



सत्यमेव जयते

Government of India
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

#startupindia

❖ STATES' STARTUP RANKING 2022 ❖
LEADER



ASSAM



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States' Startup Ranking 2022 Results

Assam participated in 23 Action Points of the Ranking Framework 2022. Assam performance in each of the Reform Area has been graphically represented. Data presented below is the percentile score, which is the relative performance of the State in each Reform Area as compared to other participating States/UTs.

For example, if Assam has a score of 100th percentile in the 'Institutional Support' Reform Area, this implies that the State has scored higher than all the participating States/UTs in that Reform Area.

Assam has been evaluated on seven Reform Areas that have a significant contribution towards propelling the startup ecosystem in the State. Detailed analysis with insights into the initiatives taken by the State to promote its startup ecosystem are discussed in the subsequent sections.



STATE STARTUP ECOSYSTEM

Assam, located in the North-eastern part of India, covers an area of 78,000+ square kilometres with 35 districts and a majorly rural population with the service sector being the most dominant sector of the State's economy. Dispur is the capital city and a major spot for tourism, which forms the core of service sector of the State.. Assam is also famous for various agricultural produce such as silk and tea.

In 2017, the Government of Assam launched the Assam Startup Policy. This was further amended in 2018, a visionary initiative to address unemployment and foster entrepreneurship in the State. Although the Startup ecosystem in Assam is still in its early stages of development, it is growing rapidly thanks to the State Government supported policies and the growing pool of talented entrepreneurs. The State GDP has grown at a CAGR of 13.90% between 2016-17 and 2022-23 and is the largest economy in the Northeast¹ region of India.

Assam has introduced a number of investor-friendly policies to attract investments in key sectors such as information technology, tourism, and power. The State Government also provides seed funding and mentorship to Startups. These initiatives have helped to create a conducive environment for Startups to thrive in.

To make the Startup ecosystem more effective, the Assam Government has established a high-level committee of 22 members and a Startup Council of 13 members, with the Assam Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (AIIDC) as the nodal agency. The high-level committee meets at least once every six months to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the 2017 Startup Policy and to issue directives and suggestions for amendments and effective implementation.

The Startup Council meets monthly to oversee the implementation of the Assam Startup Policy 2017, including the approval of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for Startups. The Council may also address any issues or make decisions related to incubation centres, fund sanctioning, the website, or the helpline, as they pertain to the policy's implementation.

State Startup Policies and Incentives

The Government of Assam drafted the Assam Startup Policy in 2017 with a vision to create a culture of entrepreneurship in Assam by empowering the youth to become job creators and pursue their entrepreneurial dreams, thereby transforming Assam into a leading Startup hub in the country.

To achieve its objective, the Government of Assam offers various fiscal and non-fiscal incentives (over and above the Startup policy of the Government of India) to Startups registered with MASI (My Assam Startup ID) under the 2017 policy, such as:

¹Assam State GDP: About Assam: Tourism, Industries in Assam, Agriculture, Economy & Geography (ibef.org)

Fiscal Incentives:

- Reimbursement of State GST
- Reimbursement of stamp duty/ registration fee/ conversion fee
- Digital upgradation subsidy for purchase of computers, related hardware, purchase of relevant software
- Reimbursement of rent
- Power subsidy to Startup
- Reimbursement of patent filling cost (including filing fees, attorney fees, search fees, maintenance fees)
- Special incentives for hiring women, transgender people, and differently abled persons
- Reimbursements of marketing and promotion costs (including travel) incurred by a Startup in listing fees for online and offline advertisement, in store promotion, publishing marketing collaterals, providing discounts, digital marketing, trade show participation, market research, etc.
- Monthly sustenance allowance for one year for eligible Startups
- Idea2POC grant (idea to proof of concept) and scale up grants to eligible Startups.

Non-Fiscal Incentives:

- Relaxation of the condition of prior turnover and prior experience for products procured by all Government Departments of Assam
- Startups in MASl exempt from regular inspections under certain laws and rules, except in cases of specific complaints
- Academic intervention/revamping education system to propel the Startup ecosystem.
- Organisation of the Annual Innovative Assam Conference and Festival
- Colleges and universities encouraged to set up EDCs (Entrepreneurship Development Cell).

Highlights of State Startup Ecosystem

~350

Startups Registered

~40

programs undertaken
to support student
entrepreneurs



140+

Startups received incubation support

40+

Women-led Startups connected to funds and policy support

5+

programs conducted to sensitise Government officials

60+

Startups connected with private funds or investors

160+

Startups supported through market and showcase opportunities, undertaking 30+ programs

10+

incubators functioning in the State

~INR 1.5 Cr

as fiscal support to Startups

Key Initiatives Driving Growth

The Government of Assam has implemented a range of key policies measures to nurture its Startup ecosystem:

Key focus areas to develop Startup ecosystem in Assam are:

- Agro and Food Processing including Bamboo products.
- Plastic and Petrochemical
- Road, Industrial and urban Infrastructure
- River transports, River front Development & port Township

- Education & Skill Development
- Power
- Tourism, hospitality, and wellness
- IT, and IT-enabled services (ITes), including hardware.
- Textile handlooms and handicraft
- Health care
- Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices

The Startup Policy of the Government of Assam is based on four broad pillars:

- Digital Startup Ecosystem: Building a digital platform for the State's Startup community, including the Startup Assam Portal, a Mobile App, and a Helpline.
- State-Owned Incubators: Creating a modern Startup centre that belongs to the State, along with other helpful resources connected to this main centre.
- Incentives: Giving financial and other types of support to encourage new Assamese entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into successful businesses.
- Academic Intervention: Taking active steps in schools and colleges to teach and encourage young people to be innovative and entrepreneurial from a young age. This means creating the right environment for learning and trying out new ideas.

Some of the notable policy initiatives include:

- Setup of MASI: To streamline the recognition system for Startups in Assam, the Government of Assam has set up MASI (My Assam Startup ID). Startups can obtain MASI through an automated approval process on the Assam Startup portal. MASI provides access to State-wide infrastructure and fiscal benefits, while integration with the Single Window Portal enhances administrative efficiency.
- Ease of Doing Business: The Government of Assam has established a Single Window Agency (SWA), a Help Desk, and a comprehensive Single Window Portal (www.easeofdoingbusinessinassam.in). An array of more than 37 State Government departments/agencies have been integrated into the portal, each with specified timelines for processing.
- State-owned Incubator Centre: The Government of Assam is launching a cutting-edge State-owned incubator, offering State-of-the-art facilities, expert guidance, and services to foster Startups and establish Assam as a regional Startup hub.
- Funding: The State Government encourages High Net-Worth Individuals (HNIs), industrialists, successful entrepreneurs, university alumni, and experienced business executives and professionals to help create an Assam Angel Network and social impact investor groups which will help with early-stage funding needs of Startups in Assam.
- Different Kinds of Funds: The State Government has established different kinds of fund (Startup Funds, Innovation funds, etc.) to support Startup and incubation centres.

Institutional Support

Introduction

Institutional Support focuses on the facilitation and execution of the State/UT's Startup Policy through a comprehensive user-friendly portal and specific incentives provided by various Government stakeholders. This Reform Area focuses on paving way for easy access of information to Startups and ecosystem stakeholders.

It analyses whether a particular State/UT has a functional Startup portal offering single-window solutions for all Startup ecosystem stakeholders. A holistic Startup portal offers services ranging from Startup registration to an efficient grievance redressal mechanism having quick 30 days of query resolution.

The Reform Area also emphasises institutionalised support provided to the Startups from various State/UT Government departments including that of Government policies that are currently active for support to Startups.

State Performance

50+

Startups were provided institutional support by 20+ departments

~10

State has Active policies supporting the Startups

Out of 12-point evaluation on State Startup Portal, all 12 points have been complied by the State.

The North-East Agriculture Technology Entrepreneurs Hub (NEATeHUB) has been set up to create a robust and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem/support infrastructure to build successful Startups in Agri and allied agriculture. The incubator has elements such as physical space and infrastructure, common service delivery systems, network activities, partnerships, and linkages – both institutional and individual – to enable Startups to structure their businesses and make them “investment-ready” for potential investors.

Support provided under this scheme includes:

1. Entrepreneurial workshops for Agri Startups
2. Business sessions
3. Technical assistance
4. Assistance in compliances
5. Market linkage
6. Access to finance
7. Startup grant of INR 5 lakhs

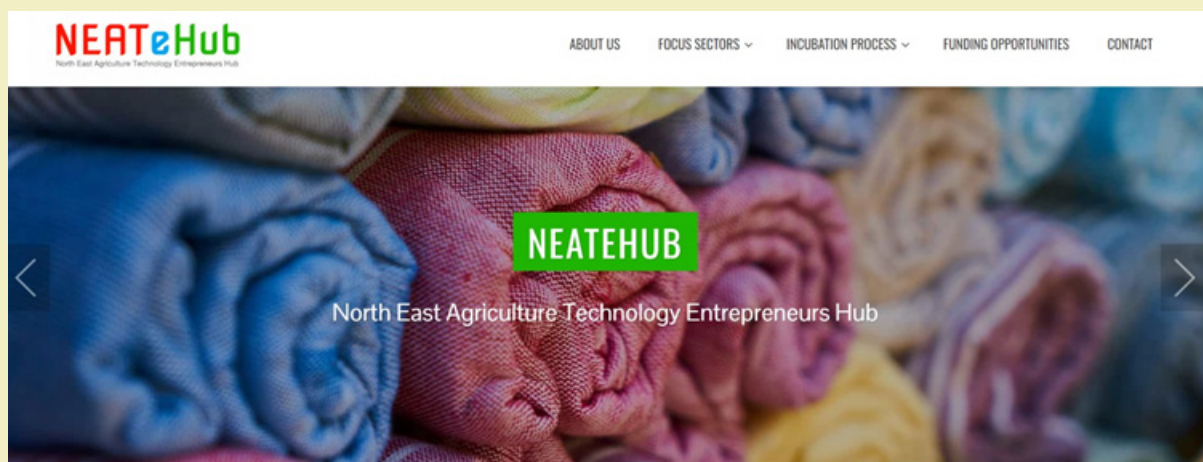


Figure A: NEATeHub Web Platform

Way Forward

1. The State Government may further enhance the State Startup portal by adding information on public procurement support, details of rules or regulations introduced or amended to support Startups, and details of departments supporting institutions to Startups.
2. The State may have an active tracking mechanism for query resolution on the State Startup Portal.
3. The State Government may introduce a unified web platform for Startups to submit their grievances covering topics such as incubation and funding support, public procurement issues, and regulatory support.
4. All State Government departments may be mandated to provide institutional support to Startups in the state. The number of activities and frequency of institutional support offered by the departments already offering support may be increased so as to increase the number of beneficiary Startups.

Fostering Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Introduction

Fostering Innovation and Entrepreneurship, as the name of reform area suggests, seeks to encourage the spirit of innovation among aspiring entrepreneurs with a focus on student entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and women entrepreneurs. It focuses not only on the assessment of the total number of registered Startups in each State/UT, which is a direct result of the State/UT support but also on the regulatory reforms undertaken to support Startups in diverse sectors.

This Reform Area assesses the extent to which Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) have been engaged in providing support to student entrepreneurs. It also highlights the value of innovation and entrepreneurship be it students or women. Furthermore, special focus has been drawn towards women-led Startups with specially tailored incentives and schemes to ensure equitable implementation.

State Performance

~350

registered Startups

20+

programs undertaken in HEI to support student entrepreneurs

20+

events undertaken to support student entrepreneurs in schools

The Incubation Centre of the Assam University has been set up for innovation and entrepreneurship to enable the students to get first-hand experience in entrepreneurship, promote innovation-driven activities in the University, and provide a comprehensive and integrated range of support, including mentoring, training programs, networking, and an array of other benefits.

The objectives of this incubation centre are:

1. To encourage students and the locality to take part in entrepreneurship development through the different awareness programmes.
2. To conduct workshops, lectures, industrial visits etc., for improving entrepreneurial skills of students and concerned local people.
3. To provide information for acquiring loans and financial assistance from Government and Non-Government agencies.

The Incubation Centre has organised various entrepreneurship summits in collaboration with EDII (Entrepreneurship Development Institution of India) and organised different industrial motivational workshops sponsored by MSME.



Figure B: Biotechnology Ignition Grant (BIG) Programme conducted by Assam University

Way Forward

1. The State may conduct more programs which may include Business Plan workshops, faculty awareness sessions, Bootcamps, Entrepreneurship Programs, Entrepreneurship or Innovation classes, lectures, meet-and-greets and any other program focused on entrepreneurship development.
2. The State may organise interaction events for students with successful entrepreneurs and industry experts. Students will get a chance to understand the real-world challenges and opportunities that exist in the Startup Ecosystem through these events.

3. The State may make best efforts to support Startups from the region with knowledge and access to resources (e.g., incubation facility, technology labs), so that innovative ideas may be transformed into successful business ventures. In addition to providing the researcher with personal recognition, research initiatives also help to create resources, improve infrastructure, and increase academic resources for the benefit of students of the State.

Access to Market

Introduction

This Reform Area seeks to encourage the State/UT Government to increase participation in the public procurement process for Startups and become an enabler in providing the opportunities to Startups in the domestic and international market. The States/UTs are evaluated based on their support to Startups through the organisation of showcase opportunities such as Demo-Day, Buyer-Seller Meet, National and International Events, and relaxation in criteria for Government work orders.

The aim is to steadily increase the number of work orders awarded to Startups by helping them be at par with the established players in their respective sectors.

State Performance

| **~30**

programs to provide market access opportunity to ~150 Startups

| **~10**

Startups were awarded purchase orders or work orders

The Government of Assam has released a public order to grant exemptions to Medium, Small, and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs) and Startups. This initiative is aimed at encouraging their involvement in Government tenders. For facilitating the participation of Startups in public procurement, the State Government has eased the need for Startups to submit an "EMD" (Earnest Money Deposit).

The Government of Assam is steadfast in its commitment to creating a conducive climate for investments across all verticals. The Government of Assam is making incessant endeavours through various policies to help Startups and motley industries sustain and thrive.

Assam Startup - The Nest, an initiative by the Department of Industries and Commerce in association with IIM Kolkata (Calcutta) Innovation Park, organised UDYAM ASSAM 3.0 on 16 August 2021. The event commemorated the success and impact stories of Assamese Startups as well as encouraged the Startups to continue with their entrepreneurial journey. An exhibition showcase platform was also set up for the incubates to display their product offerings.



Figure C: Snapshots of UDYAM ASSAM 3.0 Initiative

Incubation and Mentorship Support is provided to States/UTs in the form of financial and infrastructural support to Startups and State-supported incubators. The State/ UT Governments are initiating setting up of new incubators or in upgrading existing incubator facilities through various fiscal and non-fiscal incentives including conduction

Way Forward

1. The State may provide the relaxations in a separate circular enlisting the relaxations for the category of Startups who can receive it.
2. The State may also specifically specify the percentage of each relaxation they are providing in the State.

Incubation and Mentorship Support

Introduction

Incubation and Mentorship Support is provided to States/UTs in the form of financial and infrastructural support to Startups and State-supported incubators. The State/UT Governments are initiating setting up of new incubators or in upgrading existing incubator facilities through various fiscal and non-fiscal incentives including conduction of acceleration programs across State/UTs. This Reform Area also aims at ensuring proportionate utilisation of the incubation capacity of the State-supported incubators.

The support provided by the State/UT to the incubators through programs and incentives will in turn help Startups in scaling up and thereby, contribute to the growth of the State/UT Startup ecosystem. The Reform Area measures efforts by the State/UT Government in facilitating mentorship to Startups. This has been assessed by the number of Startups benefitting from the State's/UT's network of mentors.

State Performance

~10

incubators functioning in the State

~70

Startups enrolled in Acceleration Programs

140+

Startups received incubation support

~150

Startups connected with mentors by state supported incubators

Startup Assam has an ever-growing pool of mentors who are the driving force of the Startup ecosystem. During the incubation period each Startup is assigned to a matching mentor. The mentor will be to guide the Startup incubates and provide necessary advisory and expert advice as and when required. The mentors helps the Startup develop action plan and provide valuable inputs to the Startup in term of business planning, product or service development, market penetration strategy, branding and networking, financial links, and Government grants and schemes.



Figure D: Startup Assam – Mentor Portal

Startup Assam has partnered with various institutions, colleges, universities, and institutes across the State to establish “Entrepreneurship Cells” in their campus. Their E-cells are acting as a spoke to Assam Startup-The Nest and are promoting Startup entrepreneurs locally. E-cells are also coordinating with the nest to provide incubation facilities to the interested Startups (both physical and virtual). The universities, institutions, colleges, and others, i.e., the academia, are playing a significant role in spreading awareness and developing an entrepreneurial ecosystem and mindset amidst the students and the youths.

Way Forward

1. The State may develop incubators that focus on specific industries relevant to Assam's strengths and economic priorities. This targeted approach may provide Startups with sector-specific knowledge and connections.
2. State could organise the programs in hub and spoke model differentiating between Startups and scaleups and launch an integrated district level acceleration and incubation programs.
3. The State may increase the reach of the acceleration programs. The State can leverage the virtual format for holding seminars and discussions. In this way, the State could take advantage of this opportunity to connect with stakeholders outside the State as well as outside the country.
4. The State may organise regular workshops and training sessions on essential Startup skills, including business planning, fiscal management, marketing, and legal compliance. Experienced professionals and industry experts may conduct these workshops.
5. The State may establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the success and impact of incubation programs. This may include metrics such as job creation, revenue growth, and successful funding rounds.

Funding Support

Introduction

All Startups require timely availability of funding for their growth. This Reform Area encourages various State/UT Governments to establish either new Seed or Venture funds or Fund of Funds for Startups or continue supporting the existing ones. It also focuses on the access to these funds established by the State/UT Government.

A special emphasis has been given to State-supported initiatives and programs to mobilise the private investments into Startup ecosystem by connecting Startups with investors such as workshops, networking events and pitching sessions.

State Performance

| ~10

Startups received funding support of more than one crore rupees

| 5+

Programs undertaken to connect Startups with private funds or investors

A total of nine Startups presented their business models to the Startup Council for Idea2POC and Scale Up Grants.

The State aims to provide funding support through various fiscal and non-fiscal incentives that will encourage budding Assamese entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into fully-fledged ventures.

Way Forward

1. The State may develop an online mechanism for the disbursement of funds which captures the details of all transactions of the Fund.
2. The State may implement tax incentives for angel investors, venture capitalists, and other funding entities to encourage investment in Assam's Startups. These incentives may include tax credits, deductions, or exemptions on capital gains.

3. The State may partner with industry associations and business chambers to create sector-specific funds that align with the state's economic strengths.
4. The State may look to provide tailored funding solutions to cater to different stages of Startups (seed, early-stage, growth), industries, and business models. The State may organise seed funding competitions where Startups pitch their ideas to a panel of investors. Winning Startups may receive cash prizes, mentorship, and access to investor networks.

Capacity Building of Enablers

Introduction

Capacity building of key stakeholders and enablers is essential for driving the growth of the entire Startup ecosystem. It is vital to provide necessary information to the key ecosystem facilitators to enable Startups with the opportunity to contribute to Government initiatives.

This Reform Area assesses sensitisation workshops, programs conducted for Government officials, and workshops conducted to train State-supported incubators. It also focuses on the capacity development of potential private investors to encourage local private investments.

State Performance

10+

State-supported incubators trained through 5+ capacity development workshops

~5

Programs conducted to sensitise potential investor

5+

sensitisation workshops conducted and sensitised ~170 Government Officials

Assam Startup organised a virtual capacity-building program on “Running an Incubator” for the officials of Sonapur College Incubation Centre in the Kamrup Metro district of Assam on 5 October 2021. Around 10 officials consisting of the faculty members and members in charge of the incubator participated in the workshop.

The program offered a basic perspective on Startups and business and further delved into the process of identifying potential Startups and offering them an initial handholding to convert ideas into proofs-of-concept.

The Government of Assam also conducted sensitisation workshops for the Assam Civil Service officials with an objective to gain a better perspective on the germination and gradual evolution of a Startup culture in Assam.



Figure E: Sensitisation workshop for Assam Civil Service officials

Way Forward

1. The State Government may hold quarterly sensitisation workshops for various Government departments and officials to encourage them to interact with Startups to understand their concerns.
2. The State may train State-supported incubators through capacity development workshops by collaborating with incubators from other States to explore mutual learning opportunities.
3. The State may increase the coverage of the potential investor sensitisation program across all the districts of the State.
4. The State may provide access to online learning platforms and resources, allowing Startups to engage in self-paced learning and acquire new skills at their convenience.

Roadmap to a Sustainable Future

Introduction

Roadmap to a Sustainable Future sought to encourage the spirit of innovation in rural Startups, and at the same time focus on sectors like renewable energy, sustainability, and climate change with an emphasis given to Startups working on Circular Economy.

The aim is to steadily increase the number of Startups working in the space of renewable energy and sustainability and follow India's direction of attaining a more inclusive and greener world.

State Performance

Government of Assam supported more than 35 Startups with rural impact .

Assam-based Startup, Agrithink Services, is on a mission to integrate innovative technology into agricultural practices to help improve yield and quality of crops and do away with uncertainties. The Startup applies economically and ecologically viable technologies in the field so that farming becomes precise and efficient and demands lesser human intervention.

Aicheng Innovation and Research, too, has innovated an integrated multipurpose reeling machine that can reel different varieties of silk. The patented innovation has been creating ripples for its game-changing potential to upscale the silk industry in Assam and the country.

Way Forward

1. The State may develop specific incentives for the Startups working in the field of sustainability, renewable energy, climate change and circular economy and consider amending any existing policy or incentive for Startups in the State to support these Startups.
2. The State may undertake sensitisation workshops with Startups, Incubators and other stakeholders in the field of sustainability, renewable energy, climate change and circular economy.
3. The State may look at developing a separate parameter for "Social Impact", under which a Startup promotes a product or service that is based in a rural area as well as related to sustainable practices, renewable energy, circular economy and climate change.
4. The State may support Startups developing technology solutions for wildlife conservation, forest management, and environmental monitoring. This may contribute to the preservation of Assam's rich biodiversity.

Annexure

List of Figure

Figure A: NEATeHub Web Platform

Figure B: Biotechnology Ignition Grant (BIG) Programme conducted by Assam University

Figure C: Snapshots of UDYAM ASSAM 3.0 Initiative

Figure D: Startup Assam – Mentor Portal

Figure E: Sensitisation workshop for Assam Civil Service officials

Abbreviations

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

CAGR - Compounded Annual Growth Rate

AIIDC - Assam Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation

MASI - My Assam Startup ID

GST - Goods & Services Tax

POC - Proof of Concept

EDC - Entrepreneurship Development Cell

HEI - Higher Education Institutes

ITeS - IT-Enabled Services

SWA - Single Window Agency

HNI - High Net-Worth Individuals

NEATeHub - North East Agriculture Technology Entrepreneurs Hub

EDII - Entrepreneurship Development Institution of India

MSME - Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises

BIG - Biotechnology Ignition Grant

KPI - Key Performance Indicators

EMD - Earnest Money Deposit

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