

i-HUB GUJARAT · FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME

Product & Service Piloting Support Scheme

Financial assistance of up to ₹10 lakh per startup to pilot, demonstrate and validate innovations in real operating environments

Gujarat Student Startup and Innovation Hub (i-Hub Gujarat) · FY 2025-26

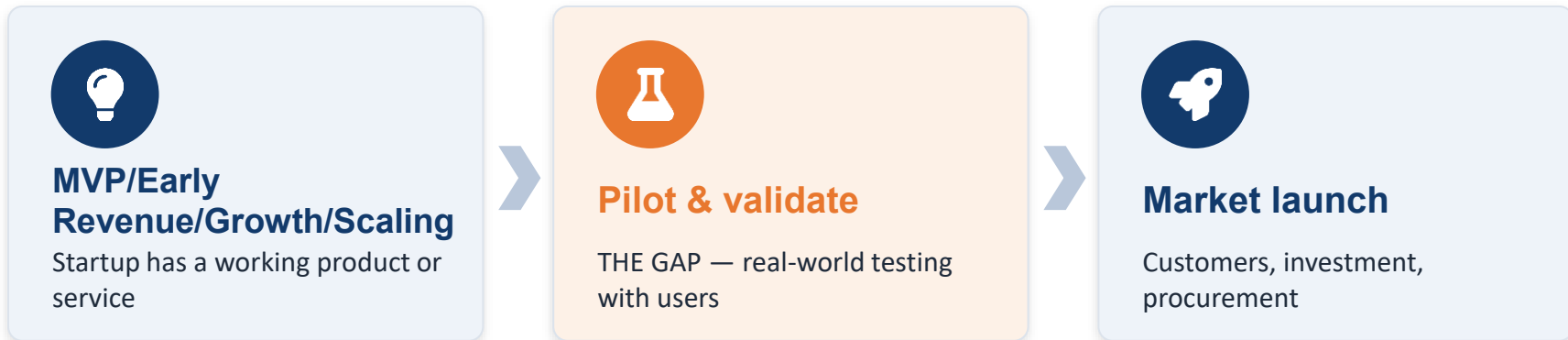


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Background: the piloting gap

Many startups build MVPs but struggle to prove them in the real world



Why piloting matters: it lets startups validate technical performance, assess customer acceptance, refine business models and generate the evidence needed for commercialisation and investment. i-Hub Gujarat — a Section 8 Company set up by the Government of Gujarat — introduces this scheme to fund structured pilot deployments and field demonstrations.

Objectives of the scheme

Financial assistance for pilot deployments, PoCs, field demonstrations and validation



Market validation

Validate innovative products and services in the market



Pilot partnerships

Pilot with government, industry, academia or end users



Product readiness

Improve product readiness and customer acceptance



Data & feedback

Generate performance data and user feedback



Commercialisation

Accelerate commercialisation and market adoption



Customers & capital

Secure customers, investments and procurement

Fund allocation

₹10 Cr

Total scheme budget

₹10 Lakh

Maximum assistance per startup

2025-26

Approved financial year



What this means

The ₹10 crore budget can support at least 100 startups at the maximum grant of ₹10 lakh each — more if approved pilot budgets are smaller. All expenditure is booked against the approved budget head and stays within the sanctioned provision.

Eligibility: who can apply

35

years or younger on the date of application

Applicant can be a:

- Student
- Innovator
- Startup founder / co-founder
- Director or partner

...and must meet **ANY ONE** of these conditions:

1

Student or alumni eligible for benefits under SSIP 2.0

2

Startup registered under ROC Gujarat and recognised by DPIIT

3

Has availed benefits under the SSIP 2.0 Policy

4

Has availed benefits under any Government of Gujarat startup scheme

5

Has availed benefits under any i-Hub scheme, or is a beneficiary of an i-Hub flagship programme

What a pilot proposal must have

Every application is assessed against these five requirements



Pilot partner

Implementation with government, industry, academic institutions or other end users



Pilot-ready product

A clearly defined product, process or service ready for deployment, field testing, PoC or validation in a real or relevant environment



Competent team

Relevant technical, operational and domain expertise to execute the pilot



Clear pilot plan

Pilot site/host or end users, objectives, scope, methodology, timeline, budget, measurable outcomes and KPIs



Approvals (if applicable)

Permissions, regulatory approvals, ethical clearances, safety certifications or other statutory compliances

Selection process

A four-stage evaluation from application to final approval



STEP 1

Online application

Through the online/digital mechanism prescribed by i-Hub Gujarat



STEP 2

Initial scrutiny

i-Hub internal team checks eligibility and application requirements



STEP 3

Preliminary screening

Eligible proposals evaluated by the Primary Selection Committee



STEP 4

Final approval

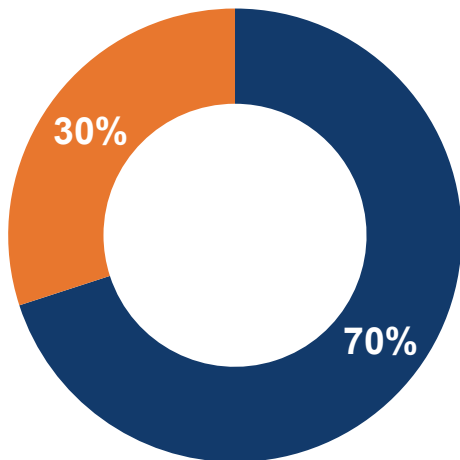
Selection approved by the Final Approval Committee



Preference may be given to proposals showing a clear pathway to product validation, customer adoption, commercialisation or scale-up. Priority follows applicable provisions and norms.

Disbursement of grant

Released in two instalments



■ 1st instalment ■ 2nd instalment

70% First instalment — released after:

- Approval by the Final Approval Committee
- Completion of all pre-disbursement criteria
- Letter of Intent from the pilot host organisation
- Complete pilot plan with timeline

30% Second instalment — released after:

- Utilisation of at least 70% of the first instalment
- Submission of the Utilisation Certificate (UC) & Progress Report (PR)

Permitted use of funds

Only for activities directly related to the pilot study and validation



Product piloting



Service piloting



Pilot deployment



Field trials



**Other pilot activities
approved by i-Hub**

Monitoring & Reporting

Operational mechanism developed by the CEO, i-Hub, as per approved guidelines



Beneficiary must

- Submit utilization certificates, progress report and supporting documents
- Provide proof of stage-wise pilot outcomes, as applicable
- Submit a final UC, PR after the pilot is completed
- Return any unused balance to i-Hub



i-Hub Gujarat may

- Conduct physical or virtual verification
- Commission third-party evaluation where necessary
- Recover assistance in case of misrepresentation, misuse of funds or non-compliance

Grant validity: 2 years from the date of disbursement

Applicant journey at a glance

From application to closure of the grant



Tip: line up your pilot host early — the Letter of Intent is a pre-condition for the first instalment, and the whole grant must be used within 2 years.

Documents checklist for applicants

-  Identity and age proof (Mandate)
-  Proof of eligibility (SSIP 2.0 / DPIIT / Gujarat scheme / i-Hub programme) (Mandate)
-  Startup registration certificate (if registered)
-  DPIIT recognition certificate (if applicable)
-  Detailed pilot plan: objectives, scope, methodology, timeline, KPIs
-  Estimated pilot budget (Mandate)
-  Letter of Intent from pilot host organization (Optional)
-  Educational Certificate, and CVs of founder(s), details of key team members (Mandate)
-  Permissions / approvals / clearances (if applicable)

Key takeaways

₹10 lakh

max. grant per startup

≤ 35 yrs

applicant age limit

70 : 30

two-instalment release

2 years

grant validity

Ready to pilot your innovation?

Apply online through i-Hub Gujarat with your pilot plan and documents

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is the Product and Service Piloting Support Scheme?

It is a financial assistance scheme introduced by i-Hub Gujarat to help startups and innovators conduct structured pilot deployments, proof-of-concept implementations, field demonstrations and validation of innovative products or services in real operating environments.

2. Why has this scheme been introduced?

Many startups develop prototypes or minimum viable products but need support to test them in real-world conditions. The scheme helps applicants validate technical performance, understand customer acceptance, refine their business models and generate evidence for commercialization and investment.

3. What outcomes does the scheme seek to support?

- Market validation of innovative products and services.
- Pilot implementation with government, industry, academic institutions or other end users.
- Improved product readiness and customer acceptance.
- Performance data and user feedback.
- Commercialization, market adoption, customer acquisition, investment and procurement opportunities.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

4. Who may apply for the Pilot Study Support Grant?

A student, innovator, startup founder or co-founder, director or partner may be eligible if the person is up to 35 years of age on the date of application and satisfies at least one of the scheme's qualifying conditions.

5. What qualifying conditions can make an applicant eligible?

1. The applicant is a student or alumnus eligible for benefits under SSIP 2.0.
2. The startup is registered under Gujarat ROC and recognized as a startup by DPIIT.
3. The beneficiary has received benefits under the SSIP 2.0 Policy.
4. The beneficiary has received benefits under a startup scheme of the Government of Gujarat.
5. The startup or innovator has received benefits under a scheme implemented by i-Hub or is a beneficiary of an i-Hub flagship programme.

6. Is age eligibility assessed on the application date?

Yes. The applicant must be up to 35 years of age on the date of application, as stated in the scheme note.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

7. What type of pilot is eligible?

The proposed pilot must be based on a clearly defined product, process or service that has reached a level of readiness suitable for pilot deployment, field testing, proof-of-concept demonstration or validation in a real or relevant operating environment.

8. Does the applicant need a team?

Yes. The applicant should have a competent team with relevant technical, operational and domain expertise to execute the proposed pilot.

9. What must be included in the pilot plan?

The applicant must submit a clearly defined pilot plan specifying the pilot site or host organization, intended end users, objectives, scope of work, implementation methodology, timeline, estimated budget, measurable outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

10. Are permissions or approvals required before starting the pilot?

Where applicable, the applicant must obtain the permissions, regulatory approvals, ethical clearances, safety certifications or other statutory compliances required for conducting the pilot.

11. How are applications invited?

Applications are invited through the online or digital application mechanism prescribed by i-Hub Gujarat. The scheme note does not specify a public application URL or deadline; applicants should follow the latest instructions issued by i-Hub Gujarat.

12. How are applications evaluated?

Applications undergo preliminary scrutiny by the internal team of i-Hub Gujarat against the eligibility and application requirements. Eligible applications are then placed before the appropriate screening or selection committee. Final selection and approval are undertaken by the Final Approval Committee constituted or authorized for the scheme.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

13. What proposals may receive preference?

Priority may be given, in accordance with applicable provisions and norms, to proposals demonstrating a clear pathway towards product validation, customer adoption, commercialization or scale-up.

14. Who participates in the selection process?

The Primary Selection Committee and Final Approval Committee may include representatives or experts from i-Hub Gujarat, institutes of national importance or similar reputed organizations, technical domain experts, relevant industry organizations, incubators or research parks, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, successful startups, Gujarat Knowledge Society and relevant Government of Gujarat departments. Additional representatives may be invited as required.

15. What is the total budget for the scheme?

The total scheme budget is ₹10 crore for the approved financial year 2025–26.

16. What is the maximum assistance available to one startup?

Financial assistance is available up to ₹10,00,000 per startup. The approved amount will depend on the application, evaluation and final approval.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

17. How is the grant disbursed?

The approved Pilot Study Support Grant is disbursed in two instalments:

- First instalment – 70%: Released after approval by the Final Approval Committee and completion of all pre-disbursement conditions.
- Second instalment – 30%: Released after the applicant has utilized at least 70% of the first instalment and submitted the required Utilization Certificate (UC) & Progress Report (PR).

18. What documents are required for the first instalment?

- Completion of all pre-disbursement conditions specified by i-Hub Gujarat.
- A Letter of Intent for conducting the pilot study from the specific organization, where applicable.
- A complete pilot plan with a timeline for the pilot study.

19. What is required for release of the second instalment?

The applicant must demonstrate utilization of at least 70% of the first instalment and submit the required Utilization Certificate. Any additional conditions communicated by i-Hub Gujarat must also be completed.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

20. How long is the grant valid?

The grant is valid for two years from the date of disbursement.

21. What happens to any unspent balance?

Any balance grant amount, if any, is required to be returned to i-Hub Gujarat in accordance with the scheme conditions.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

22. For what purposes may the financial assistance be used?

The assistance must be used exclusively for activities directly related to the pilot study and validation purpose.

Permitted purposes include:

- Product piloting
- Service piloting
- Pilot deployment
- Field trials
- Any other activity directly related to the pilot and validation study for the product, process or service, as approved by i-Hub Gujarat

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

23. Can the grant be used for unrelated business expenses?

No. The financial assistance is restricted to activities directly related to the approved pilot study and validation purpose. Use for unrelated expenses may lead to recovery of funds or other action under the applicable rules.

24. How will supported pilots be monitored?

i-Hub Gujarat will establish a monitoring mechanism for beneficiaries. The operational mechanism for implementing the scheme will be developed by the CEO of i-Hub Gujarat in compliance with the approved guidelines.

25. What reporting obligations do beneficiaries have?

- Submit utilization certificates and relevant supporting documents.
- Provide proof of stage-wise pilot study outcomes, as applicable.
- Submit the final Utilization Certificate after completion of the pilot study.

26. Can i-Hub Gujarat verify the pilot physically or virtually?

Yes. Where required, i-Hub Gujarat may conduct physical or virtual verification of the pilot and its outcomes.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

27. Can an external evaluator be appointed?

Yes. Third-party evaluation may be conducted wherever i-Hub Gujarat considers it necessary.

28. What happens in case of misrepresentation, misuse of funds or non-compliance?

i-Hub Gujarat may recover financial assistance in cases of misrepresentation, misuse of funds or non-compliance with prevailing norms. Beneficiaries should therefore maintain complete records and use the grant only for approved pilot-related activities.



THANKING YOU

About i-Hub : i-Hub is an incubation centre established under the SSIP by the Education Department, Government of Gujarat, and is registered under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013. i-Hub serves as a catalyst for strengthening the startup ecosystem throughout Gujarat, through its cohesive strategies and efforts to develop an entrepreneurial mindset among the youth. By linking students, academia, and industry, i-Hub bridges the gap between "Mind to Market," encouraging collaboration and innovation throughout the entrepreneurial journey.



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