

GUIDELINES
of
RESEARCH INCUBATION PROGRAMME

Implemented by

MAHATMA GANDHI UNIVERSITY



Funded by

KERALA STARTUP MISSION (KSUM)



1. Programme in brief

For transforming the higher education sector of Kerala, the project **Research Incubation Programme** has been initiated at Mahatma Gandhi University, funded by the Kerala Startup Mission. The major objective of the programme is to promote entrepreneurship among the research community and to support the translation of potential research outcomes into commercial products. Through the programme financial assistance, mentorship, incubation support etc. will be provided for the conversion of innovative research leads into products/technology/applications. For the same, the selected applicants will be awarded a startup grant of up to Rs. 5 lakhs as per the submitted proposal.

2. Objectives of the Programme

- To convert innovative research outcomes into market-ready products/technology/services and to support the early-stage growth of enterprises
- To provide financial assistance for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, company registration, market entry and commercialization
- To build a startup ecosystem in the State of Kerala for sustainable economic growth and to create large-scale employment opportunities

3. Targets and outcome

The programme targets to facilitate and enable a minimum of 20 startups that are commercially viable and technically feasible with societal impact.

4. Thrust areas

- Engineering and Future Technologies
- Life Science/Biotechnology
- Healthcare and Medical Device Technology
- Water Conservation
- Environment, Climatic Change, Disaster Management
- Nanotechnology
- Food and Agriculture
- Fisheries
- Assistive Technologies
- Energy/Renewables/Biofuel
- Value Addition/Waste Management
- Pharmaceutical Science
- Business, Tourism
- Rural Technology
- Social Entrepreneurship

5. Project Duration

The duration of the selected project will be a maximum period of 8 months from the date of contract signing. The startup grant of up to Rs. 5 lakhs will be awarded in a milestone-based manner for the establishment of the successful startup business. The extension of the project duration is subject to approval by the Assessment Committee constituted for the same.

6. Support provided to grantees under this programme

❖ Financial

- Startup grant disbursement will be milestone-based (3 months period) and will be released as 2 instalments

- 1st instalment - After signing of the contract, 50% of the sanctioned amount will be awarded
- 2nd instalment - After completion of the 1st milestone and submission and evaluation of the report the remaining 50% will be awarded

❖ **Entrepreneurial**

- Skill development training
- Technical mentoring (connect with technical experts)
- Intellectual Property (IP) support
- Legal support for company registration
- Networking and outreach
- Regulatory advice
- Business mentoring
- Connect with investors
- Training on a case basis

7. Eligibility Criteria

- Faculty members from universities or Colleges /Scientists/Ph.D./Post-Doc/Post Graduates registered with an accredited Research Organization/University/College/Academic Institution within Kerala, where the institutional policies allow them to create a start-up
- Those who have completed the Post Doc, Ph.D or PG with commercially viable scientific research outcome can also apply under the category as Alumni. If selected, they have to submit a consent letter from the host institution where the startup incubation will be carried out in Kerala
- Applicant can be an individual or a team (with max 3 members). In the case of a team, the name of the Project Leader should be mentioned specifically and the details of proposed mentor should be mentioned while applying. If

selected consent letter from the mentor should be provided. The mentor may not be required when the team has a faculty member/scientist as a team member. In such a case, only the student applicant can be the Project Leader.

- The consent letter from the mentor for the selected candidates should be on the letterhead stating his/her willingness to support the project and also to ensure proper utilisation of the sanctioned amount
- The mentor may not be compulsory in the case where the applicant is a scientist/ faculty member
- Existing startups (or their promoter shareholder) are not allowed to apply for the grant as the programme is intended to generate new startups from the researchers.

8. Selection criteria

- Novelty
- Technical feasibility
- Commercial viability
- Applicant strength
- Commercialization plan

9. How to apply?

Interested applicants may fill out the google form given below and submit it on or before **September 30, 2022**.

<https://forms.gle/5pfNpc8c7ZnsBAaG7>

10. General instructions

- The applicant should be an Indian citizen

- The project leader should upload his/her resume and a scanned image of any Govt. approved identity proof (Aadhar card/Driving Licence/Passport/Institutional ID card)
- The applicant or project leader in the case of a team should manage the funds through a separate no-lien bank account
- The project leader is advised to sign NDA(Non-Disclosure Agreement) with the proposed mentor if selected
- The applicant selected for the grant is encouraged to incorporate a startup during the project period. Startup incorporation is not mandatory during the application filing/processing. The startup, if generated, should be registered as a legal entity registered with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (OPC/LLP/Pvt Ltd). In the case of an application submitted by the team, the mentioned project leader needs to be a promoter-shareholder in the new start-up.
- If the applicant is formally employed (or registered as a student) with an academic or research organization, then he/she has to produce a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the competent authority of the organization clearly indicating that the organization has policies to allow the applicant while in service/ on sabbatical/on extraordinary leave to create a startup
- The first round of screening will be done by reviewing the application
- The second round of screening will be a pitch presentation before an Evaluation Panel
- The applicants recommended by the Evaluation Panel will be selected for the grant
- The grant will be disbursed as money in instalments after executing an agreement with the grantees

- The grant will be released in successive instalments only after the performance review against milestones, verification of audited Utilisation Certificate/Statement of Expenditure and report submission
- Review meetings will be conducted every month to assess the progress of the work and report submission is mandatory.
- If the project is failed or discontinued, then no further grant support will be extended to the grantee and will be considered the project to be closed. The entire outstanding amount as on the date of closure will become due and payable within 120 days or as mutually agreed between the grantee and M. G. University.
- Requests for change in a proposal once submitted will not be entertained.
- It is important to ensure that the IP generated (if any) need not have to face any difficulty during the commercialization phase
- Applicants shall not have any actual or/and potential conflict of interest with the Research Incubation Program selection process and during the whole programme
- All projects should end with a working prototype (on case to case basis) in 8 months duration and has to be displayed during the final Demo Day.

11. Guidelines for usage of funds

- **Manpower:** The project leader nor the team members cannot receive salary/ stipend/ fellowship from two sources simultaneously (the project grant and any other source). If the project leader is not receiving any financial support as salary/fellowship, 10% of the sanctioned amount may be given as per the request made and also with the approval of the Assessment Committee. The proposed mentor shall serve as an honorary advisor and cannot draw monetary benefits from the sanctioned grant.

- Prototyping cost: Capped at 50% of the grant
- Consumables/raw materials: Capped at 20% of the grant
- Expenses incurred for setting up of the startup (Company/LLP) - Limited to the maximum of Rs. 25,000/-
- Travel and contingency: Capped at 7.5% of the grant

12. What is not supported?

- Basic/exploratory research projects below the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 3 category (Refer Fig. below)
- Projects having a low element of novelty
- Projects including software development/ basic academic research will not be supported

Deployment	9	Actual system proven in operational environment	Supported by Research Incubation Programme
	8	System complete and qualified	
	7	System prototype demonstration in operational environment	
Development	6	Technology demonstrated in relevant environment	
	5	Technology validated in relevant environment	
	4	Technology validated in lab	
Research	3	Experimental proof of concept	Not supported by Research Incubation Programme
	2	Technology concept formulated	
	1	Basic principles observed	

Fig. 1 TECHNOLOGY READINESS LEVEL (TRL)

Note: Research Incubation Programme is not a research fellowship and cannot be used just to complete Ph.D. or any part of academic programme.