

AP Incubators – Roundtable Meet

Date: 20 January 2026

Venue: KL University, Vaddeswaram, Andhra Pradesh

Organized by: DST–NIDHI, KLTIF, MeitY Startup Hub

Participants: CEOs and Managers of Incubation Centers, Academia IIC Representatives, Incubator Consultants, Faculty Coordinators

Objectives

- ✓ Advancing the startup ecosystem in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- ✓ Addressing challenges faced by incubators and ways to overcome them.
- ✓ Strengthening support for startups.
- ✓ Enhancing collaboration with academia.

1. Introduction

The AP Incubators – Roundtable Meet was conducted to deliberate on the current status, challenges, and best practices of incubation ecosystems in Andhra Pradesh. The meeting aimed to strengthen collaboration among incubators, academia, government bodies, and industry partners, and to evolve actionable strategies for sustainable and outcome-driven incubation.

2. Objectives of the Roundtable

- To review challenges faced by incubators in fund management and sustainability
- To identify gaps in student entrepreneurship readiness
- To discuss governance and operational best practices for incubators
- To define a structured idea-to-incubation pipeline
- To recommend policy and institutional alignment mechanisms

3. Key Discussion Areas and Outcomes

3.1 Funding, Grants, and Financial Sustainability

Government Fund Disbursal:

Participants highlighted delays and procedural bottlenecks in government fund disbursement. Such delays affect startup continuity, hiring, and product development. It was recommended that fund releases be milestone-based with transparent digital tracking mechanisms.

State Government and CSR Support:

The convergence of Higher Education Department funding with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) support was emphasized. CSR funds can effectively support mentoring, infrastructure development, prototyping, and innovation programs.

Collective Representation:

Incubators agreed on the need for collective representation to government agencies and funding bodies. A unified approach enhances negotiation power and policy influence.

Certification and Consulting Support:

Startups require structured assistance in pricing strategies, regulatory certifications (BIS, FSSAI, ISO, CE, etc.), and business consulting. Incubators should facilitate access to expert consultants and certification agencies.

Accelerator Funds and Demo Platforms:

Stronger linkages with accelerator programs were recommended to support startups transitioning from prototype to market. Regular demo days, expos, and investor pitch events were identified as critical for visibility and validation.

Financial Sustainability and Fund Management:

Incubators should diversify revenue streams beyond grants through equity participation, corporate programs, training services, and consultancy. Transparent fund management, audits, and compliance were stressed as essential.

3.2 Startup and Student-Centric Challenges

Industry Problem Statements:

Startups should be encouraged to work on real industry-driven problem statements to ensure market relevance and higher adoption rates.

Low Awareness of Entrepreneurship:

Limited awareness among students regarding entrepreneurial pathways was identified as a major challenge. Early-stage sensitization programs and exposure to startup success stories were recommended.

Job Preference over Startups:

Students often prefer conventional employment due to financial security and social expectations. Incubators must build confidence by showcasing viable startup journeys and support mechanisms.

Program Execution to Venture Building:

A shift from event-based activities to outcome-based venture creation was emphasized. Success metrics should include startup registration, revenue generation, and employment creation.

Quality of Mentorship and Reality Check:

The quality of mentors significantly impacts startup success. Students should also be given a realistic understanding of startup risks, failure rates, and long gestation periods.

3.3 Incubator Governance and Institutional Support

Professional Management and Consultants:

Engaging professional consultants for incubator management was recommended to bring strategic and operational expertise.

Top Management Support:

Institutional leadership buy-in is crucial. Clear KPIs, impact metrics, and alignment with institutional vision were suggested to secure sustained support.

Common Evaluation Criteria:

Standardized evaluation frameworks for startup selection, funding, and performance assessment were proposed to ensure transparency and fairness.

Governance, Sectoral Focus, and Technology Translation:

Clear policies on equity, IP ownership, and conflict resolution are necessary. Incubators should focus on select priority sectors and strengthen technology translation from academic research to marketable products.

Business Model for Incubators:

Incubators must function as sustainable entities with a clear value proposition and long-term revenue models.

3.4 Student Engagement and Capacity Building

- Open and consistent communication with students is essential to build trust and participation.
- Regular sessions, hackathons, innovation challenges, and boot camps should be conducted.
- Design thinking workshops were highlighted as critical for developing user-centric problem-solving skills.

3.5 Structured Idea-to-Incubation Pipeline

The following structured pipeline was discussed and recommended:

Idea Expo → YUKTI → Shortlisting → MSME Hackathon

- *Idea Expo*: Idea showcasing and initial screening
- *YUKTI*: Alignment with national innovation platforms
- *Shortlisting*: Feasibility and impact assessment
- *MSME Hackathon*: Industry validation

Pre-Incubation: Mentoring, validation, and prototype development

Incubation: Funding, infrastructure, legal, and market access support

3.6 Ecosystem Philosophy and Culture

- Adoption of a **customer-driven approach**, rather than a product-driven mindset
- Ensuring **skin in the game** by founders to improve commitment and accountability
- Promoting a **student-driven ecosystem** encouraging peer learning and leadership

4. Institutional Alignment and Metrics

- Allocation of dedicated incubation budgets by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- Alignment of incubation activities with **IIC, NIRF, and NAAC** frameworks
- Collaboration with Training and Placement Offices (TPOs) instead of competition

AP INCUBATORS

— ROUNDTABLE MEET —

Welcoming CEOs, Managers of Incubation Centers and Academia IIC Representatives

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- ✓ Strengthening support for startups
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Date: 20th January 2026

Time: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Last Date for Registration:
13th January 2026

Venue: 5th Floor, L Block, KL University, Vaddeswaram

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✓ **FUND REQUEST** ← All Govt + CSR

- COOPERATION COLLECTIVELY
- ✓ **CONTINUOUS SUPPORT** (PRICING / CONSULTING)
- ✓ **ACCELERATE FUNDS**
- ✓ **COLLABORATE FOR BOTH DAYS / EVENTS**
- ✓ **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**
- ✓ **INDUSTRY PROBLEM STATEMENTS FOR SOLUTONING**
- ✓ **LOW LEVEL OF AWARENESS ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP**
- ✓ **PREFERENCE TO GO FOR A JOB & NOT TO START-UP**
- ✓ **PROBLEM EXECUTION → VENTURE BUILDING**
- ✓ **QUALITY OF NETWORKING**
- ✓ **REALITY CHECK FOR STUDENTS**
- ✓ **FUND MANAGEMENT**
- ✓ **CONSULTANTS IN INCUBATOR MEET.**
- ✓ **Continuing the Management** - common evaluation criteria
- ✓ **Spreading the Startup** - Tech Translation
- ✓ **Focusing on few sectors** - Better model for incubator

- OPEN COMMUNICATION W/ STUDENTS
- CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION W/ STUDENTS
- REGULAR SESSIONS / WORKSHOPS / CHALLENGES
- DESIGN THINKING WORKSHOPS
- IDEA EXP → YUKT → (SHORTLIST → FINE TUNING) → PRO-INNOVATION
- SYSTEM DRIVEN BY 'CUSTOMER' NOT 'PRODUCT'
- SKIN IN THE GAME
- STUDENT DRIVEN ECOSYSTEM

Photos

