

Guidelines for National Startup Awards 6.0

Startup India | DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry

A. Eligibility Criteria for Startups:

1. **DPIIT recognition.** The applicant must be a DPIIT-recognised startup at the time of application and must submit a valid DPIIT Certificate of Recognition.
2. **Financial statements.** The applicant must submit audited financial statements (balance sheet and profit and loss statement) for FY 2023–24, FY 2024–25 and FY 2025–26.
 - a. Startups incorporated less than three years ago must submit statements for all available financial years
 - b. Startups less than one year old without audited financial statements are exempt
 - c. Where audited statements for FY 2025–26 are unavailable, provisional statements certified by a Chartered Accountant may be submitted
3. **Age of the startup.** The applicant must not have completed ten years from its date of incorporation on or before the final date for submission of applications, subject to the applicable DPIIT startup recognition framework.

B. Rules for National Startup Awards 6.0:

1. **Voluntary participation:** Participation in the National Startup Awards is voluntary
2. **Previous winners:** Applicants declared winners in any category in a previous edition of the National Startup Awards are not eligible to apply again
3. **Number of categories:** A startup may apply in a maximum of 3 categories
4. **Due diligence:** Applicants may be subject to legal and other due diligence by independent third-party evaluators. Refusal to cooperate may result in disqualification, and Startup India DPIIT may consider the next highest-scoring eligible applicant
5. **Publicity consent:** By participating, applicants consent to the Government of India and its partners using their names, URLs, photographs and videos for award-related publicity on websites and other promotional materials, subject to applicable law
6. **Accuracy of information:** Submission of false or misleading information, including information about identity, contact details, ownership of rights or compliance with eligibility conditions, may result in immediate disqualification
7. **Finality of decisions:** Decisions of the jury and the implementation committee are final and binding. The jury may recommend that no award be conferred in a category where no deserving applicant is identified
8. **Right to modify or withhold:** DPIIT reserves the right to cancel, terminate, modify or suspend the awards, or to withhold awards in any category. DPIIT may disqualify applicants who tamper with the application process, engage in fraud or violate applicable laws

C. Others:

1. The startup applicant entity should not be undergoing insolvency, liquidation, or winding-up proceedings as on the last date of application

2. Applicants shall disclose any material ongoing litigation, regulatory proceedings, or investigations that may adversely affect their eligibility or operations. Mere pendency shall not automatically result in disqualification
3. Applicants shall disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest involving members of the evaluation agency, jury, or implementation committee, to the extent known to them
4. DPIIT or its authorised evaluation agency may seek additional documents, clarifications, or supporting evidence to verify information submitted by applicants at any stage of the evaluation process
5. Any material misrepresentation, concealment of relevant information, or submission of forged or misleading documents may result in disqualification or withdrawal of the award
6. DPIIT reserves the right to withdraw an award if material discrepancies or violations of eligibility conditions are discovered after the announcement of results, following an appropriate opportunity for clarification
7. Information submitted by applicants shall be used for evaluation, verification, and purposes connected with the National Startup Awards, subject to applicable laws and disclosure requirements
8. Applications that are incomplete, contain insufficient supporting documentation, or are submitted after the prescribed deadline may be rejected.
9. DPIIT or its authorised evaluation agency may request clarifications from applicants during screening, evaluation, or due diligence. Failure to respond within the stipulated timeline may result in rejection
10. Applications shall be evaluated against predefined parameters, which may include innovation, scalability, market potential, demonstrated impact, sustainability, and other category-specific criteria, as determined by DPIIT. The evaluation process may comprise preliminary screening, detailed assessment, due diligence, and jury evaluation
11. Submission of an application, fulfilment of eligibility criteria, or shortlisting at any stage shall not confer any right or entitlement to receive an award. The decision to confer awards shall remain subject to the evaluation process and final approval of the competent authority