MeitY Startup Hub (MSH)

GUIDELINES FOR GENESIS ENTREPRENEUR-IN-RESIDENCE (EIR) COHORT 3

The GENESIS Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR) Program - Cohort 3, implemented through MeitY Startup Hub (MSH), is intended to support early-stage innovators and startups from Tier-II and Tier-III cities working in electronics, information technology, ICT and DeepTech. These Guidelines prescribe the framework for application, eligibility, screening, evaluation, selection, funding, incubation, reporting and closure of Cohort 3 through the national online portal.

1. Objectives

- To identify and support promising technology-led entrepreneurs and early-stage startups from Tier-II and Tier-III cities.
- To facilitate development of ideas, Proof of Concept (PoC), prototypes and Minimum Viable Products (MVPs) through structured incubation and mentoring support.
- To ensure a transparent, uniform and digitally enabled process for application, screening, evaluation and selection across participating Implementing Agencies (IAs).
- To provide financial assistance of up to INR 10 lakh per selected EIR, subject to approval and achievement of prescribed milestones.

2. Cohort 3 Application Process and Timeline

1. The application portal shall open on 04 August 2026.
2. Applicants shall submit applications online and indicate up to two Implementing Agency preferences - Preference 1 and Preference 2 - at the time of application.
3. Round 1 shall comprise eligibility screening and shortlisting by the concerned Implementing Agency.
4. Round 2 shall comprise Evaluation Committee assessment & scoring of startups shortlisted in Round 1.
5. The process from call for applications to final selection shall ordinarily be completed within 30 days, subject to the schedule notified by MSH.

3. Eligibility Criteria

An applicant shall be eligible for consideration under GENESIS EIR Cohort 3 subject to fulfilment of the following conditions:

- The applicant shall be an Indian citizen.

- The applicant may be an early-stage innovator/entrepreneur or founder/co-founder of a startup. In the case of a registered entity, the date of incorporation shall not exceed two years as on the date of application.
- The applicant/startup shall originate from or operate in a **Tier-II or Tier-III** city, as applicable under the Program.
- The selected EIR shall be physically incubated with the selected/preferred Implementing Agency during the EIR tenure.
- Where applicable, DPIIT recognition/registration of the startup shall be verified.
- The applicant/startup shall not have been previously supported under the GENESIS EIR Program or an overlapping MeitY scheme.
- The applicant/startup must not have received financial assistance **exceeding INR 10 lakh** under any Government scheme for the same proposed idea/startup.
- The innovation shall be at an early stage such as ideation, concept development, validation/problem-solution fit, PoC, prototyping or working prototype (**TRL-1 to TRL-4),** with a realistic plan for further development during the EIR tenure.

4. Eligible Technology Domains

Preference shall be accorded to technology-led innovations in electronics, IT, ICT and DeepTech, including, inter alia:

- Electronic Design and Manufacturing
- DeepTech Software and Products
- ICT
- Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning (AI/ML)
- Internet of Things (IoT)
- VLSI / Semiconductor
- Cybersecurity
- Blockchain
- Quantum Computing
- AR / VR / Spatial and Immersive Technologies

5. Preference of Implementing Agencies

- Each applicant may indicate a maximum of two Implementing Agency preferences at the time of application.
- Preference 1 shall be treated as the primary preference and shall remain fixed after submission of the application.
- If the Preference 1 IA does not shortlist the applicant in Round 1, the application may be routed to Preference 2 for a fresh Round 1 review, as configured on the portal.
- If neither Preference 1 nor Preference 2 shortlists the applicant, the application shall be treated as not selected for the cohort.
- Where an applicant is required by the portal workflow to confirm an IA for onboarding, the applicant shall be onboarded with only one IA and shall not avail EIR support simultaneously through more than one IA.

6. Selection Process

6.1 Round 1 - Eligibility Screening and Shortlisting by IA

Each IA shall review the applications assigned/routed to it and shall be responsible for verifying eligibility before shortlisting an applicant for Round 2. The IA shall complete the prescribed eligibility checklist for every application considered.

Eligibility Check	Portal Status
Indian citizen; applicant/startup stage as per applicable SOP/guidelines	Yes / No / Needs Review
Tier-II/III city origin or operation, as applicable	Yes / No / Needs Review
Physically incubated / willing to be incubated with preferred IA	Yes / No / Needs Review
Not previously supported under GENESIS EIR or overlapping scheme	Yes / No / Needs Review
If registered entity: incorporation not exceeding 2 years	Yes / No / Needs Review
DPIIT registration (Optional) , where applicable, verified	Yes / No / Needs Review
Financial assistance INR 10 lakh under any Government scheme.	Yes / No / Needs Review

Only applicants found eligible may be shortlisted for Round 2. The number of startups that may be shortlisted by an IA shall be subject to the ceiling/configuration notified by MSH for the cohort.

Responsibility of IA: The IA shall be responsible for the correctness of eligibility verification and the documents relied upon for shortlisting. Shortlisting of an applicant shall not create an automatic entitlement to financial support.

6.2 Round 1 to Round 2 Handover

Upon closure of the Round 1 selection window, the portal shall compile the list of shortlisted applicants and make the same available for Round 2 evaluation in accordance with the notified workflow.

6.3 Round 2 - Evaluation Committee Assessment

Startups shortlisted in Round 1 shall be invited to present their proposal before the Evaluation Committee (EC). Evaluation shall be undertaken against predefined parameters and recorded on the portal. Each evaluator shall assess the applicant independently.

7. Suggested Evaluation Committee and Portal Configuration

The IA shall constitute the Evaluation Committee in accordance with the composition/roles approved for Cohort 3 and shall add the required committee members on the portal prior to evaluation. Committee members shall submit a conflict-of-interest declaration before scoring.

Evaluator Category	Portal Role Tag	Primary Assessment Area
Domain/Sector Expert (empanelled)	EXPERT	Technical merit, innovation and feasibility
Incubator Representative (preferred IA)	INCUBATOR	Incubation fit, mentoring capacity and TRL assessment
MSH Team	MSH	Compliance, Program fit and Tier-II/III alignment

8. Round 2 Suggested Evaluation Parameters for EC

S. No.	Parameter	Assessment Focus
1	Problem-Solution Fit & Innovation	Clarity of problem, originality, novelty, alternatives and use of technology
2	Technology Readiness & Feasibility	TRL, technical soundness and realistic PoC/MVP plan within the EIR duration
3	Market Relevance & Scalability	Demand validation, Tier-II/III/grassroots relevance and potential to scale
4	Founder/Team Commitment	Full-time availability, clarity of vision and team complementarity
5	Business & Revenue Model Clarity	Monetisation logic, cost structure and realistic milestones linked to funding
6	Social & Regional Impact	Employment generation, community/grassroots benefit and national-priority alignment
7	Pitch Quality & Funding Ask Justification	Quality of pitch, response to queries and justification of funding requirement
8	IP / Differentiation	Existing/planned IP, defensibility and differentiation from competitors

The total evaluation score shall be 100 marks. Parameter-wise marks and portal fields. may be revised by MSH prior to final configuration.

9. Marks Band Descriptors

Percentage of Marks	Descriptor
90-100%	Exceptional - best-in-class on the parameter with no significant gaps.
70-89%	Strong - clear merit with minor gaps that do not materially affect viability.
50-69%	Adequate - meets the required bar, with notable gaps or claims requiring validation.
30-49%	Weak - significant concerns; major corrective action may be required.
Below 30%	Poor - does not meet Program expectations on the parameter.

10. Mandatory Evaluator Inputs

- Parameter-wise marks/scores as configured on the portal.
- Remarks, including mandatory justification where a parameter score is below 50% of the available marks.
- Declaration of no conflict of interest prior to scoring.
- Final individual recommendation: Select / Reject / Select with Conditions.
- Recommended Anchor Mentor, where applicable.
- Suggested funding requirement within the sanctioned ceiling, where such field is enabled for the designated role.

11. Final Recommendation and Result

- The Evaluation Committee shall record its final recommendation for each applicant as Select, Reject or Select with Conditions.
- The IA shall publish/record the final result through the prescribed portal process.
- The IA shall submit the recommended startup list along with the prescribed supporting documents to MSH.
- Selection/recommendation by the IA/EC shall remain subject to completion of prescribed documentation, approval and sanction under the Program.

12. Documents to be Maintained / Submitted by IA

- Round 1 eligibility checklist for each applicant considered.
- Evaluation sheets / portal evaluation records.
- Minutes of Meeting (MoM) of the Evaluation Committee.
- Attendance record of Committee members.
- Conflict-of-interest declarations.
- Final recommendation / selected startup list.
- Relevant startup eligibility and supporting documents.
- Agreement and onboarding documents for selected EIRs.
- Such other records/documents as may be prescribed by MSH from time to time.

13. Funding Support and Disbursement

- Financial assistance of up to INR 10 lakh may be provided per selected EIR, subject to approval and sanction.
- The grant shall be released in two tranches of 50% each.
- Tranche 1 (50%) shall be linked to onboarding/incubation and completion of prescribed documentation, following sanction and release of funds to the IA.
- Tranche 2 (50%) shall be linked to achievement of agreed milestones and recommendation by the competent IA authorities/mentor, along with submission of the prescribed utilisation and progress documents.
- Release of any tranche shall be subject to availability of funds, compliance with applicable conditions and approval by the competent authority.

14. Incubation, Mentoring and Milestone Review

- The selected EIR shall be onboarded and physically incubated with the selected IA.
- Each selected EIR shall be assigned an Anchor Mentor, as applicable.
- The IA shall provide structured technical and business mentoring during the EIR tenure.
- The IA shall monitor progress against agreed milestones and maintain appropriate milestone/progress records.
- Milestone achievement for release of Tranche 2 shall be assessed and recommended by the IA in accordance with the approved process.

15. Reporting, Utilisation and Closure

- The IA shall submit Utilization Certificates (UC), Statement of Expenditure (SoE), interim/final progress reports and milestone records in the prescribed format and timelines.
- For Tranche 2, the IA shall submit the prescribed Tranche 1 utilisation documents and recommendation to MSH for processing.
- Upon completion of the EIR support, the IA shall submit final UC, SoE, progress/closure report and other prescribed closure documents.
- MSH shall process administrative and financial approvals on the basis of documents submitted by the IA, in accordance with the applicable sanction terms and Program provisions.

16. Roles and Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Key Responsibilities
Applicant / Startup	Submit complete and accurate application; select IA preferences; participate in evaluation; provide declarations/documents; complete onboarding; utilise support for approved purposes; work towards agreed milestones.
Implementing Agency (IA)	Eligibility verification; Round 1 shortlisting; constitution of EC; Round 2 evaluation process; result publication; document verification; recommendation to MSH; onboarding; mentoring; milestone monitoring; tranche disbursement to EIR; utilisation reporting and closure.
MeitY Startup Hub (MSH)	Program administration; portal/process oversight; review of documents submitted by Incubator.

Stakeholder	Key Responsibilities
	approval/sanction processing; release of funds to IAs; review of utilisation/closure documents and related administrative/financial processing.

17. General Conditions

- Submission of an application or shortlisting at any stage shall not confer any right to selection or financial assistance.
- MSH reserves the right to modify the timeline, portal configuration, evaluation parameters, documentation requirements and operational instructions, with approval of the competent authority, as may be required for effective implementation of the cohort.
- Any false declaration, material misrepresentation, suppression of information or subsequent finding of ineligibility may lead to cancellation of selection/support and recovery/action as applicable.
- The decision of the competent authority under the Program shall be final in matters relating to sanction and release of financial assistance.
- These Guidelines shall be read together with the applicable GENESIS Scheme provisions, sanction terms, portal instructions and other directions issued by MSH/MeitY from time to time.

Annexure I - Suggested Minutes of Meeting (MoM) Format

The IA may use the following minimum structure for recording the Evaluation Committee proceedings:

Particular	Details
Date / Time / Mode / Venue	[To be filled]
No. of Startups Evaluated	[To be filled]
Committee Members	Name, designation, affiliation/expertise
Agenda	Evaluation of shortlisted applicants; assessment against approved criteria; final recommendation
Evaluation Record	Startup-wise score and remarks, as captured on the portal
Final Decision	Selected / Rejected / Selected with Conditions, with remarks
Approval	Committee Chair / IA Head / authorised signatory, as applicable

Annexure II - Evaluation Record

The portal-based evaluation record shall capture applicant details, parameter-wise scoring, evaluator remarks, conflict-of-interest declaration and final recommendation in accordance with Sections 8-10 of these Guidelines.

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