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Annexure

THE UTTARAKHAND STARTUP POLICY, 2023

Promoting Innovations & Entrepreneurship

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BACKGROUND

India is at the cusp of becoming the leading startup ecosystem in the world with a consistent annual growth of 12-15 per cent as estimated by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Government of India. India has more than 70,000 registered startups with at least 14,000 recognized during fiscal 2022, according to the Economic Survey 2021-22; around 8,900 – 9,300 of these are technology led startups, 1300 new tech startups were born in 2021-22 alone implying there are 2-3 tech startups born every day. From producing its first unicorn startup in the year 2011 to hitting the century of unicorns in India in the year 2022, it has been a long and eventful journey for the Indian startup ecosystem. Funding raising and investments into start-ups has been at its peak globally. From the start of the year 2022 until July 2022, India has already seen 19 new unicorns. The total count of Indian tech startups that have entered the unicorn club to date stands at 105. With the increased funding activity and rise in valuations, the number of startups in the decacorn list is also on the rise across the country.

With proximity to national capital region (NCR), unique climatic condition couple with natural flora and fauna, Uttarakhand can be considered as the strategic hub for the startups working in the sectors such as Food and Agriculture, Travel and Tourism, Education, Pharmaceutical, Wellness, Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Big Data, SaaS, Drone, Robotics etc. The state has conducive policies, business friendly environment, robust infrastructure which makes the state as most preferred startup destination in the country. The state is home to more than 700 startups by the end of June 2022, which was only 100 until end of the year 2018. Around thirteen (13) startup from the state have been successful in raising funds from notable angel investors, venture capital firms and other private investors by the end of the first quarter of 2022 as result of focused efforts of Government of Uttarakhand. Till the mid of the year 2022, the state has been able to establish 55,000+ square feet of the incubation space in 11 incubation centers across the state, more than 190 registered mentors, 20+ angel investors and venture capitalist on-boarded along with on boarding of 13 partner organizations for providing technical and shared services to startups.

In the States' Startup Ranking 2019, Uttarakhand was recognized as the "Aspiring Leader" and "Regulatory champion". After the announcement of Uttarakhand Startup Policy and as a result of strategic programs and interventions undertaken, "**Startup Uttarakhand**" was recognized as "**An Institutional Champion**" and "**A Capacity Building Pioneer**". In the **States' Startup Ranking 2021** announced by Startup India & DPIIT, Startup Uttarakhand was recognized as "**Leader**". The State Government has also formed CM Advisory group on Startups, Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the year 2020 to guide and advise Government of Uttarakhand on the strategic initiatives focused on Startups. Startup Uttarakhand has more than twenty (20) specially programs designed to guide, train, mentor and handhold aspiring entrepreneurs, incubators, investors, women entrepreneurs, government officials and

other ecosystem players from across the state. The state government organizes Startup Boot Camps, Grand Challenge, hackathons etc. to identify and recognize innovations ideas. The state also organizes national and international exposure visits for the stakeholders of the startups ecosystem.

It is evident from the current trends that startups have become the center of innovations across the world. They not only play important role in designing and developing innovative solutions to the complex problems but also plays vital role in improving employment patterns, providing job opportunities and wealth creation for the states. Startups boost the economy with revolutionary technology and create new industries over time. Countries that have provided suitable economic, political and social environments to startups have witnessed the positive impacts they have created for the country. Thus, to nurture the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the state of Uttarakhand, it is inevitable to support startups, incubators, investors, mentors and all other key stakeholders of the ecosystem with the futuristic policies, schemes and support systems. This demand the need to take strategic efforts and actions plans to further boost the startup ecosystem in the state.

In the wake of the drastic changes in the economic environment as result of pandemic across the world, it has become inevitable to design exemplary measures to support homegrown startup enterprises. As a result, it is important to revisit the State's Startup Policy and make sufficient provisions to support the further growth of startup ecosystem in Uttarakhand. Thus, with an objective to address the need of promoting innovations and entrepreneurship in solving the complex societal problems and to support key stakeholders of startup ecosystem, the **"Uttarakhand Startup Policy 2023"** has been brought in to force.

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OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to create the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship by establishing a robust startup ecosystem in the state. The growth of the startup ecosystem will be fueled with the establishment of world-class institutional infrastructure, incubation and mentoring network, enabling access to funds, providing market access, public procurement, business friendly and regulatory environment along with promotion of employment generation and wealth creation opportunities across the state.

VISION

To become a leading startup destination and develop Uttarakhand as the strategic startup hub for innovators, aspiring entrepreneurs, incubators and ecosystem players

GOALS

1. Stimulate the growth of 1000 startups including technology driven enterprises in next 5 years
2. Encourage the growth of startup enterprises working on innovative technologies, processes or procedures, eco-friendly technologies, social impact or sustainability having focus on solving complex problems and stimulating the growth of local economy through employment creation and wealth generations
3. Establish state of the art infrastructure and facilities for innovators, startups, aspiring students entrepreneurs, women entrepreneurs and other ecosystem stakeholders across the state
4. Establish 30 new incubation centers across the state with at least 1 incubation center in each district
5. Establish a mechanism to enable access to funds, key infrastructure and other key resources that are important for the growth of startup enterprises in the state.
6. Enable collaborations between industry and academia to promote entrepreneurship, innovations and its commercialization and the growth of technology enterprises
7. Develop an environment conducive to the creation, growth or transformation of startups enterprises in to a highly successful enterprises

VALIDITY OF THE POLICY

This Policy is valid for a period of 5 years from the date of its notification or until new Policy is formulated.

1. DEFINITION

1.1. Legal Entity (for the purpose of recognizing startups under this Policy)

A legal entity means a company incorporated in India as

- i. A private limited company as defined in the Companies Act 2013 or
- ii. A limited liability partnership firm under the provisions of Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 or

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- iii. A partnership firm registered under section 59 of the Partnership Act, 1932

1.2. Startups

An entity shall be considered as a "Startup" under the Uttarakhand Startup Policy, 2023 if it fulfills the criteria as specified below:

For legal entities having Registered Office in Uttarakhand

- (i.) It should be a separate "Legal Entity" as defined in the sub-clause 1.1 of clause 1 and
- (ii.) The period of existence and operations of the legal entity should not exceed ten years from the date of its incorporation and
- (iii.) Turnover of the legal entity for any of the financial years since incorporation/ registration has not exceeded one hundred crore rupees and
- (iv.) Entity should not have been formed by splitting up or reconstruction of an existing business and should not be a part of the family business or conglomeration and
- (v.) Entity should be working towards innovation, development or improvement of products or processes or services, or if it is a scalable business model with a high potential of employment generation or wealth creation or
- (vi.) as per the criteria notified by Government of India from time to time for defining startups

Legal Entities having Registered Office in other states of India

In addition to the criteria define under sub clause 1.2 of this Policy:

- (i.) Entity shall have an office in Uttarakhand and should have significant operation of business from Uttarakhand
- (ii.) Entity shall be employ at least 70 percent of its overall full-time workforce (workforce shall include founder, cofounders, support staff, skilled staff working on company payroll) having a domicile of Uttarakhand during the entire period of recognition

1.3. Grassroot Innovation or Innovation/Startups with Rural Impact

Grassroot Innovations or Innovations/startups with rural impact shall be defined as

- (i.) creation or development or improvement of products or services that can solve the problems or challenges or issues faced by the people living in the rural or hilly region or

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- (ii.) the development or improvement of the product or services which is scalable and can generate wealth and provide livelihood opportunities to the people living in the rural or hilly region.

Startups, which are based in the regions as defined under category A and B of the Uttarakhand MSME Policy, 2015 (as amended from time to time) and are working on some innovative means, ways or methods to solve the challenges, issues or problems faced by the people living in those region or providing livelihood opportunities to them shall be considered as Startups working towards grassroot innovations or innovations with rural impact.

1.4. Startups working on disruptive technologies

The qualification of startups working on disruptive technologies are as follows:

- (i.) **Startups working on futuristic technologies:** Startups that are working on futuristic technologies such as Neural Language Processing (NLP), Drones, Robotics, Defence, Aerospace, Space technologies, Fintech, Medtech, Healthtech to provide innovative solutions to the problem or challenges existing in the society or country.
- (ii.) **Startups working on Renewable energy:** Startups helping to reduce carbon footprints through a renewable and sustainable source of energy using clean technologies or solutions such as Solar energy, Wind energy, Hydro energy, Tidal energy, Geothermal energy, Biomass energy etc.
- (iii.) **Startups working on Climate Change:** Startups working in the area of eco-friendly and/or climate-friendly technologies/solutions that helps in reducing and offsetting carbon emissions or increasing the green cover in the region
- (iv.) **Startup working on Circular Economy:** Startups working in the four Rs of the circular economy namely:
 - (a.) Reuse: Cloth collection, circular fashion, second-hand products etc.
 - (b.) Recycle: Recycled plastic, bottles, construction with recyclable materials etc.
 - (c.) Reduce: Packaging with sustainable material, edible cutlery etc.
 - (d.) Remove: Urban farming, use of fossil fuel, carbon capturing etc.
- (v.) **Startup working on Sustainability:** A startup working on green and sustainable practices along with next generation cutting edge technologies, processes or solutions that are enabling the world at large to recover from years of overuse such as
 - (a.) improving the soil's health
 - (b.) protection of endangered species
 - (c.) protection of the ocean's biodiversity
 - (d.) clean technologies for alternative energy sources
 - (e.) clean technologies for water conservation and ground water recharging

- (f.) plantation and conservation of trees to increase green cover in particular region
- (g.) disaster management etc.

1.5. Startups by Women Entrepreneurs

Legal entity shall be considered as women startup wherein

- (i.) The entity is founded by a woman entrepreneur; and
- (ii.) the equity holding and/or partnership of the women founders in the legal entity is not less than 51 percent; and
- (iii.) woman is an active partner or director in the company and is actively looking after the day-to-day operations in the company

1.6. Startups by Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribes or Differently Abled Person or by a Transgender

The legal entity shall be considered as Startup by Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes /Differently Abled/ Transgender wherein

- (i.) the entity is founded by a person from Scheduled Caste /Scheduled Tribes/Differently Abled/ Transgender; and
- (ii.) the equity holding and/or partnership by the person from Scheduled Caste /Scheduled Tribes/Differently Abled/ Transgender is not be less than 51 percent in the legal entity so formed; and
- (iii.) is an active partner or director in the company and is actively looking after the day-to-day operations in the company

1.7. Startups by Student Entrepreneurs

Any person studying in

- (i.) schools, colleges, polytechnics, industrial training institutes (ITIs) or
- (ii.) any institution of higher education (HEIs), technical education, medical educations or ayush established by the state or central government or
- (iii.) skill training or vocational training institutes recognized by governments
- (iv.) any open university and/or university established through a State or Central Act or
- (v.) any other educational institution or university that is recognized by the State or Central Government

who is pursuing innovation (product, process, technology or business innovation) driven entrepreneurial ventures while studying with due permission from the respective board, institution and/or universities as the case may be.

1.8. Recognized Startup

- (i.) Any legal entity fulfilling the criteria specified in sub-clause 1.2 of clause 1 and which is recognized as Startup by the Startup Task Force established

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under the Uttarakhand Startup Policy shall be considered as recognized startups.

- (ii.) The startups ideas by student entrepreneurs, which are approved by the Startup Task Force established under the Uttarakhand Startup Policy shall be considered as a recognized startups.
- (iii.) Entities that have been recognized as Startups under Uttarakhand Startup Policy 2018 shall be considered as recognized startup

1.9. Turnover

Turnover shall be as defined under the provision of The Companies Act, 2013

1.10. Stages of Startup

1.10.1. Ideation Stage

Idea Stage refers to an integral stage in the lifecycle of startup wherein feasibility analysis of the startup idea is performed to evaluate the success/failure of the concept.

1.10.2. Prototyping or Minimum Viable Product (MVP) Stage

Prototyping or MVP Stage refers to an integral stage in the lifecycle of a startup wherein the concept for the product or process or service is converted into the physical form and which can be produced and delivered in a limited capacity and can be scaled-up upon the success and requirement.

1.10.3. Scale-up Stage

Scale-up Stage refers to an integral stage in the lifecycle of a startup wherein company is ready with the validated/final product, process or services and is looking for its commercialization on a larger scale.

1.11. Innovation

Inventions are the bedrock of innovation. An invention is a new solution to a technical problem that can be protected through patents.

Innovation means doing something new that improves the product, process or service. Innovation involves application of information, imagination and initiative in deriving greater or different values from resources. Innovations can be protected under intellectual property rights (IPRs).

1.12. Incubation Center or Incubator

An organization designed to support startup companies in the early stages to help them develop innovative products, processes or service with a scalable

business model through business support resources and facilities such as co-working space, prototyping labs and equipment for the development of products or services. The incubation center shall also provide access to hard and soft infrastructure, seed funding, business mentoring and coaching, shared services that shall including accounting, legal services, human resource, corporate connects, connect with industry mentor and investor, acceleration program and providing networking opportunities along with other support needed for the growth of the startups.

For the purpose of this policy, an incubation center shall be

- any entity funded or registered under the policies or schemes by the departments, agencies or bodies of Government of India such as Technology Business Incubator (TBI) under Department of Science & Technology, Atal Incubation Centre under NITI Aayog etc. or
- any existing incubation center established under the policies or schemes of any other state government in India which has its full functional facilities in Uttarakhand or
- any newly established legal entity registered in Uttarakhand for setting up of incubation center

which has its sole objective to promote innovation and entrepreneurship among the sections of the society.

1.12.1. For the purpose of this policy, an incubation center shall be a separate legal entity having the core objective to promote innovation and entrepreneurship across the state and which is registered under any one of the following categories:

- (i.) A Society (under The Societies Registration Act, 1860) or
- (ii.) A Section 8 Company (under The Companies Act, 2013) or
- (iii.) A Private Limited Company (under The Companies Act, 2013) or
- (iv.) A Limited Liability Partnership (under The Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008) or
- (v.) A Public Charitable Trust (under The Indian Trusts Act, 1882)

1.13. Recognized Incubator

Any separate legal entity fulfilling the criteria as specified in sub-clause 1.11 of clause 1 and which is recognized as Incubator by the Uttarakhand Startup Council established under Uttarakhand Startup Policy shall be considered as recognized incubators.

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Entities that have been recognized as Incubator under Uttarakhand Startup Policy 2018 shall be considered as recognized incubator.

1.14. Lead Incubator

The Government realizes that there is a need to create world-class incubation facilities in Uttarakhand with requisite physical infrastructure in terms of co-working space, prototyping labs with capital equipment and operating facilities. The incubation facility shall also provide product development and business-planning support, access to seed capital, subject matter experts, corporates, technology support providers, industry bodies, acceleration programs, trainings and capacity building programs along with other relevant components required for establishing innovation driven startup enterprises in the state.

While State Government will encourage establishment of Incubation Centers in all academic institutions and professional educational institutions across the state, the state shall also aim to establish a **“Lead Incubator”** to promote the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the state and to nurture innovative startup businesses in their pursuit to become scalable and sustainable enterprises. The “Lead Incubator” shall work as the Hub for the other recognized incubators (spokes) spread in the districts across the state.

1.15. Mentors

Mentor is a person with a proven track record who possess expertise in the area of his/her operations, possess specialize knowledge and carries real world practical experience to guide, mentor and train aspiring entrepreneurs.

1.16. Subject Matter Experts

Subject Matter Expert is a certified professional who has domain expertise, specific skills or knowledge in specific sector and has vast practical experience working in his/her field.

1.17. State Government

For the purpose of this policy, State Government means Government of Uttarakhand

1.18. State Government Agencies

For the purpose of this policy, state government agencies shall include but not limited to the departments, institutions, agencies, authorities, boards or any other bodies including a society, trust, corporation set up under the act of the state legislature or established by Government of Uttarakhand and shall also include urban local bodies.

1.19. Academic Institutions

For the purpose of this policy, academic institutions shall include but not limited to:

- (i.) schools, colleges, polytechnics, industrial training institutes (ITIs); or
- (ii.) any institution of higher education (HEIs), technical education, medical educations or ayush established by the state or central government; or
- (iii.) skill training or vocational training institutes recognized by governments;
- (iv.) any open university and/or university established by a State or Central Act; or
- (v.) any other educational institution or university that is recognized by the State or Central Government

1.20. Accelerator

Accelerator is an organization or program that enables rapid growth of new Startups by providing specific services like: mentoring, training, resources and networking to help Startups increase their customer base, generate more profits, prepare for funding and professionalize their organization.

1.21. Angel Network

An angel investor (also known as a private investor, seed investor or angel funder) is a high-net-worth individual who provides financial backing to early stage startups or entrepreneurs, typically in exchange of ownership in the form of equity in the company.

An angel network is a group of angel investors who pool their investments together, which is managed professionally for making investments in early stage startups.

1.22. Venture Capital

Venture Capital is a form of equity funding that is generally invested in startups with high growth potential upon critical appraisal of the project undertaken by venture capital firms. The capital is generally invested in return of equity shareholding

1.23. Uttarakhand Startup Council

The Uttarakhand Startup Council shall be the Governing Body comprising of members from Government of Uttarakhand, Incubation Centers, Industry Bodies, Academic Institutions, Corporates, Subject Matter Experts, Nationalized Banks, Financial Institutions, Venture Capital Firms or any other organization having vast experience working in National or International Startup Ecosystem

to advise State Government on the matters related to Startup Policy, Strategic Initiatives focused on promoting innovation and entrepreneurship across the state.

1.24. State Nodal Agency

Directorate of Industries, Department of MSME shall be the State Nodal Agency to fulfill the purpose set out in Uttarakhand Startup Policy 2023 and to look after the activities focused on the implementation of the provisions of Uttarakhand Startup Policy.

1.25. Uttarakhand Startup Cell

A startup cell will be established to take care of the day-to-day operations and activities to be carried out under the Uttarakhand Startup Policy. A dedicated startup Project Management Unit (PMU) adequately staffed with consultants from internationally reputed professional firms shall be on-boarded for supporting State Nodal Agency and Startup Cell.

1.26. Task Force or Committee for Grant of Recognition and Disbursement of Incentives - CoRDI

The state nodal agency shall establish a Task Force or Committee for Grant of Recognition and Disbursement of Incentives (CoRDI) comprising of members from department of State Government, Entrepreneurs, Investors, Banks, Financial Institutions, Academic Institutions, Industry Bodies, Subject Matter Experts, etc.

The Task Force or Committee shall take decisions related to:

- (a) Scrutiny and Assessment of the application received for startup recognitions and incentives
- (b) Grant of recognition or incentives to the entities which has applied for it
- (c) Any other decisions as may be notified by Uttarakhand Startup Council

1.27. Limiting Clause

1.27.1. The startups, incubators and nodal agencies recognized under Uttarakhand Startup policy 2018 shall be eligible to claim incentives only under the Uttarakhand Startup policy 2018 till the 21 February, 2025

1.27.2. Startups and incubators that have availed funding under "Uttarakhand Startup Policy 2018" shall not eligible to claim incentives for the same component under this new policy i.e. "Uttarakhand Startup Policy 2023" and

1.27.3. Startups and incubators that have availed funding under "Uttarakhand Startup Policy 2023" shall not eligible to claim incentives for the same components and/or categories under any other policies or schemes of Government of Uttarakhand

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2. INCENTIVES FOR RECOGNIZED STARTUPS

FISCAL INCENTIVES

The fiscal incentives shall be granted in tranches to recognized startups only after proper assessment and evaluations of their startup idea, progress made by the startups since its inception and the requirement of funds submitted by them at the different stages of startups.

2.1. Monthly Allowance

Recognized startup or a startup by student entrepreneurs whose project is approved by the Task Force shall be eligible for a monthly allowance up to INR 15,000 per month per startup

In case of a startup led by women entrepreneurs or by a person from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Differently Abled, Transgender or a startups which is working towards grassroot innovations or innovations with rural impact or in any startup working on disruptive technologies shall be eligible for a monthly allowance up to INR20,000 per month per startup.

The monthly allowances shall be a one-time assistance given to startups at the ideation stage for a maximum period of twelve (12) months.

2.2. Seed Fund

A recognized startup, which is at the ideation stage or prototyping or MVP stage shall become eligible for a one-time seed funding assistance up to INR 10 lakhs.

In case of startup led by women entrepreneurs or startup by a person from scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, differently abled, transgender or a startups that is working towards grassroot innovations or innovations with rural impact, seed funding assistance up to INR 12.5 lakhs.

An additional seed funding up to INR 2.5 lakhs shall be provided to startups working on disruptive technologies.

2.3. Intellectual Property Rights

All startups will be encouraged to avail incentives, benefits and/or support services for filing of IPR under the policies/schemes formulated by the departments of Government of India.

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In other cases, startups can apply for incentives for filing IPR as specified below:

Patent

100 percent Reimbursement of the amount paid and maximum up to INR 1.0 lakh(per patent) for Indian Patent and up to INR 5.0 lakh (per patent) for International Patent can be sanctioned to each startup. Reimbursement will be before the expense paid towards Prior Art search, Government Filing Fees, Attorney Fees, Maintenance fees or any other legal fees for filing patent.

Reimbursement of expenses shall be made in two stages

- (i.) 75 percent after filing of patent application and
- (ii.) 25 percent at the time of grant of patent.

The support shall be for filing two working patents in the area in which the startup recognition is availed.

Trademark

Reimbursement up to INR 10,000 (per trademark) for filing trademark application. Reimbursement shall be for the expense paid towards Trademark Search, Government Filing Fees, Attorney Fees, Maintenance fees or any other legal fees for filing trademark application.

The support shall be maximum for filing two trademark application in the name of the startup for which recognition is availed.

Industrial Design

Reimbursement up to Rs 10,000 (per industrial design) for filing Industrial Design application. Reimbursement shall be for the expense paid towards Government Filing Fees, Attorney Fees, Maintenance fees or any other legal fees for filing design application.

The support shall be maximum for filing two design application in the name of the startup for which recognition is availed.

2.4. Incentives under MSME Policy

Startups eligible under Uttarakhand MSME Policy or any other policies or schemes notified by the state government can avail incentive under the respective policies and/or schemes subjected to complying with the criteria and due procedure specified there under.

However, startups shall not be eligible to claim incentive for the same components and/or categories under any other policies or schemes of Government of Uttarakhand

2.5. Pre-incubation Support

Innovators or aspiring entrepreneurs or women/student entrepreneurs or startups with grassroots impact or innovator/entrepreneurs working in disruptive sector identified by the State Nodal Agency shall be eligible for a one-time free of cost incubation support to provide them mentoring support and handhold them for product development.

Pre-incubation program will be organized through reputed incubation centre or accelerators which shall be identified by State Nodal Agency from time to time. The pre-incubation support shall be a one-time support for a maximum period of four (4) months. The cost up to INR 10,000 per incubate shall be borne by the State Nodal Agency towards the pre-incubation program.

2.6. Incubation Support

All recognized startups shall be eligible for a one-time free of cost incubation support for a period of 12 Months in any recognized incubator subjected to the approval of State Nodal Agency.

Startups working on disruptive technologies shall be provided incubation support for additional 6 months.

The total cost to enroll in the incubation program for the recognized startups in the recognized incubator will be borne by State Government, which is specified in sub-clause 3.3 under clause 3

2.7. Provision of Land in Industrial Area/ IT Parks/SEZ

The State Government shall make provision for allocation of land/space to recognized startups in notified industrial areas, IT Parks, special economic zones (SEZ) or any other state established or support industrial area at the base price.

2.8. National and International Exposure

Subjected to the approval of State Nodal Agency, recognized startups shall be eligible for financial assistance to participate in the reputed national or international, Trade Fairs, Exhibitions, Expositions, Conference, Seminar, Training Programs, Acceleration Programs etc.

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Frequency of Assistance	Category of Participation	Assistance
One	International	Reimbursement for the cost incurred towards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traveling in economy class (for one founder/ cofounder)
Two	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • budget accommodation (for one founder/ cofounder) • stall space • participation fees, if any

2.9. Pilot Projects

Recognized startups shall be eligible for one time assistance up to INR 3 lakhs for undergoing a pilot project for proof of concept, testing and market validation of the product or services with the State Government Agencies. An additional funding support up to INR 2.5 lakhs shall be provided to startups working on disruptive technologies.

The startup should have received letter of intent for undergoing a pilot project from the respective government agency.

2.10. Acceleration Program

The state government shall organize at least two acceleration program each year in partnership with venture capital firms or renowned accelerators or corporate house or any other recognized professional organization having specialization in designing and organizing acceleration program.

2.11. Access to external funding

In order to facilitate access to funding opportunities, the state government will establish a mechanism and/or a platform to provide an opportunity to eligible startups to mobilize funds at convenient terms (e.g. preferential lending, collateral-free lending, soft loans etc.) from external investors, banks, financial institutions, funding bodies, venture capitalists, investment networks etc.

NON-FISCAL INCENTIVES

2.12. Ease of Doing Business

Starting a business involves getting various departmental approval and clearances. Thus, it is very important that state government should work out a plan to minimize the regulatory compliances, punitive actions and provide support /awareness to these propellers of next stage economic growth.

The State Government shall enhance the ease of doing business by minimizing inspections and encouraging self- certifications. All recognized startups shall become eligible for exemption from inspection on self-certification basis for a period of five years from the date of recognition under the following acts:

- (i) The Factories Act, 1948
- (ii) Shops and Establishment Act,
- (iii) The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961
- (iv) The Contract Labour (Regulations and Abolition) Act, 1970
- (v) The Payment of Wages Act, 1936
- (vi) The Minimum Wages Act, 1948
- (vii) The Employment Exchange Act, 1959
- (viii) Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972
- (ix) Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981
- (x) Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
- (xi) The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996
- (xii) The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979
- (xiii) The Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952
- (xiv) The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948
- (xv) Any other Acts, Rules, Regulations notified in this regard by the state or central government

The exemptions under the above Acts shall be subjected to the complying with the due procedure specified by Startup India, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade or by the concerned departments of state or central government or under the respective acts, rules or regulations.

2.13. Public procurement

All recognized startups shall become eligible for the exemption in public procurement as specified in Uttarakhand Purchase Preference Policy, Procurement Rules and amendments made there under. All State Government Agencies shall extend the exemptions specified under Uttarakhand Purchase Preference Policy and Procurement Rules (as amended from time to time) made there under to all recognized startups.

All State Government Agencies will be permitted to make direct procurement up to INR 10 lakhs exclusive of GST from recognized startups registered under Uttarakhand Purchase Preference Policy.

2.14. Access to Shared Facilities

The State Government will make arrangements to provide free access to the resources in the State Universities, Government Laboratories, Center of Excellence, Libraries or any other shared facilities which may be needed for the development of innovative idea/concepts and/or products and services by recognized startups.

2.15. Pro Bono Services

The State Government will establish partnerships with professional organizations, corporates, or with other organizations and service providers for providing training and mentoring such as Land D modules, tools and templates for investor pitch decks, etc. and handholding support such as accountancy, legal, human resource, cloud services etc. to facilitate and provide support to startups in development of products or services.

2.16. Skilled Human Resource

In order to support startups to recruit skilled and unskilled human resource, the State Government will establish a mechanism wherein the human resources can be recruited through polytechnics, industrial training institute, skill training and vocational training institutes, Uttarakhand Skill Development Mission, academic institutions etc.

2.17. Resolution of issues or grievances

State Government will establish a unified web platform that will allow identification of issues or grievances of startups, incubators, investors, aspiring entrepreneurs and will establish a mechanism for the resolution of issues or grievances in a time bounded manner.

All State Government Agencies shall also establish an online mechanism for the identification and resolutions of issues or grievances of startups, incubators, investors, aspiring entrepreneurs and other ecosystem players, which are related to the respective agencies.

2.18. Public consultations on the policies & schemes

The state government will establish a mechanism to consult startups on the policies, schemes rules, regulations, government orders etc. made by the State

Government Agencies to take in to consider their suggestions while formulating them.

The startups working in the disruptive sectors such as GPS systems, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Cyber security, Blockchain, Big Data, Fintech, Transport, Urban mobility, eVehicle, Biotech, Healthcare, E-Pharmacy, Civil Aviation, Waste Recycling, Space Technologies, Drones, Robotics Tourism, Travel Tech, Renewable energy, Climate Change, Disaster Management, Medical Devices, Circular Economy, Sustainability etc. shall be consulted by the State Government Agencies while formulating policies, schemes rules, regulations, government orders etc. made for the startups respective sector.

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3. INCENTIVES FOR INCUBATORS

3.1. Lead Incubator

The state government shall establishment of world-class incubation centers or Center of Excellences (CoEs) in the sectors such as manufacturing, transport, energy, health, education, agriculture, water and sanitation etc. in Uttarakhand. These objective of this incubation centers and/or CoEs shall be to encourage innovative technology based startups or startups that are solving grassroots challenges that have an application and/or impact in the core sectors of the economy.

3.2. Capital Grant for Incubation Centers

The state government will strive to establish state of the art incubation centers in partnership with Corporates, Nationally or Internationally recognized Professional organizations, Accelerators etc. on public private partnerships. The incubation centers approved and recognized by Uttarakhand Startup Council shall become eligible for a one time Capital Grant except the cost of land and building:

Descriptions	Quantum of Support	Extent of Assistance
Setting up of new incubation centers	up to INR 1 crore	maximum 50 percent of the amount proposed be spent
Expansion of existing incubation centers	up to INR 50 Lakhs	maximum 50 percent of the amount proposed be spent

The capital grant shall be disbursed on year on year basis subjected to the annual budget plan submitted by the applicant and approved by the Uttarakhand Startup Council. The applicant shall clearly define the business model for running the incubation center along with the annual budget plan submitted while making application and it shall become self-sustainable in a period of five years.

3.3. Operational Grant for Incubation Centers

Incubators recognized by Uttarakhand Startup Council shall become eligible for reimbursement up to Rs 1.00 Lakh per Startup to cover the cost of providing incubation support to startups as specified in sub-clause 2.6 of clause 2. An additional one-time assistance up to INR 5 lakhs can be provided to the recognized incubation centers subjected to the approval of the Uttarakhand Startup Council on case-to-case basis.

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The recognized incubation centers shall be eligible for the operational grant once they have come in to operation and have started incubating startups recognized by council. The operation grant shall be for a maximum period of 5 years starting from the date on which written communicating is received by the State Nodal State from the incubation center of coming in to operation. Incubators shall physically incubate recognized startup at least for a period of 12 months and maximum for a period of 18 months.

The incubation center shall submit to the State Nodal Agency the quarterly report of the progress made by the incubatee startups in the formats specified.

3.4. Incubation Centers in Academic Institutions

Universities, Institution of Higher Education, Technical Educations, Medical Education, Polytechnics, colleges, schools etc. shall strive to set up a basic incubation facility along with prototyping labs and resources such as geographical resources, hard and soft infrastructural resources, process and pedagogy linked resources and sectoral systems within their campus.

Each incubation center shall also establish Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Council (SIEC), employ human resources to look after the council, assign a senior competent authority for coordination of such a facility to develop action agendas for short and long term

Subject to the maximum cap specified in the below table, the fiscal support to academic institutions established by the State or Central Government will be up to 100 percent of the proposed budget and up to 50 percent of the proposed budget for the privately established academic institutions.

Fiscal Support	Universities	Institutions & Colleges	Polytechnic, ITIs, Schools etc.
Capital Grant for setting up of new incubation centers	Up to INR 1 Crore	Up to INR 30 lakhs	Up to INR 20 lakhs
Capital Grant for expansion of existing incubation centers	Up to INR 50 Lakhs	Up to INR 20 lakhs	Up to INR 10 lakhs

Operational grant	As specified in sub-clause 3.3 of clause 3	As specified in sub-clause 3.3 of clause 3	As specified in sub-clause 3.3 of clause 3
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4. PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ACADEMIA

4.1. Entrepreneurship Development Cells (eCells)

All academic institutions established by state government or under the Acts enacted by the state legislature shall establish Entrepreneurship Development Cells (eCells) and all privately established academic institutions will be encouraged to establish Entrepreneurship Development Cells (eCells) to create awareness and encourage students towards entrepreneurship within their campus. The academic institutions shall appoint a Startup Nodal Officer to look after the day to day operations of the eCells.

All eCells shall be affiliated with Startup Uttarakhand for organizing activities focused on entrepreneurship throughout the year. All eCells shall organize Startup boot camps, Business plan competitions, Startup pitch fest, Idea challenges, Grand challenge, Hackathons, etc., in association with Startup Uttarakhand, for the students who are willing to take up entrepreneurship.

eCells affiliated with Startup Uttarakhand shall be eligible for the financial assistance up to INR 1.00 lakhs per programs for meeting the expenses towards conducting programmes

4.2. Student Startup Entrepreneurs

Student entrepreneurs working on innovative startup ideas which is approved by the State Nodal Agency shall be eligible for pre-incubation support as specified in the sub-clause 2.5 of clause 2 and monthly allowance as specified in the sub-clause 2.1 of clause 2. The student entrepreneurs in the graduation and post-graduation will be permitted to convert their start-up project as their interim project or final year project required for the award of their degree.

Startup Uttarakhand will establish mechanism to facilitate student entrepreneurs for preliminary mentoring to do preliminary research for validation of idea, prototyping, MVP, field-testing, market research and filing IPR from time to time.

4.3. Syllabus on Entrepreneurship

All academic institutions shall formulate a Student Startup and Innovation Policy along with action plan and well-defined short-term and long-term goals,

which should be in line with the Uttarakhand Startup Policy, 2023 and National Innovation and Startup Policy, 2019

Entrepreneurship promotion and development should be one of the major dimensions of the academic institution's strategy. The State Nodal Agency shall design and develop a curriculum focused on entrepreneurship development.

All academic institutions shall update their curriculums to include the course on "Entrepreneurship Development" as an optional subject to make students aware and encourage them to take entrepreneurship as their carrier option.

All Academic Institutions shall also organize, at least one dedicated course focused on "Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development" for the identified students, in association with Uttarakhand Startup Cell as a part of the summer camp program.

4.4. Inclusion of Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs) in curriculum

Various nationally and internationally accredited Massive Open Online Courses focused on innovation and entrepreneurship or any other MOOCs designed and approved by the State Government will be made available on startup portal.

These MOOCs may be taken by the aspiring student entrepreneurs as elective subjects and may be assigned to them depending upon their interest.

4.5. Training of trainers

Innovation and entrepreneurship can propel the youth towards breakthrough discoveries. The role of teachers, faculties and mentors becomes very important in guiding youth towards entrepreneurship. Strong emphasis will be put on training the teachers, faculties, government officials on the development in area of entrepreneurship by industry veterans, corporate and subject matter experts from startup ecosystem.

Financial assistance up to INR 1.00 lakhs per year per program per institution for organizing training and capacity programs focused on Startups for the resource person in academic institutions and state government agencies.

4.6. Faculties as Mentor of Startup

Faculties in all academic institutions would be encouraged to take time off to work as a mentor with the aspiring students entrepreneurs at the incubator center or Entrepreneurship Development Cells (EDCs) for a stipulated time, after which they can join back to their normal work.

4.7. Partnership between industry and academia

Industry - Academia collaboration is vital for a sustainable ecosystem where both the industry and academia flourish. Partnerships with industry and corporates are very instrumental in advancing the research projects, catalyzing innovations and growth of technologies and for the creation of skilled workforce.

The state government will establish a mechanism to enable partnership between industry and academic institutions.

4.8. Commercialization of innovation in academic institutions

Cultivating the culture of innovation and entrepreneurial and providing timely support to start-ups, indeed, forms the rock-solid foundation for a progressive economy. Creating next-generation start-ups is the need of the hour. The research advances being made by academic institutions such as universities, schools, colleges, polytechnics, industrial training institute (ITIs), institutions of technical education, medical educations etc. can play a very important role in creation of next generation startups.

All academic institutions in Uttarakhand will be encouraged to provide access to research & development (R&D) projects, patented ideas or any other projects that has commercial value to aspiring student entrepreneurs, startups and member from industries with an objective to translate academic research discoveries into successful commercial ventures.

The aim is to benefit both research and business and to create new value as the new technology is put into use.

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5. GENERAL PROVISIONS

5.1. Institutional Support

(i) Start-up Portal & Mobile App

The state government will upgrade the Uttarakhand Startup Portal and App as per the need to provide access to all information related to the startup policy, government notifications, applications for recognition and incentives etc. through Startup Portal.

(ii) Dedicated Helpline

A dedicated helpline to provide handholding support all startup related queries will be established in English and Hindi. The helpline shall assist in addressing all queries in areas such as registering a business, raising funds/loans, policy clarifications, etc.

5.2. Fab lab or Makers Lab or Prototyping lab

A provision of funds shall be made for setting up of the fab lab, makers labs or common facility centers having modern facilities for product development, testing and validation, internet connectivity and other facilities required by innovators, startups, innovators. State Government will ensure establishment of at least two labs in the regions identified by State Nodal Agency.

5.3. Flagship Programs

To attract youth and motivate them to solve complex problems by taking up entrepreneurship, the State Nodal Department and the departments, agencies, bodies, corporations, urban local bodies, authorities and entities established by State Government shall

- (a) organize at least two national program such as Uttarakhand Innovation Week, Startup Tech fest, Startup Fundraising event, Uttarakhand Startup Conclave etc. in two different regions of Uttarakhand
- (b) organize district wise startup boot camps and at least one Idea Challenges, Grand Challenges, Rural Innovation Challenges, Hackathons etc. to seek out fresh ideas and projects from innovators from across the state
- (c) organize at least one program to provide market access to startups such as Uttarakhand Startup Exposition, Startup Product Showcase, Demo Day/Demand Day, B2G & B2B programs etc.

Annually, top twenty innovative startup ideas selected through a rigorous process during the challenges/competitions shall be provided seed fund of INR 2.0 lakhs which shall be in the form of grant in aid and incubation support along with publication of their success stories.

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5.4. Sensitization Programs

In order to create awareness and create the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across the state, the State Nodal Agency shall organize startup sensitization programs to guide, train and handhold aspiring entrepreneurs, incubators, investors, mentors, members from industry, professionals and other ecosystem enablers covering all the districts of the state.

5.5. Funds of Funds or Venture Fund

A fund of funds with a corpus of INR 200 crore shall be allocated for investing in venture funds that invest in startups with an objective to provide them scale up fund in the form of equity funding to enable them to develop and growth their enterprises. A professional fund manager shall be selected through open bidding process for the operation and management of the funds. A portion of the funds of funds can be used to setup the critical infrastructure in the lead incubator in the state.

The State Government Agencies can also establish sector specific venture fund from their budgets to invest in innovative and/or technology oriented startups in exchange of equity.

5.6. Establishment of Angel Network

The Government of Uttarakhand will sensitize industrialists, professionals, individual investors, high net-worth individuals (HNIs), non-resident indian (NRIs), social impact investor groups' to establish Angels Network (Uttarakhand Angels) to enable an alternative source of early stage funding for startups operating from Uttarakhand.

5.7. Activities to be undertaken by State Government Agencies

All State Government Agencies shall

- (i) formulate startup policies which shall clearly define the annual plan for providing institutional support to startups in the form of sustainable programs, hackathons, grand challenges, incubation support, mentoring support, funding support, public procurement, venture funding, open data APIs and other sustainable programs
- (ii) established startup help desk and appoint a nodal officer to look after its operation and management in order to provide them required guidance and handholding to aspiring startup entrepreneurs
- (iii) establish partnerships with corporates, industry associations or professional organizations to provide technical support, mentoring and other support to recognized startups
- (iv) organize training and capacity building programs for the government officials to guide, mentor and train them on the nuances of startups

- (v) establish an online mechanism for the identification of the issues or grievances related to it and addressal of the same in time bounded manner
- (vi) provide opportunities to recognized startups in the form of opportunity to undergo pilot project through grand challenges, idea challenge, demo day/demand day, innovation day etc. to enable them to test and validate their product and services
- (vii) provide relaxation as specified in Uttarakhand Purchase Preference Policy, Procurement Rules to all recognized startups in all public procurements
- (viii) make a consultation with startups to take their suggestions on the changes to be made in the existing or in any new schemes, policies, rules, regulations, government orders etc. of the respective State Nodal Agencies in order to address the challenge faced by them
- (ix) enable hassle free and time-bounded statutory clearances to startups
- (x) organize annual programs as specified in sub-clause 5.2 of clause 5
- (xi) any other activities as may be specified by the state government from time to time

5.8. Hackathons or Idea Challenge

In order to find solutions to the complex problems, each year, the State Government Agencies shall identify a problem area or challenges from their respective sectors and invite all startups to develop innovative solutions to solve those problems.

The solutions so designed and developed by the startups and selected through a rigorous selection process shall be awarded an initial grant and may be taken up for implementation as a pilot project at an appropriate scale in the respective department, agencies, or bodies, corporations, authorities, urban local bodies or other entities.

The provision of funds for organizing the hackathon/idea challenge/innovation challenge and for giving an opportunity to the winning ideas to undergo pilot project shall be made by the respective State Government Agencies.

5.9. Encouraging Entrepreneurship among Women

All State Government Agencies shall design and implement programs and initiatives in their respective areas to encourage women in entrepreneurship and establish a mechanism to guide, support and mentor women startups. At least two programs focused on women shall be organized in a year for their capacity building. The concerned Departments, agencies, bodies shall make a provision of funds for the same from their own budget.

All State Government supported incubators shall allocate minimum 15 percent seats for startups led by recognized startups led by women.

5.10. Capacity Building Programs

Every year, the State Nodal Agency shall organize capacity-building workshops for government official, startups, incubators, angel investors and other key stakeholders of startup ecosystem to sensitize over the recent developments in the startup ecosystem across the world

5.11. District Innovation Committee

A District Innovation Committee shall be established under the chairmanship of District Magistrate in each district of Uttarakhand involving members from Industries, Nationalized Banks, and Industry Bodies. The District Innovation Committee shall oversee the implementation of the startups policy in their respective districts and organize awareness programs to develop the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Each district shall establish Startup Help Desk at the District Industries Center to provide guidance, handholding support, mentoring support etc. to aspiring startup entrepreneurs and shall notifying a nodal officer for the same to State Nodal Agency.

The district innovation committee shall look after

- (1) implementation of startup policy at the district level
- (2) prepare an startup action plan, processes and mechanisms for nurturing of Startups/enterprises in each district of Uttarakhand to
 - (a.) providing handholding support to aspiring startup entrepreneurs
 - (b.) identify innovative startups from the respective districts
 - (c.) enable them to get incubation support and mentoring support
 - (d.) provide an opportunity to undergo pilot project in the respective district through state government agencies, corporates etc.
 - (e.) preference in public procurement and related exemptions
 - (f.) facilitate to access funds from investors, venture capitalists etc.
 - (g.) organize programs focused on district innovation
 - (h.) any other activities specified by state government
- (3) establish partnerships with corporates, industry associations or professional organizations to provide technical support, mentoring and other support to recognized startups
- (4) simplify procedures and processes for getting the government clearances, licenses etc.
- (5) establishment of mechanism for identification of issues or grievance of startups at district level

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- (6) organize programs in academic institutions to promote entrepreneurship among students, women etc.
- (7) organize sensitization programs for government officials, industry members, mentors and other ecosystem enablers on the nuances of startups

5.12. District Innovation Programs

In order to create awareness and to identify grassroot innovations and budding startup entrepreneurs, the District Innovation Committee

shall organize focused programs such as

- (i) B-plan competitions
- (ii) Grand challenges / idea challenge
- (iii) Hackathons
- (iv) Startup Showcase Days/B2G meets
- (v) Demo Day/Demand Day etc.
- (vi) Buyer-Seller Meets

in the respective districts of Uttarakhand in association with state government agencies, academic institutions, industry bodies, corporates, financial institutions etc.

5.13. Corporate Innovation Programs (CIPs) for Market Access:

With an aim to widen the scope of private sector market access for startups in Uttarakhand, State Nodal Agency will organize partnership-based programs with corporate to facilitate State, National and International level exposure to startups. The state government shall make provision of requisite funds for organizing CIPs.

5.14. Review of the Policy

State Government shall formulate a committee to review this policy once in two years to critically appraise the usefulness of the policy, the ease of implementation and the outcomes achieved. The report shall be placed before the Uttarakhand Startup Council for its decision.

5.15. Grant of incentives and benefits under this Policy

Startups or incubators which are recognized under this Policy shall be eligible to claim the benefits under this for a period of three years after expiry of this Policy

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