



**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
INNOVATION AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**
INDIA
EMPOWERING IDEAS.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Startup Validation & Seed Funding Scheme

(Student Startup Grant Programme)

Scheme Code: NCIE/APJAK/SSG/2026-27

Programme Type: Student Startup Grant & Seed Funding Scheme

1. About the Scheme

The **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Startup Validation & Seed Funding Scheme (Student Startup Grant Programme)** is an initiative of the **National Council for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (NCIE)** to identify, validate, nurture, and financially support innovative student startups across India.

The Scheme is designed to assist students in transforming innovative ideas into commercially viable startups through structured startup validation, mentoring, incubation support, prototype development, business establishment, and equity-free seed funding.

The programme follows a **Five-Stage Startup Validation Framework**, under which eligible student startups may receive **equity-free financial assistance of up to ₹5,00,000**, subject to successful completion of evaluation milestones and approval by the Competent Authority.

2. Objectives

The Scheme aims to:

- Promote innovation and entrepreneurship among students.
- Encourage research and technology-based startups.
- Validate innovative startup ideas through structured assessment.
- Support prototype development and commercialization.
- Create employment and self-employment opportunities.
- Encourage startups addressing national priorities and social challenges.
- Build a sustainable innovation ecosystem in educational institutions.

3. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants shall:

- Be citizens of India.
- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Be enrolled in, or have graduated from, a recognized Higher Educational Institution, Polytechnic, University, ITI, or approved incubation centre.
- Submit an original and innovative startup idea.
- Demonstrate technical or commercial feasibility.
- Agree to comply with all Scheme Guidelines.

4. Financial Assistance

Eligible startups may receive **equity-free Seed Funding of up to ₹5,00,000 (Rupees Five Lakhs Only)**.

The grant shall be released only upon successful completion of approved startup validation milestones.

The grant shall not create any ownership, equity, or shareholding rights in favour of NCIE.

5. Five-Stage Startup Validation Framework

Stage	Validation Level	Funding Support
Stage 1	Explore & Idea Validation	₹10,000
Stage 2	Concept Validation & Ideation	₹25,000
Stage 3	Prototype Development & Technical Validation	₹75,000
Stage 4	Pilot Testing & Commercial Validation	₹1,50,000
Stage 5	Startup Establishment & Market Launch	₹2,40,000

Maximum Student Startup Grant: ₹5,00,000

6. Tranche-wise Release of Funds

Tranche	Milestone	Amount
Tranche I	Approval of Startup Idea	₹10,000
Tranche II	Completion of Concept Validation	₹25,000
Tranche III	Successful Prototype Development	₹75,000
Tranche IV	Pilot Testing & Market Readiness	₹1,50,000
Tranche V	Startup Registration, Launch & Scale-up	₹2,40,000

Each tranche shall be released only after:

- Achievement of the prescribed milestone.
- Submission of progress reports.
- Technical review by the Evaluation Committee.
- Recommendation of the Startup Validation Committee.
- Approval by the Competent Authority.

7. Eligible Utilization of Grant

Grant funds may be utilized for:

- Prototype development.
- Product engineering.
- Software and hardware development.
- Testing and validation.
- Patent, copyright, trademark, or design registration.
- Product certification.

- Business incorporation.
- Regulatory compliance.
- Market research.
- Pilot implementation.
- Technical consultancy.
- Essential equipment and tools.

8. Monitoring & Evaluation

All selected startups shall:

- Submit quarterly progress reports.
- Maintain financial records.
- Submit utilization certificates.
- Participate in review meetings.
- Permit inspection and audit by NCIE.

9. Cancellation of Grant

NCIE may suspend or cancel the grant if:

- False information is submitted.
- Grant funds are misused.
- Milestones are not achieved.
- Fraud or misconduct is established.
- Scheme guidelines are violated.

10. Recognition & Support

Selected startups may receive:

- **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Student Startup Grant Certificate**
- NCIE Startup Validation Certificate
- Startup Mentorship
- Incubation Support
- Investor Connect Programmes
- Intellectual Property Facilitation
- National Startup Showcase Opportunities

11. General Provisions

- Submission of an application does not guarantee funding.
- Financial assistance is subject to evaluation, availability of funds, and approval by the Competent Authority.
- NCIE reserves the right to amend, modify, suspend, or discontinue the Scheme.
- The decision of the Competent Authority shall be final.

12. Disclaimer

This Scheme is administered by the National Council for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (NCIE). The use of **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam** in the Scheme title is honorary and commemorative in recognition of his contribution to science, innovation, and youth development. The Scheme is **not affiliated with, endorsed by, or administered by the Government of India or the estate/family of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**, unless such authorization has been formally obtained.

Issued by

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