



# I-NCUBATE

## *About the Program*

### **Introduction**

I-NCUBATE is the flagship program of the Gopalakrishnan-Deshpande Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (GDC) at IIT Madras designed to enable faculty, researchers, and entrepreneurs bring their ideas from the laboratories to the market. GDC's charter is to work with faculty and budding entrepreneurs from STEM colleges across India by sensitising them on how to think about commercialisation of their technology and ideas. The key goals of I-NCUBATE are:

- a) to help faculty and entrepreneurs obtain evidence-based validation of their idea by interacting with a sufficiently large number of potential customers;
- b) to enable faculty and entrepreneur to formulate a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) that can be subsequently tested in the market; and
- c) to assist the entrepreneur in formulating a business model that enables successful scaling up.

GDC believes that these steps at a pre-incubation stage are essential pit-stops in the journey of transforming an idea into a scalable and sustainable business venture. Through I-NCUBATE, GDC enables transformation of lab-based research into marketable products and services. Watch our [I-NCUBATE video](#) to learn more.

### **Program Description**

The I-NCUBATE program is an 8-week engagement of 10-15 teams, pre-selected by GDC. A typical team comprises a Technology Lead (TL – usually a faculty member who is the technical expert), an Entrepreneurial Lead (EL – the business entrepreneur, who in many cases could be the research scholar working with the faculty member), and a Business Mentor (BM – usually an industry person with business/ entrepreneurial experience). Besides the TL, EL, and BM, each team is expected to have another 3-4 members (considered as co-entrepreneurs) who support the EL and TL through the program. The learnings of the teams from this program are empirical in nature and arise from interactions with GDC's instructors, from discussions with peer teams, and through interactions with potential customers that the team meets as part of the program.

The program comprises three modules over its eight-week duration. The first module is an in-person immersion meeting conducted over the initial 3-5 days where all the teams in full strength meet with GDC instructors. During these 3-5 days (usually held over two weekends), each team presents its business idea and go-to-market proposition. Based on this, a tailor-made plan for customer interaction is prepared by each team in discussion with GDC instructors and respective mentors. In the second module, each



team meets a sufficiently large number of potential customers (100 or more) over the next 7 weeks. These are in-person meetings, the learnings of which are carefully recorded by each team. Every team attends a weekly webinar that GDC conducts to discuss the progress on the customer meetings and the lessons learnt from these meetings. The third module is a two-day in-person meeting of all the teams with GDC instructors at the end of eight weeks. During this meeting, each team will be expected to present its experiences and learnings from the customer interactions and discuss the contours of the MVP and business model they have decided upon.

## **Benefits and Outcomes of the Program**

The I-NCUBATE program is designed to have the following outcomes:

- a) enabling a team to gain a deep understanding of the customer needs and requirements based on first-hand evidence obtained from customers on their pains and potential gains;
- b) enabling a team to arrive at a Go/No-Go decision to take the idea to the next stage, based on the problem-solution fit and market viability; and
- c) throwing up a set of inputs to formulate an MVP and an optimal business model to attain a good product-market fit and scalability, going forward.
- d) enabling faculty, researchers, and students to develop entrepreneurial skills and mind-set.

## **Fees & Expenses**

For the I-NCUBATE program, GDC does not normally charge any fees from teams or participants who are faculty, research scholars, and students of government-owned colleges in India. GDC reserves the right to levy a fee from participants from private colleges, foreign universities or corporate entities. Based on prior agreement between the university sponsoring the teams and GDC, teams that successfully complete the I-NCUBATE program may be eligible for reimbursement of expenses incurred for participating in the program up to a pre-specified limit. The applicable guidelines and the governing rules of the I-NCUBATE program will be communicated to the participating teams ahead of the selection process.

*For more details on GDC or the I-NCUBATE program, please contact:*

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