fostering Innovation and Mentorship

9.1 Maharashtra Innovation Excellence Awards

Recognizing the pivotal role of innovation in driving growth and progress, the state of Maharashtra is committed to celebrating, acknowledging, and incentivizing innovative endeavours within its boundaries. Aligned with this vision, the "Maharashtra Innovation Excellence Awards" will be instituted to honour and felicitate exceptional contributions to innovation across various sectors in the state.

- Startups
- Incubators
- Accelerators
- Banks / Financial institutions
- Corporates
- VC Funds
- Individual Innovators
- Women Entrepreneur/Founder
- Scientists / Researchers

9.2 Making Districts as Fulcrum of Innovation

9.2.1   Strengthening of District Level Committee:

a. The District-Level "Skills, employment, Entrepreneurship, Innovation District Executive Committee", constituted under the Government Resolution dated 17thJune 2022 (Department of Skills, Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Innovation) will be strengthened and empowered to effectively implement and monitor innovation and startup-related initiatives at the district level.

b. . In alignment with the Government Resolution dated 13th December 2022 (Planning Department GR No.: DAP-1022/PR.No.230/Ka.1481) the policy will also leverage the 3.5% Innovation Fund earmarked under the District Annual Plan to support innovation and startup-related initiatives. This fund empowers district-level working committees to implement grassroots innovation programs including Startup Yatras, Hackathons, Innovation Cells, and other entrepreneurial activities.

c. District entrepreneurship and innovation fellowship scheme will be instituted to promote and boost the district innovation ecosystem.

d. Each district will be converted into a 'Growth-Hub through promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation leveraging strengths of the district.

9.2.2   District Innovation Ranking Framework

District Innovation Ranking Framework will evaluate Maharashtra's startup landscape through district-level interventions and support for the innovation ecosystem. This initiative aims to drive overall growth and development in the state. The framework will assess districts based on parameters like infrastructure, resources, ease of doing business, and implementation of startup-friendly environment.

The top districts demonstrating exceptional performance in fostering a conducive environment for startups and innovations will be recognized, based on criteria set by the Maharashtra State Innovation Society. This should facilitate the district wise mapping of the sectors which will be focused on strengthening the startup and innovation ecosystem in that respective district.

9.2.3 Promoting Digital literacy and Entrepreneurial Skills

To foster innovation and entrepreneurship, a range of courses will be curated that provide the necessary skills, knowledge, and mindset to succeed in these areas in collaboration with relevant partners in schools, ITIs, Polytechnics, and Colleges. Such courses will also be made available as open source for the public. A dedicated mentoring mechanism will be created, connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with skilled professionals as mentors.

The Government will also facilitate creation of special centres for enhancing digital capabilities and competencies of the community as a means of bridging the digital divide and empowering communities to gain confidence to access e-government services and online facilities. Community spaces such as libraries, panchayats, academic institutions, resident associations etc. may house such centres with a trained staff/ Volunteers. This will facilitate adoption of various services based on new technologies and empower the communities.

9.3 Mentorship Program

A hybrid platform will be created to encourage mentors and mentees to interact seamlessly to focus on specific industries, entrepreneurship, and innovation. The state government will collaborate with universities, industry associations, and successful businesses to establish partnerships. All the departments will collaborate with experts/organizations to create a pool of mentors for specific domains.

9.4 CSR Support

The state will have various avenues of collaborations via CSR to promote entrepreneurship and Startup Ecosystem. Corporates will be encouraged to establish incubators, accelerators and Centres of Excellence (CoEs) and to encourage patents and commercialisation of innovations. Events like CSR Grand Challenge will be organised to propose solutions to specific social, developmental, or environmental challenges, with successful ones receiving grants, mentorship, and pilot opportunities.

9.5 Capacity Building programs for Stakeholders

The state will create a platform and avenues for capacity building of officials and other stakeholders on startup ecosystem. The state recognizes the importance of equipping government officials, policymakers, regulatory bodies, academic institutions, industry associations, investors, mentors, and other stakeholders with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively support and nurture the startup ecosystem. A comprehensive capacity-building program shall be implemented to enhance the understanding of entrepreneurship, innovation, and emerging technologies among these key stakeholders. The state will facilitate knowledge-sharing platforms, such as conferences, seminars, and online forums, where stakeholders like government agencies, corporates, investors, incubators, and startup founders can exchange best practices, insights, and learnings related to startup ecosystem development.

9.6 Sandbox Support

The state government, in partnership with various regulatory agencies and private entities will grant special support to startups to test new technologies and business models. A sandbox environment will be developed as part of this initiative - a secure, controlled space that allows emerging technologies, products, and services to be tested in compliance with government standards. This will enable startups to validate and refine their innovations under real-world conditions with reduced regulatory risk, fostering responsible experimentation and accelerated deployment.

9.7 Knowledge Portal

A knowledge portal will be developed for providing a, user-friendly data platform that aggregates essential information such as startup directories, funding opportunities, mentorship, various schemes and incentives, market insights, ecosystem resources, and regulatory guidelines. This repository will attempt to integrate real-time data from government databases, industry reports, and other sources, ensuring accuracy and security with due compliance of data privacy laws.

9.8 Global Expansion Support

Startups who are looking to expand their business globally will be provided a support through exchange programs and networking. This will help Startups to create market access and exposure to global market.

10. Promoting Young Innovators and Entrepreneurs

10.1 Chief Minister Mahafund for entrepreneurship and innovation

To facilitate entrepreneurship and innovation at the grassroots level, the government will implement an Chief Minister Mahafund for entrepreneurship and innovation in partnership with academic and financial institutions including engineering, agriculture and allied sectors, ITIs, and polytechnics to provide financial assistance to selected entrepreneurs and innovators. The selected candidates will also gain access to incubation support, mentorship, facilities, and industry linkages to help validate and commercialize their ideas. This initiative will leverage institutional expertise to identify and nurture high-potential innovators and entrepreneurs at an early stage. Similarly, it will encourage entrepreneurship for youth with necessary mentoring and support. This scheme will be extended to youth from family business or artisanal enterprises for bringing innovation in their businesses.

10.1.1. The selection will be done in three staged process.In the first stage 5 lakh aspirants will be registered at the institutional/local level. In second stage 1 lakh aspirant will be assessed through activity-based tests or challenges/hackathons and other tools for their entrepreneurial ability. This assessment will be done to identify talented youth who show traits like problem solving, initiative, risk taking, resilience, hard work and business acumen. In third stage the selected 25,000 candidates will then be given technical support, financial assistance and mentoring through experts. The objective will be to create 25,000 successful entrepreneurs/innovators. The selected candidate will be provided with loan assistance from Rs.5 lakh to Rs.10 lakh in collaboration with financial institutes. A corpus of INR 500 crore over a period of 5 years will be allocated. The corpus fund will be managed under financial experts.

10.2   Student Innovation Challenge / Startup Yatra

To foster grassroots innovation, the government will launch initiatives like Student Innovation Challenge and Startup Yatra, inviting grassroot innovators and early-stage startups to propose their innovative ideas to local challenges identified by the administration. Selected innovators will receive mentorship, incubation access, prototyping facilities, seed funding, cloud resources, and investor networking to help transform ideas into viable ventures.

10.3   Entrepreneurship Cells

To empower entrepreneurial mindsets, promote innovation, and provide hands-on exposure through mentorship, skill development, and alumni engagement, the academic institutions, schools, ITIs, Polytechnics will establish Entrepreneurship Cells (E-Cells). These cells will serve as platforms for students to explore real-world problem-solving and startup creation. Awareness programs and innovation activities will also be actively supported at the institutional level.

11. Promoting Women Entrepreneurship

11.1   Women Entrepreneurship Wing

The Government will set up a dedicated Women Entrepreneurship Wing which will cater to the unique needs of women-led startups and enterprises across Maharashtra. This women-centric wing will provide tailored support to facilitation centres to ensure that women entrepreneurs receive the necessary resources and assistance by convergence of various government schemes. A vibrant community of women entrepreneurs will be created in partnership with various expert agencies and institutions working in this field.

This Wing will facilitate interventions including financial assistance, mentorship, incubation support and recognition to foster innovation and leadership, driving economic growth and inclusivity within the state.

11.2   Women centric Incubation Centre

The state will establish dedicated incubation centre for women entrepreneurs in various regions. All the incubation centres will be encouraged to organise sessions for women entrepreneurs for mentorship, business planning, access to markets, and access to investors. The focus will be on scaling and expanding women entrepreneurs, especially from rural Maharashtra.

11.3   Special Financial Assistance for Women Startups

The government will set up a grant to support promising women-led startups based on selection process. The goal is to make Maharashtra the leading state with the highest number of women-led startups.

12.   Leveraging National and International Partnerships

12.1 Partnerships

Maharashtra will establish a collaborative framework that encourages knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and collective problem-solving among government bodies, corporates, academic institutions, and research institutes. Through these partnerships, the state aims to accelerate the growth of startups, encourage innovation-driven entrepreneurship, and position Maharashtra as a global innovation hub. The

State will also explore the partnerships with Developmental organisations/Foundations/Industry Associations and NGOs for effective implementation of the programs and initiatives.

Cross-border partnerships with ecosystem stakeholders including universities, academia, investors, government, and industries will be developed. The Government will create a network of all global ecosystem stakeholders for the benefit and support of startups in Maharashtra.

13. Fiscal Support for Startups

13.1 Seed Fund Support

The policy aims to provide financial assistance through incubation centres to early-stage startups that have innovative ideas and the potential to create a positive impact on the state's economy. The grant scheme will be open to startups registered in Maharashtra from all sectors.

13.2 Venture Fund

The Government will establish and operationalise a Venture Fund to support deep tech startups and women led startups which are innovative, scalable, and socially relevant solutions. This sector agnostic fund aims to empower startups that create high-impact innovations and sustainable employment opportunities.

13.3 Funds of Funds

The Government through the Fund of Funds model will make investment in "Daughter Funds," which would invest in startups promoting innovative ideas and technologies across all sectors in Maharashtra.

13.4 Intellectual Property Rights support

The Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) support program aims to provide financial assistance to Maharashtra startups recognized by DPIIT by reimbursing costs for granted Patents, Industrial Design Patents, Utility Patents, Trademarks, and Copyrights. The monetary support is capped as follows:

1. Domestic IPR: Up to ₹5,00,000 per startup

2. International IPR: Up to ₹20,00,000 per startup

13.5 Quality Testing and Certification Support

Startups will be eligible for reimbursement of costs up to ₹5,00,000 for quality testing and certification of their innovative solutions. This testing must be conducted by recognized institutions such as NABL (National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories), BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards), or other government-recognized/nationalized labs.

13.6 Exhibition Support

Under this initiative, startups will be provided reimbursement for the exhibition stall rental cost incurred for participating in prominent/notified national or international exhibitions. This support will be extended with a maximum limit of up to Rs. 2,00,000/- for domestic exhibitions and up to Rs. 5,00,000/- for international exhibitions. The reimbursement support will be provided to a startup only once during its entire lifespan on proven merit.

13.7 Maharashtra Startup Week

The Maharashtra Startup week program aims to provide direct work order to startups and facilitate fruitful collaborations between startups and government entities, with a strong emphasis on promoting innovation and driving positive change in public services.

a) **Startup Selection**: Each year, a rigorous selection process will identify 50 promising startups to participate in this initiative. The selection criteria will prioritize startups with exceptional innovative capabilities and relevance to enhancing government operations.

b) **Government Work Orders**: The selected startups will be awarded with direct work orders to roll out pilots of their innovations in various government departments, agencies, and institutions up to Rs. 25 lakhs. These work orders will serve as a mechanism for engaging the startups in projects focused on modernizing and improving various aspects of public administration and service delivery.

c) Industry Department will modify procurement guidelines to facilitate procurement from startup week winners at state and national level.

13.8 Loan Assistance to Startups

To support startups to scale, a mechanism will be created in partnership with financial institutions to assist for loans to meet their cash flow requirement against confirmed work orders from reliable clients such as government bodies or large/renowned corporations. This initiative will address cash flow challenges, helping startups scale their operations and strengthen their credibility in the market.

13.9 Grand Challenge & Hackathon

To leverage the immense talent of the youth combined with new technologies, there is tremendous scope for finding solutions to problems faced by public as well as private sector. To tackle these challenges, various stakeholders will be encouraged to define problems and organise Hackathons and Grand Challenges.

1. **Government Grand Challenge**: Grand challenges & Hackathons will be organised by various government departments, agencies, and institutions. The winners will be awarded an initial grant/reward to pilot their innovations and a follow-on funding may be made available for the deployment of the solution by the beneficiary department.

2. **Corporate Grand Challenge**: Grand challenges & Hackathons will be organised in collaboration and funding support of different corporate partners. The winners will be supported by industry to pilot their innovations for domestic and global market.

3. **Partnership with media agencies**: Collaboration with media agencies will be done for various events including special pitching session between startups and investors on TV channels and OTT platforms.

13.10 Common Incentives for Startups

The Government of Maharashtra has already extended a package of common incentives including rebates in electricity tariffs and stamp duty for startups vide GR dated 27th June 2023 - "New Information Technology and Information Technology Enabled Services Policy of Maharashtra State - 2023" by the Department of Industries. Systematic efforts will be made to disseminate incentives available under

different policies of State and Central Government to ensure that maximum startups can take advantage of the same.

13.11 Winding Up Facilitation

The state will provide guidance and facilitation to entrepreneurs navigating the challenges of closing or exiting a startup venture. This may include but not limited to offering counselling and advisory services and providing resources to help entrepreneurs effectively manage the winding up process.

14. Maharashtra Innovation City (MIC)

Maharashtra will build a dedicated Innovation City spread over 300 acres. This will serve as a state-of-the-art city which will bring together startups, corporates, investors, academia, and government under one roof. It will act as a hub for collaborative cutting-edge research and innovation with participation of industry, experts, researchers, and startups.

Maharashtra Startup, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Policy 2025 will position the State as a global destination for investors and innovators, catalysing sustainable and inclusive economic growth with a world-class infrastructure. The Policy is not merely a bouquet of incentives, but a robust framework to build an entire ecosystem for nurturing talent, entrepreneurship and innovation. It is indeed an invitation to dream audaciously, to solve meaningfully, and to build resiliently.

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Annexure I: Definitions

Accelerators:

Accelerator programs are intensive, time-bound programs that provide mentorship, funding, networking opportunities, and other resources to help early-stage startups accelerate their growth and development. These programs typically last for a few months and culminate in a demo day, where startups pitch to potential investors.

Co-working Spaces:

Co-working spaces are shared office environments where individuals, freelancers, and startups can rent desks, private offices, or meeting rooms on a flexible basis. These spaces provide amenities like high-speed internet, printers, lounges, and often foster a collaborative community through networking events and shared resources.

Corporate Innovation:

Corporate innovation refers to the process of developing and implementing new ideas, products, services, or business models within an established company. It involves fostering an innovative culture, leveraging internal and external resources, and enabling the company to adapt to changing market conditions and stay competitive.

Deep Tech:

Deep tech startups are focused on developing cutting-edge, disruptive technologies that have the potential to create significant impact across various industries. These startups work on technologies like artificial intelligence, biotechnology, quantum computing, advanced materials, robotics, and other emerging fields that require substantial scientific or engineering expertise.

Emerging Technologies:

Emerging technologies refer to new and rapidly evolving technologies that have the potential to significantly impact various industries and sectors. These technologies are often still in the early stages of development or adoption but are expected to have a transformative effect on how we live, work, and interact with the world.

Grassroot/Rural Innovation:

Grassroot or rural innovation refers to startups that develop solutions specifically tailored to address local needs, challenges, and opportunities faced by rural communities. These innovations often leverage local resources, traditional knowledge, and community involvement to create sustainable and contextually relevant solutions.

Hackathons:

Hackathons are competitive events, typically lasting for a day or a weekend, where teams of developers, designers, and problem-solvers collaborate intensively to create software or hardware solutions for specific challenges or problems. These events foster creativity, teamwork, and the rapid development of innovative solutions.

Incubators:

Incubators are organizations that provide comprehensive support services to help nurture and grow startups in their early stages. Services offered by incubators typically include affordable office space, mentoring, access to funding opportunities, networking events, and shared resources like labs, equipment, and administrative support.

Innovation:

Innovation is the process of creating and implementing new ideas, products, services, or business models that generate value for an organization or society. It involves identifying opportunities, developing novel solutions, and bringing those solutions to market or implementing them in a practical context.

Intellectual Property (IP):

Intellectual property (IP) refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, symbols, names, and images, that are protected by law. IP rights enable creators and owners to derive financial and other benefits from their intellectual works or creations.

Mentors:

Mentors are experienced individuals who provide guidance, advice, and support to entrepreneurs or startup founders. They share their knowledge, expertise, and insights to help mentees navigate challenges, develop strategies, and make informed decisions in their entrepreneurial journey.

Prototypes:

A prototype is a preliminary model or sample of a product or service that is built for testing, evaluation, and gathering feedback. Prototypes can range from low-fidelity representations (e.g., sketches, wireframes) to high-fidelity, functional models, depending on the stage of product development.

Seed Funding:

Seed funding refers to the initial investment or capital provided to a startup in its early stages to cover initial operating expenses, product development, and market validation. Seed funding is often obtained from angel investors, accelerators, or the founders themselves, and it helps the startup progress from the idea stage to a more developed product or service.

Startups:

A startup is a newly established company or venture that is focused on developing and bringing innovative products, services, or business models to market and aligning with the definition set forth by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India, and amendments time to time. Additionally, the startup must be registered in Maharashtra.

Unicorns: A unicorn is a privately held startup company that has achieved a valuation of over $1 billion. These companies are considered rare and highly valuable, typically demonstrating exceptional growth, innovative products or services, and significant market potential.

Venture Capital:

Venture capital (VC) refers to investment funds provided by firms or individuals to high-potential startups and early-stage companies in exchange for equity ownership. Venture capitalists invest in startups with the expectation of significant returns on their investment as the company grows and becomes successful.

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