

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1725
ANSWERED ON 03.08.2023

FOSTERING INNOVATION AND STARTUPS

1725. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

Will the Minister of Science and Technology be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of measures being taken by Government to foster innovation among startups in the country;
- (b) the progress made in this respect so far;
- (c) the details of measures taken to ensure success of the established network of Technology Business Incubators (TBI) and Science & Technology Entrepreneur's Parks (STEP) across the country; and
- (d) the proposed measures to be taken in this regard to foster innovation?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
FOR THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
(DR. JITENDRA SINGH)

(a) In order to foster innovation among the startups in the country, Department of Science & Technology launched an umbrella program NIDHI (National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing innovations) in 2016. NIDHI program has various components to support innovations, startups and startup incubation ecosystem in the country. The NIDHI- PRAYAS (Promoting and Accelerating Young and Aspiring Innovators and Startups) program at Proof-of-Concept level provides mentoring and financial support to innovator for converting their ideas into prototypes. NIDHI Entrepreneurs-In-Residence (EIR) Program provides fellowships to the students opting for entrepreneurship. The NIDHI Seed Support Program provisions availability of early-stage seed support funding to startups and the NIDHI Accelerator program speeds up the investment readiness of the startups. The NIDHI program has been helpful in creating state-of-the art infrastructure for incubating startups in technology sectors through Technology Business Incubators (TBIs) and Centres of Excellence (CoE).

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is an integral part of the National Innovation System (NIS). It is playing an active role in conceptualizing and developing state-of-the-art Incubation facilities for translating technology & products and handholding entrepreneurs, start-ups, and MSMEs so as to ensure the transfer of the benefit of S&T interventions to the Society, Industry and the Country. CSIR today is one of the leading R&D organizations in the country to set up Incubation Centers across its labs using innovative models/approaches. In addition to the above, few Common Research and Technology Development Hubs (CRTDHs) for industrial R&D innovation, dedicated for MSMEs, start-ups and individual innovators have also been set up at CSIR with the support of DSIR.

Department of Biotechnology through BIRAC (Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council) and its various schemes and initiatives encourages startups, entrepreneurs, innovators, scientists, technology experts, academicians to undertake translational research and innovations leading to development of affordable

products & technologies for public at large. BIRAC schemes encourage setting up of biotech enterprises. Support is extended for mentoring, funding, validation/pilot testing of startup innovations and investor connect for the startups in biotechnology domain.

Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) under Ministry of Defence supports creation of an ecosystem to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging Industries including MSMEs, start-ups, individual innovators, R&D institutes & academia.

Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) has initiated Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs (TIDE 2.0) Scheme with an aim to promote technology-based entrepreneurship through financial and technical support to incubators.

National Agriculture Innovation Fund of ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) promotes the Startups related to agritech under incubation activities in ICAR Network wherein it has established Agri-business Incubator (ABIs) centres in 50 Institutes.

(b) The progress made in this respect so far;

Through DST's NIDHI program for promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship, 8 NIDHI CoEs and 40 NIDHI TBIs and 20 NIDHI Inclusive TBIs have been established in academic setups to extend incubation and mentoring support to innovative startups in various technology domains.

Through CSIR incubation centres, 300 startups/Incubatees have been supported so far.

The progress made through BIRACs incubation program include setting up of 75 Incubation Centres supported through BIRAC's BioNEST and E-YUVA (Empowering Youth for Undertaking Value Added Innovative Translational Research) schemes of BIRAC across 21 states & UTs of the country, around 900 innovative projects supported under Biotech Ignition Grant (BIG).

(c) & (d) DST is supporting TBIs/STEPS primarily in and around academic, research, technical and management institutes to tap innovations and technologies for startup creation. The program helps in crating expertise and S&T entrepreneurial infrastructure at the Host Institute. DST extends holistic end to end support from ideation to POC, Incubation to seed funding, by providing a strong platform for innovators and researchers, S&T faculties and entrepreneurs to form innovative startups.

Measures taken by DST to ensure the success of established network of STEPs & TBIs, includes support via virtual incubation of the startups for a better outreach throughout the country. In addition, NIDHI-Promoting and Accelerating Young and Aspiring Innovators and Startups (PRAYAS) extends support at pre-incubation stage to the innovators and ensures creating a strong pipeline of startups. Another measure taken by the department is through NIDHI-Seed Support Program (NIDHI-SSP) which ensures availability of early stage funding to incubated startups and strengthen the success of startups in the incubator. In order to motivate students to become job providers rather than job seekers, NIDHI Entrepreneurs-in-Residence (EIR) program is an additional measure taken by DST. In order to strengthen innovation and startup incubation ecosystem in Tier II and Tier III cities, a new program named NIDHI-Inclusive Technology Business Incubators (iTBI) program was launched by DST to support startup incubation centres in academic setups in tier II and tier III cities. The iTBI program has helped increasing entrepreneurial inclusiveness in terms of geographies, gender and persons with special abilities.
