

INNOVATION, STARTUP AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICY-2021 of Assam Agricultural University (AAU-ISEP)¹

Preamble

Whereas, Assam Agricultural University (AAU) is the premiere institution of its kind in the whole of North-Eastern Region of India. The main goal of this institution is to produce globally competitive human resources in farm sector and to carry out research in both conventional and frontier areas for production optimization as well as to disseminate the generated technologies as public good for benefitting the food growers/producers and traders involved in the sector while emphasizing on sustainability, equity and overall food security at household level. *At the same time*, AAU is also striving creating a congenial ecosystem and enabling culture for fostering innovation, incubation, entrepreneurship and business development among the students and faculty. It is also endeavoring to change their mind set from job seekers to job creators by working on enhancing their leadership and soft Skills, initiatives, critical thinking, innovation, higher order skills and use of modern technological tools for 21st century business ecosystem. To facilitate and create an enabling, congenial and academically compatible environment in the university for promoting future generation entrepreneurs and start-ups, a policy document at the university level was felt a dire need which will pave a way for the students and teachers for this initiative and stimulate and motivate them by institutional interventions and incentives to contribute towards a viable, enabling and sustainable culture of innovation and start-up.

Whereas, The 'National Innovation and Start-up(NISP) Policy 2019 for students and faculty in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) was launched by Former Minister of Education, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank on 11th September 2019 at AICTE, New Delhi. This policy intends to guide HEIs for promoting students' driven innovations & start-ups and to engage the students and faculty in innovation and start up activities in campus. The policy aims at enabling HEIs to build, streamline and strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem in campus and will be instrumental in leveraging the potential of student's creative problem solving and entrepreneurial mind-set, and promoting a strong intra and inter institutional partnerships with ecosystem enablers and different stakeholders at regional, national and international level. The policy is being implemented by MoE's Innovation Cell and in coordination AICTE, UGC, state/ UT governments and universities. Implementation of policy has been undertaken for quick adoption by HEIs. The NISP policy intends to guide HEIs to promote students' and faculty driven innovations & startups. It is envisaged that this policy will be instrumental in leveraging the potential of student's problem solving & entrepreneurial mind-set and promoting a strong intra and inter-institutional partnerships. The GoI has directed the HEIs to enunciate a policy to synergize science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship in order to create robust innovation culture and ecosystem through this policy.

In this context, an eight member committee was constituted in Assam Agricultural University (AAU) to formulate detailed guidelines for various aspects related to innovation, Startup and entrepreneurship management (annexure I). This committee deliberated on various facets for nurturing the innovation and Startup culture in AAU, which covered Intellectual Property ownership, revenue sharing mechanisms, norms for technology transfer and commercialization, equity sharing, etc. After multiple rounds of meetings, the AAU-Innovation, Startup and Entrepreneurship Policy (AAU-ISEP) has been formulated mainly for students, staff and faculties of AAU. AAU-ISEP policy document is in consonance with the NISP-2019, and in a way, the

¹ **Policy Finalized**

adoption of this policy which is likely to be made mandatory at some point of time in near future for fostering the innovation, entrepreneurship and startup culture in the AAU.

Therefore, it is expected that this policy will also facilitate Intellectual Property ownership management, technology licensing and institutional Startup policy, thus enabling creation of a robust innovation and Start up ecosystem in AAU. The policy is subjected to periodical review and amendments.

ABOUT ASSAM AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

The Assam Agricultural University was established on April 1, 1969 under The Assam Agricultural University Act, 1968' with the mandate of imparting farm education, conduct research in agriculture and allied sciences and to effectively disseminate technologies so generated. Before establishment of the University, there were altogether 17 research schemes/projects in the state under the Department of Agriculture. By July 1973, all the research projects and 10 experimental farms were transferred by the Government of Assam to the AAU which already inherited the College of Agriculture (1948) and its farm at Barbheta, Jorhat and College of Veterinary Sciences (1948) at Khanapara, Guwahati.

Subsequently, College of Community Science at Jorhat (1969), College of Fisheries at Raha (1988), Biswanath College of Agriculture at Biswanath Chariali (1988) and Lakhimpur College of Veterinary Science at Joyhing, North Lakhimpur (1988) were established. Presently, the University has three more colleges under its jurisdiction, viz., Sarat Chandra Singha College of Agriculture, Chapar, College of Horticulture, Nalbari & College of Sericulture, Titabar. Similarly, few more regional research stations at Shillongani, Diphu, Gossaigaon, Lakhimpur; and commodity research stations at Kahikuchi, Buralikson, Tinsukia, Kharua, Burnihat and Mandira were added to generate location and crop specific agricultural production packages.

Since establishment, AAU has been developing numerous technologies in the pre-harvest and post-harvest domain to increase farm productivity and reduce cost of production, besides post-harvest processing, value addition and enhancing marketability of a wide range of products of the region.

ABOUT AAU INCUBATOR

AAU has established the best-in-class Incubator hub, North East Agriculture Technology Hub (NEATeHub) in the year 2018, to facilitate absorption and commercialization of various agri and allied-agri technologies to promote ventures and businesses in the North East region. The NEATeHub has been set up as a Section-8 Company (not-for-profit) to create a robust and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem/ support infrastructure to build successful startups in the area of agri and allied agriculture. The Incubator has many requisite elements such as physical space and infrastructure, common service delivery systems, network activities, partnerships and linkages – both institutional and individual, mentors and advisors – to enable startups to structure their business and make them “investment-ready” to potential investors. And finally, the incubator helps the startup figure out when it is time to leave and fly out of the incubator. It is envisaged that the NEATeHub will augur well for the promotion and facilitation of agribusiness enterprises around commodity-specific value chains. The AAU Incubator has plans to work on a hub and spoke model with its own satellite centers in strategic districts of Assam as well as in other North Eastern states.

The policy document comes with two caveats - that “necessary legal provisions in Act and Statute of the AAU for investment and profit making by AAU, envisioned in the policy, should be ensured; AAU should also have its own IPR policy in order for the Startup Policy to be implemented.”

Policy Statement

The Vision and Mission of AAU-Innovation, Startup & Entrepreneurship Policy (AAU-ISEP)

It is envisaged that this policy will *develop outstanding entrepreneurship ecosystem, by leveraging the facility of NEATEHub, in the AAU to foster innovation and entrepreneurship among students and faculty that can enhance employment generation, strengthen the economy and wellbeing of society.*

The Mission of the policy are:

- 1. To orient the educational infrastructure of the institute towards start-ups and entrepreneurship opportunities for student and faculties while maintaining all rigor and vigilance for academic excellence.*
- 2. to encourage and to support students, faculty and staff to consider start-ups and entrepreneurship as a career option.*
- 3. to provide enabling mechanism to start-ups, through training and skill development, capacity building, networking, access to knowledge & support services, etc. on continuous basis.*
- 4. to provide the guidelines to stakeholders of AAU for developing entrepreneurial agenda, managing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) ownership, technology licensing and equity sharing in Startups or Enterprises established by faculty, students and staff.*

Objectives:

- Enabling the University to actively engage students, faculty, and staff in innovation and entrepreneurship encouraging activities.
- Provisioning framework to foster innovation and creativity in the areas of agriculture technology innovation and entrepreneurship by nurturing new ideas and research, in an ethical environment.
- Nurturing and supporting students, staff and faculty in their entrepreneurial ambitions and helping them overcome obstacles
- Entrepreneurship Exposure and Skills Development
- Offer value-added services viz. legal, financial, technical, IPR and mentoring to incubatees for technology commercialization
- Networking with Regional and National Start-up Eco-System and Inter-Institutional Partnership to establish a vibrant and dynamic startup ecosystem in Assam and adjoining states
- Facilitating Industry Support, Corporate & Private Partnership Linkage
- Facilitating the University in terms of Intellectual Property (IP) ownership management, technology licensing and equity sharing.

Short-term Goals:

- Developing critical thinking skills to motivate students and faculties with entrepreneurial abilities.
- Building Innovation and Incubation ecosystem by providing resources available at the University.
- In-house competency development to serve potential incubators.
- Strengthen the intra and inter institutional linkage with ecosystem enablers at different levels.
- Creating a dedicated seed fund (Innovation Fund) for providing the much-needed seed fund support to the early stage startups & entrepreneurs nurtured by the University.
- Defining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Entrepreneurial Performance Impact Assessment including designing and implementing short term course correction measures, if any, to achieve the set objectives & milestones under this policy guideline.

Long-term Goals:

- Innovation, Pre-incubation, Incubation and startup facilities on different campuses
- Academic courses offered by the institute on Innovation, IPR and Start-ups
- Obtaining scientific and technical IPR protection by Incubators and Startups
- Collaboration, Co-Creation and Technology Exchange and Commercialization
- Emerging successful Innovation and Start-ups from the Institute
- Increase technical employment rate through self-employment by Startups
- Creating a dedicated Agri-Tech focused Venture Fund/Angel for equity support to early revenue to Growth Stage startups with support from key stakeholders of startup ecosystem.
- Creating societal, ethical and technological entrepreneurs through National Innovation and Start-up Policy.

1. Strategies and Governance

AAU has initiated the establishment of fourth vertical of Innovation and Entrepreneurship along with the traditional verticals of teaching, research and extension. A separate Innovation and entrepreneurship policy (IEC Policy) has been framed to support this vertical. This initiative has created a pathway towards development of culture among students and faculties to adopt entrepreneurship as one of the carrier options.

Following steps have been taken to implement IEC policy:

1. A dedicated Central **Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Start-up Council (AAU-IESC)** of AAU with defined specific objectives and roles, has been established to facilitate development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the AAU. This council will be at par with the university Research and Extension Advisory Councils having powers and functions at par with RAC and EAC with respect to Innovation and entrepreneurship matters. The constitution of council is as follows:

1. Hon'ble Vice chancellor – **Chairman**
2. Directors of Research (Agri and Vety)- **members**
3. All Deans, Registrar, DEE and DPGS – **member**
4. CEO, NEATeHub – **member**
5. In charge, IPR Cell- **member**
6. Start-up entrepreneur- **member**

7. Nominated person from Financial Institutions like NEDFI, SBI, NABARD etc (with designation as per the sanctity of the Committee-Seniority of such officer) - **member**²
8. Nominated person, one each, from State Agriculture and Industry department (with designation as per the sanctity of the Committee-Seniority of such officer) - **member**³
9. Executive Officer (*a person with experience and training in innovation and entrepreneurship development to be appointed with a salary not below the level of Professor*)- **Member Secretary**

This is the ultimate committee which will be responsible for formulation and administering all policy decisions related to Intellectual Property Rights, Rights, innovations and startup related issues in AAU.

2. At faculty level, a Faculty level Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Start-up Council (FIESC) will be constituted as follows:

1. Dean-Chairman
2. Start-up entrepreneur- member
3. Senior most HOD-Member (3 nos)
4. Nominee from DEE and Director of Research and DPGS- Member
4. Designated person of NEATeHub – member
5. a senior faculty member with exposure to startup business- Member Secretary

This committee is responsible for easy creation and nurturing of Startups/enterprises by students, staff and faculties in active support from NEATeHub. Micro action plan will also be developed by the colleges to accomplish the policy objectives.

3. The university will recruit staff that has a strong innovation and entrepreneurial/ industrial experience, behavior and attitude. Some of the relevant faculty members with prior exposure and interest will be sent for training to promote I&E. This will help in fostering the I&E culture.

4. Implementation of the entrepreneurial agenda will be the responsibility of the Deans of each faculty, along with his team in faculty level, which will be supported by the higher authorities of AAU through specially constituted IESC. Each faculty will create a Pre-incubation facility and Incubation Center in individual college with active support of NEATeHub for colleges outside Jorhat. In Jorhat, NEATeHub will serve as Incubation Center.

5. For expediting the decision making, hierarchical barriers should be minimized and individual autonomy to be given to each incubator and Center in AAU.

6. Research / activities in Startups where Microbial/ Animal/ human subjects are involved, clearance from respective ethics committee of AAU should be obtained.

7. IPR related activities pertaining to filing, ownership, exploitation, management, technology transfer/commercialization etc. will be dealt as per IPR policy of AAU- "Assam Agricultural University Guidelines for Intellectual Property Management and Technology Transfer/ Commercialization.

8. The Technology Management Unit (TMU) of AAU will facilitate smooth tech transfer in close liaison with IPR Cell and incubation centre setup.

²Considering project financing as a critical success factor for any venture (both through Debt/Equity instrument).

³to explore the convergence scope with both Startup Policy & Centrally/State Sponsored Schemes

9. For expediting the decision making, hierarchical barriers will be minimized and individual autonomy and ownership of initiatives will be promoted. The Dean/Associate Dean of the college in consultation with Executive officer, IESC shall take the decision.

2. Resource Mobilization

Resource mobilization plans will be made for supporting pre-incubation, incubation infrastructure and other facilities. A sustainable financial strategy should be defined in order to reduce the organizational constraints to work on the entrepreneurial agenda.

i. Investment in the entrepreneurial activities will be a part of the institutional financial strategy. Some amount of fund will be allocated for funding and supporting innovation and startups related activities through creation of separate '**Innovation fund**' with an initial amount of Rs 3.00 Cr. However, revenue earning activities will be encouraged to minimize the burden on AAU and to make it a sustainable working model. It is further envisaged that the Industry will also be roped in for seed-funding support, in the years ahead.

ii. **Since NEATEHUB is already a special purpose vehicle (SPV) created by AAU for the sole purpose of driving innovation among agri-startups and entrepreneurs in the NER, the same body will be executing the AAU Startup Programmes that are related to innovation, IPR, agri-ventures, etc. NEATEHUB already has a well-defined structure of governance, wherein, it has a Governing Board, an Advisory Board, and a fully functional secretariat comprising of CEO and incubator staff, a network of incubators and collaborators as stakeholders. All the Bodies of NEATEHUB is Chaired by the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of AAU and, for the purpose of the AAU Startup Policy, he/ she is empowered to co-opt any more members to the list of members across all Bodies.**

iii. Attempts will be made by AAU to raise funds from diverse sources such as State and Central Govt agencies like DST, DBT, MHRD, AICTE, TDB, TIFAC, DSIR, CSIR, BIRAC, NSTEDB, NRDC, Startup India, Invest India, MeitY, MSDE, MSME, etc. and non-government sources.

iv. To support innovation and entrepreneurship promoting activities ,AAU will approach private and corporate sectors to generate funds, under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as per Section 135 of the Company Act 2013.

v. AAU may also raise fund through sponsorships and donations. AAU will actively engage alumni network for promoting Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

vi. AAU will try to link the Startups with National/International fund providers and allow the Startups to take up corporate research projects to generate revenue.

vii. AAU will also work with industries/ Venture Capitalist / Govt. institutions to set up a "**Student Startup Fund**" to support outstanding Startups to be administered through AAU Incubator/ NEATEHUB.

3. Startup-friendly Institutional Infrastructure and support

The University aims to identify and support innovative ideas of students, staff, faculty and innovators from the outside community at various levels:

(i) Proof-of-concept (POC) stage: Proof-of-concept is the stage where the innovator/ startup demonstrate a fundamental functioning demonstration of the idea/ hypothesis/ innovation. Pre-Seed fund as grant-in-aid up to Rs. 3 Lakhs as grant for ideation with validation of Proof of Concept, will be provided with due approval from AAU-IESC. The grant shall be disbursed in milestone-based installments.

(ii) Prototype-stage: A prototype-stage is a pre-production/ pre-launch stage where the innovator/ startup team has developed a basic minimum viable product (MVP) with most key features desired in the final product. Pre-seed fund as grant-in-aid up to Rs. 5 Lakhs as grant for prototype development, or product trials, will be provided with due approval from AAU-IESC. The grant shall be disbursed in milestone-based installments.

(iii) Minimum viable product (MVP): MVP is a product with just enough features together with validated learnings from customers being incorporated and its continued development. Seed fund as grant-in-aid up to Rs.15 Lakhs as grant for product testing, building a product ready for market launch will be provided with due approval from AAU-IESC. The grant shall be disbursed in milestone-based installments.

Laboratories and Research and development facilities of the University shall contribute towards innovative ideas at various stages. Each college/ research station shall identify the labs and available resources such as machines, equipment, software etc. which are critical to nurture innovation and support innovators in their entrepreneurial journey. A dedicated space in such identified facilities shall be assigned to promote and support innovation. List of such facilities shall be displayed on the website.

A. Initially create Pre-incubation facility

Pre-incubation makes up the support systems towards the early stage of the innovation & startup value chain that comprises an enabling environment to trigger creative ideas, hand-holding ideas at validate its early users, basic common working infrastructures, and access to existing resources before the innovation reaches an enterprise stage. The facilities must ensure maximum engagement of the students with objective to identify and facilitate young innovators. Activity calendar in sync with University academic and activity calendar shall be prepared for such facilities and displayed on the webpage created for innovation and entrepreneurship.

1. This is to be used by students, staff and faculty of AAU with an enrollment system.
2. Each student/ team to have a faculty member as mentor.
3. This is a support system for students to “test” their ideas.
4. They will be given 6 months time to validate their ideas.
5. Pre-incubatees will get space in the incubator or any other dept to establish proof of concept.
6. Institute to provide pre-seed/ seed fund, as per norms.

7. Incubation Centre to conduct "Ideation Festivals/ Hackathons" at regular intervals to encourage students to generate and nurture innovation.
8. Pre-incubatees to undergo training through NEATeHub to understand more about innovation and entrepreneurship.

B. Incubation Centers

Incubator is an organization established to accelerate the growth of startups, through an array of business support, resources, mentorship, networking and other common services such as physical space, capital, and coaching. Incubation and technology commercialization facilities shall be established as separate entities, preferably registered under Company Act 2013 or 'Society' registered under Society Registration Act, with independent governance structure. This will allow more freedom to Incubators in decision making with less administrative hassles for executing the programs related to innovation, IPR and Startups. AAU has established the best-in-class Incubator hub, North East Agriculture Technology Hub (NEATeHub), to facilitate absorption and commercialization of various agri and allied-agri technologies to promote ventures and businesses in the North East region.

1. After completing Pre-incubation phase, Pre-incubatee to register as Incubatee in the NEATeHub
2. After their innovative ideas are validated, they can register a Startup company.
3. Upon admission in the incubation center, the some physical facilities with internet connection will be offered to the incubate companies on chargeable basis as decided by the AAU.
4. Incubatee will be supported with student interns if desired, to meet their Technical/Marketing/Sales requirements.
5. A company desirous of getting seed loan may submit an application for seed fund after five months of incubation. The application of the seed loan shall clearly indicate the requirement, activities, expenditure heads, and timeline with basic legal documentation.
6. Tenure of Incubation could be for 1 year with extension of another 6 months, as per need.

C. Mentoring and Advisory Services

Process and mechanism which support easy creation and nurturing of Startups/enterprises, are the key components for a vibrant and progressive innovation and startup ecosystem. Such initiatives attain their optimum efficiency when a pool of quality innovations and early stage startups emerge and grow on a regular basis. AAU aims to support entrepreneurial efforts by students (UG, PG, Ph.D.), staff (including temporary or project staff), faculty, alumni and potential start up applicants even from outside the institutions.

1. One of the objectives of Incubation is to utilize the technical expertise and lab infrastructure of AAU. Thus, every student incubatee that is offered incubation has to select one faculty from AAU who shall act as mentor of the student incubatee and guide the company on product development.
2. Specialized or experienced mentors to be made available to all incubatees to assist with particular strategies or to provide project oriented consultation.

3. AAU will assist to get support from professionals for accounting, IP, legal and management expertise on a part-time basis.
4. In return of the services and facilities provided to the members outside AAU (including AAU Alumni), 2% to 4% equity/stake in the Startup company will be taken by AAU for a duration of 3-5 years, as per AAU Startup Policy.
5. Product conceptualization to market strategy for Startups will be evaluated by AAU on case to case basis using the stages of Technology Readiness Level (TRL) scale with the active support of NEATEHub.

4. Nurturing Innovations and Start ups

1. Pre-incubation & Incubation facility is available to start ups by students, staff, faculty alumni of AAU and potential Startup applicants even from outside AAU acceptable for mutually agreeable time-frame.
2. Details regarding innovation / product development related to their research /project topic should be included in M.Sc and Ph.D thesis/ dissertation.
3. Best Student innovation award and Best Mentor award for innovation will be decided as per AAU-IEP guideline or any other rule framed time to time.
4. Necessary effort will be made in the faculty level to Identify potential entrepreneurs right at student entry level and providing commensurate ecosystem during the formative under grad level.
5. AAU will try to inculcate innovation and entrepreneurship knowledge across the faculty and students by:
 - a. Conducting awareness programs and training sessions for the students, staff and faculty to write proposals.
 - b. Conducting orientation programs on success stories.
 - c. Encouraging students and faculty to attend free International & National online programs.
 - d. Innovator centric provision for industrial visits periodically to stimulate & the opportunity to observe the innovation and strategy Coupled with the business.
 - e. Ideas collection from all the students/ faculties of the university with an idea box.
 - f. Conducting number of Hackathons among students community to increase awareness on innovations and Startups.
 - g. College Level Entrepreneurship Development Clubs (Boot camps) shall be established through incubators to foster innovation and entrepreneurial spirit.
 - h. Mockup marketing place for innovators to initiate marketing in the campus.
6. A student involved in Prototype/ Startup teams having a shortage of up to 20% will be facilitated for condonation of shortage of attendance for every semester during the recognised period of such activity.
7. The students may be permitted to take a semester/year break (depending upon the decision of review committee constituted by the AAU) to work on their startups and rejoin academics to complete the course.
8. Student Entrepreneurs may earn credits for working on innovative prototypes/Business Models. The university will count these credits earned by the students by working full or part time as an entrepreneur, startup or innovator or on developing a prototype or a product as a part of their curriculum for a course related to entrepreneurship/agribusiness or as a part of Student READY programme, internship or even as additional credit courses as the case may be.

9. Student inventors may also be allowed to opt for startup in place of their mini project/ major project, seminars, summer trainings, Student Ready or Experiential learning, internship etc. The area in which student wants to initiate a startup may be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary. However, the student must describe how they will separate and clearly distinguish their ongoing research activities as a student from the work being conducted at the startup.
10. Students/faculty/staff who are under incubation, but are pursuing some entrepreneurial ventures while studying/working, shall be allowed to use their address in the university to register their company with due permission from the university.
11. AAU will allow faculty and staff to take off for a semester/year (or even more depending upon the decision of review committee constituted by the institute) as sabbatical/unpaid leave/casual leave/earned leave for working on startups and come back to the University. The seniority and other academic benefits during such period may be preserved for such staff or faculty.
12. Faculty and staff who wish to involve in Startup on a part time basis can spend a day in a week in the Startup in addition to their teaching, research and other official activities, after fulfilling due documentation for the said purpose.
13. College/ Research Station-level committees will be formed for the purpose of first screening of proposals for recommending Startups. This will be done by assessing the proposal submitted indicating the interest/ feasibility/ innovation/ market potential etc. The committee will also review the progress quarterly once they are selected.
14. Participation in Startup related activities shall be considered as a legitimate activity of faculty/staff in addition to teaching, R&D projects, industrial consultancy and management duties and must be considered while evaluating the annual appraisal of the faculty/staff. Every faculty may be encouraged to mentor at least one startup/innovative project. Faculty who gets fund for start-up will be recognized through promotions and/or sufficient incentives.
15. Faculty/staff/Students/Alumni shall register their company with due permission/information from/to AAU.
16. The university will explore provision of accommodation to the entrepreneurs within the campus for some period of time during incubation and development period.
17. The university will facilitate the startup activities/ technology development by allowing students/ faculty/ staff to use the university infrastructure and facilities, as per the choice of the potential entrepreneur in the following manners:
 - i. Short-term/ six-month/ one-year part-time entrepreneurship training.
 - ii. Mentorship support on regular basis.
 - iii. Facilitation in a variety of areas including technology development, ideation, creativity, design thinking, fund raising, financial management, cash-flow management, new venture planning, business development, product development, social entrepreneurship, product costing, marketing, brand-development, human resource management as well as law and regulations impacting a business. In using these facilities, any costs towards consumables related to lab equipments, etc, will be borne by the startup. The cost breakup for such consumables will be clearly listed at respective facilities.
 - iv. The university will endeavor to link the startups to other seed-fund providers/ angel funds/ venture funds or itself may set up seed-fund once the incubation activities mature.
 - v. License the IPR as discussed elsewhere of this policy

18. In return of the services and facilities, AAU may take 1% to 4% equity/ stake in the startup/ company, based on brand used, faculty contribution, support provided and use of institute's IPR (a limit of 4% is suggested so that institute has no legal liability arising out of startup).

i. For staff and faculty, institute can take no more than 20% of shares that staff/faculty takes while drawing full salary from the institution; however, this share will be within the 4% cap of company shares, listed above.

ii. No restriction on shares that faculty/staff can take, as long as they don't spend more than 20% of office time on the startup in advisory or consultative role and do not compromise with their existing academic and administrative work/duties. In short, conflict of interest emerging out of core activity of faculty/ staff with the startup related work, shall be strictly prohibited.

iii. The faculty/staff who holds the executive or managerial position for more than three months in a startup, will go on sabbatical leave without pay/ earned leave for a period of 1-2 years so that they can facilitate their own venture.

19. At any stage, no liability because of any activity/ inactivity of any Startup will be accrued or attributed to the University and/or its incubation facilities or its constituents.

5. Product Ownership Rights for Technologies Developed at AAU

To establish relationships with the private sectors for fostering innovation and startup and entrepreneurship for the transition of secure technologies, AAU will develop consistent and open IP strategy that is officially approved by the University authority and accessible to researchers and external stakeholders for consultation. This IP policy will be guiding principles for IP/Brand Ownership Rights and their commercialization for technologies established at University.

A. When AAU facilities/ funds are used substantially or when IPR is developed as a part of curriculum/ academic activity, IPR is to be jointly owned by inventors and the AAU.

i. Inventors and AAU could together license the product / IPR to any commercial organization, with inventors having the primary license. License fees could be either / or a mix of

1. Upfront fees or one-time technology transfer fees
2. Royalty as a percentage of sale-price
3. Shares in the company licensing the product
4. Profit sharing model

ii. AAU will not direct hold equity as per the current provisions of the AAU statute, so AAU Incubator (NEATEHUB) will hold equity on their (AAU) behalf.

iii. If one or more of the inventors wish to incubate a company and license the product to this company, the royalties would be no more than 4% of sale price, preferably 1 to 2%, unless it is pure software product, and mutually decided by AAU Incubator and the Startup.

B. On the other hand, if product/ IPR is developed by innovators not using any AAU facilities, outside office hours (for staff and faculty) or not as a part of curriculum by student, then product/ IPR will be entirely owned

by inventors in proportion to the contributions made by them. In this case, inventors can decide to license the technology to third parties or use the technology the way they deem fit.

C. If there is a dispute in ownership, IESC will take a decision with help from relevant experts as deemed fit, on case to case basis.

D. Deans or Directors of Research will only be a coordinator and facilitator for providing services to faculty, staff and students. They will have no say on how the invention is carried out, how it is patented or how it is to be licensed; however in specific case, clarifications can be sought. **The IPR Policy of AAU will lay down the rules and regulations for IPR related issues and concerns of startups.**

E. In all cases of IPR, legally valid confidentiality clause is applicable for all parties. The faculty/staff/student(s) will undertake to sign suitable non-disclosure undertakings /agreement wherever applicable, for sharing any confidential material with external parties on behalf of AAU or themselves and submit a copy of the same to Central Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Start-up Council (AAU-IESC)

6. Norms for Faculty Startups

1. For better coordination of the entrepreneurial activities, norms for faculty to do startups need to adopt as proposed in this policy and also to be created by the university in near future. Only those technologies should be taken for faculty startups which originate from within the university.

i. Role of faculty may vary from being an owner/ direct promoter, mentor, consultant, investor, combinations of all or as onboard member of the startup. The roles of the faculty and stakes will be accordingly mutually agreed upon by the faculty and startup within the prescribed sealing.

ii. As the Startup Policy matures year on year, the university will develop a policy on '*conflict of interests*' to ensure that the regular duties of the faculty don't suffer owing to his/her involvement in the startup activities.

iii. Faculty startup may consist of faculty members alone or with students or with faculty of other university or with alumni or with other entrepreneurs.

2. In case the faculty/ staff holds the executive or managerial position for more than three months in a startup, they will go on sabbatical/ leave without pay/ utilize existing leave upto a maximum period of 2 years.

3. Faculty must clearly separate and distinguish on-going research at the university from the work conducted at the startup/ company.

4. Faculty must not accept gifts/ donations from the startups.

5. Faculty must not involve research staff or other staff of the university in activities at the startup and vice-versa if not indicated in their initial proposal.

6. Human/Animal subject related research/ trials by startup should get clearance from appropriate committee of the university.

7. Pedagogy and Learning Interventions for Entrepreneurship Development

1. Diversified approach should be adopted to produce desirable learning outcomes, which should include cross disciplinary learning using mentors, labs, case studies, games, etc. in place of traditional lecture-based delivery.

i. Student clubs/ bodies/ departments must be created for organizing competitions, boot camps, workshops, awards, etc. These bodies should be involved in institutional strategy planning to ensure enhancement of the student's thinking and responding ability.

ii. University should start annual "INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARD" to recognize outstanding ideas, successful enterprises and contributors for promoting innovation and enterprises ecosystem within university. IESC have to initiate the process in consultation with the colleges.

iii. For creating awareness among the students, the teaching methods should include case studies on business failure and real-life experience reports by startups.

iv. Tolerating and encouraging failures: Our systems are not designed for tolerating and encouraging failure. Failures need to be elaborately discussed and debated to imbibe that failure is a part of life, thus helping in reducing the social stigma associated with it. Very importantly, this should be a part of university's philosophy and culture.

v. Innovation champions shall be nominated from within the students/ faculty/ staff for each department/stream of study.

2. Entrepreneurship education shall be imparted to students at curricular/ co-curricular/ extracurricular level through elective/ short term or long-term courses on innovation, entrepreneurship and venture development. Validated learning outcomes shall be made available to the students.

i. Integration of expertise of the external stakeholders shall be done in the entrepreneurship education to evolve a culture of collaboration and engagement with external environment.

ii. In the beginning of every academic session, university shall conduct an induction program about the importance of I&E so that freshly inducted students are made aware about the entrepreneurial agenda of the university and available support systems. Curriculum for the entrepreneurship education shall be continuously updated based on entrepreneurship research outcomes. This shall also include case studies on failures.

iii. Industry linkages shall be leveraged for conducting research and survey on trends in technology, research, innovation, and market intelligence.

iv. Sensitization of students will be done for their understanding on expected learning outcomes.

v. Student innovators, startups, experts must be engaged in the dialogue process while developing the strategy so that it becomes need based.

vi. Customized teaching and training materials will be developed for startups.

vii. It must be noted that not everyone can become an entrepreneur. The entrepreneur is a leader, who would convert an innovation successfully into a product; others may join the leader and work for the startup. It is important to understand that entrepreneurship is about risk taking. One must carefully evaluate whether a student is capable and willing to take risk.

3. Pedagogical changes need to be done to ensure that maximum number of student projects and innovations are based around real life challenges. Learning interventions developed by the University for inculcating entrepreneurial culture should be constantly reviewed and updated.

8. Collaboration, Co-creation, Business Relationships and Knowledge Exchange

1. Stakeholder engagement should be given prime importance in the entrepreneurial agenda of the university. University will endeavor to find potential partners, resource organizations, micro, small and medium- sized enterprises (MSMEs), social enterprises, schools, alumni, professional bodies and entrepreneurs to support entrepreneurship and co-design the programs.

i. To encourage co-creation, bi-directional flow/ exchange of knowledge and people should be ensured between the organizations such as incubators, science parks, etc.

ii. University need to organize networking events for better engagement of collaborators and should open up the opportunities for staff, faculty and students to allow constant flow of ideas and knowledge through meetings, workshops, space for collaboration, lectures, etc.

iii. Mechanism should be developed by university to capitalize on the knowledge gained through these collaborations.

iv. Care must be taken to ensure that events DON'T BECOME an end goal. First focus of the incubator should be to create successful ventures.

2. University will develop policy and guidelines for forming and managing the relationships with external stakeholders including private industries.

3. Knowledge exchange through collaboration and partnership be made a part of university policy and university must provide support mechanisms and guidance for creating, managing and coordinating these relationships:

i. Through formal and informal mechanisms such as internships, teaching and research exchange programmes, clubs, social gatherings, etc., faculty, staff and students of the university should be given the opportunities to connect with their external environment.

ii. Connection of the University with the external environment must be leveraged in form of absorbing information and experience from the external ecosystem into the University environment.

iii. Single Point of Contact (SPOC) mechanism will be created in university for the students, faculty, collaborators, partners and other stakeholders to ensure access to information pertaining to innovation and entrepreneurship.

iv. Mechanism will be devised by university to ensure maximum exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities with industrial and commercial collaborators.

v. Knowledge management may be done by university through development of innovation knowledge platform using in house Information & Communication Technology (ICT) capabilities.

9. Entrepreneurial Impact Assessment

1. Impact assessment of university's entrepreneurial initiatives such as pre-incubation, incubation, entrepreneurship education should be performed regularly using well defined evaluation parameters through active support from NEATeHub.

i. Monitoring and evaluation of knowledge exchange initiatives, engagement of all departments and faculty in the entrepreneurial teaching and learning should be assessed.

ii. Number of startups created, support system provided at university level and satisfaction of participants, new business relationships created by the university will be recorded and used for impact assessment.

iii. Impact should also be measured for the support system provided by the university to the student entrepreneurs, faculty and staff for pre-incubation, incubation, IPR protection, industry linkages, exposure to entrepreneurial ecosystem, etc.

2. Formulation of strategy and impact assessment should go hand in hand. The information on impact of the activities should be actively used while developing and reviewing the entrepreneurial strategy.

3. Impact assessment for measuring the success should be in terms of sustainable social, financial and technological impact in the market. For innovations at pre-commercial stage, development of sustainable enterprise model is critical. COMMERCIAL success is the ONLY measure in long run.

10. Amendment

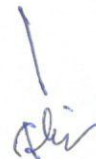
AAU reserves the right to change, make additions or deletions to improve a text, piece of legislation, etc. from time to time, in consonance with the dynamics of changing norms, markets and geographies. A periodical review of the AAU Startup Policy and its associated working documents will be undertaken by the ISEP at least once in two years. This will ensure updation and making it relevant for entrepreneurs and startups and amend for removing bottlenecks which may arise during the implementation of innovation and entrepreneurship agenda of the university.

11. Governing Laws & Rules

The activities under this policy shall be governed in accordance with the laws, rules and regulations (as amended up to date) applicable in India and other international instruments/agreements to which India is a signatory. At all times, the associated faculty/staff/student(s) must ensure that the activities are in compliance with the prevailing legal norms of India. Non-compliance by the associated faculty/staff/student(s) shall have no bearing on AAU

12. Settlement OF DISPUTE, Authority, NON COMPETE, CONFIDENTIALITY

All aspects of this policy will be regulated by the Board of Management of AAU or/and by IESC explicitly set up and mandated to control the policy, to approve any derogations and to make changes to the policy as deemed necessary from time to time. The decision by the University Management of AAU will be final.



The BOM will decide any conflicts, if any. Any further escalation of the dispute will be subject to arbitration under the Indian Arbitration Act following the decision of the BOM, AAU. Jorhat, Assam will be the jurisdiction of all disputes. The confidentiality and non-compete agreements as written from time to time are bound by students, staff and all stakeholders within the programme.



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Glossary Useful for Entrepreneurship

Accelerators: Startup Accelerators design programs in batches and transform promising business ideas into reality under the guidance of mentors and several other available resources.

Angel Fund: An angel investor is a wealthy individual who invests his or her personal capital and shares experiences, contacts, and mentors (as possible and required by the startup in exchange for equity in that startup). Angels are usually accredited investors. Since their funds are involved, they are equally desirous in making the startup successful.

Cash flow management: Cash flow management is the process of tracking how much money is coming into and going out of your business.

Co-Creation: Co-creation is the act of creating together. When applied in business, it can be used as an economic strategy to develop new business models, products and services with customers, clients, trading partner or other parts of the same enterprise or venture.

Compulsory Equity: An equity share, commonly referred to as ordinary share also, represents the form of fractional or part ownership in which a shareholder, as a fractional owner, undertakes the maximum entrepreneurial risk associated with a business venture. The holders of such shares are members of the company and have voting rights.

Corporate Social Responsibility: Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a self-regulating business model that helps a company be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and the public.

Cross-disciplinary: Cross-disciplinary practices refer to teaching, learning, and scholarship activities that cut across disciplinary boundaries.

Entrepreneurial culture: A culture/ society that enhance the exhibition of the attributes, values, beliefs and behaviors that are related to entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurial Individuals: An Individual who has an entrepreneurial mindset and wants to make his/her idea successful.

Entrepreneurship education: Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings.

Experiential learning: Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience, and is more specifically defined as learning through reflection on doing.

Financial management: Financial Management is the application of general principles of management to the financial possessions of an enterprise.

Hackathon: Hackathon is a design sprint-like event in which computer programmers and others involved in software development, including graphic designers, interface designers, project managers, and others, often including domain experts, collaborate intensively on software projects.

Host Institution: Host institutions refer to well-known technology, management and R&D institutions working for developing startups and contributing towards developing a favorable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Incubation: Incubation is a unique and highly flexible combination of business development processes, infrastructure and people, designed to nurture and grow new and small businesses by supporting them through the early stages of development.

Intellectual Property Rights Licensing: This licensing is a partnership between an intellectual property rights owner (licensor) and another who is authorized to use such rights (licensee) in exchange for an agreed payment (fee or royalty)

Knowledge Exchange: Knowledge exchange is a process which brings together academic staff, users of research and wider groups and communities to exchange ideas, evidence and expertise.

Pedagogy and Experiential Learning: It refers to specific methods and teaching practices (as an academic subject or theoretical concept) which would be applied for students working on startups. The experiential learning method will be used for teaching 'startup related concepts and contents' to introduce a positive influence on the thought processes of students. Courses like 'business idea generation' and 'soft skills for startups' would demand experiential learning rather than traditional class room lecturing. Business cases and teaching cases will be used to discuss practical business intuitions that can help students to arrive at a decision while facing business dilemma(s). Field based interactions with prospective customers; support institutions will also form a part of the pedagogy which will orient the students as they acquire field knowledge.

Pre-incubation: It typically represents the process which works with entrepreneurs who are in the very early stages of setting up their company. Usually, entrepreneurs come into such programs with just an idea of early prototype of their product or service. Such companies can graduate into full-fledged incubation programs.

Prototype: A prototype is an early sample, model, or release of a product built to test a concept or process.

Science parks: A science park, also known as a research park, technology park or innovation centre, is a purpose-built cluster of office spaces, labs, workrooms and meeting areas designed to support research and development in science and technology.

Seed fund: Seed fund is a form of securities offering in which an investor invests capital in a startup company in exchange for an equity stake in the company.

Special Purpose Vehicle: Special purpose vehicle, also called a special purpose entity, is a subsidiary created by a parent company to isolate financial risk. Its legal status as a separate company makes its obligations secure even if the parent company goes bankrupt.

Startup: An entity that develops a business model based on either product innovation or service innovation and makes it scalable, replicable and self-reliant and as defined in Gazette Notification No. G.S.R. 127(E) dated February 19, 2019.

Technology Business Incubator: Technology Business incubator (TBI) is an entity, which helps technology-based startup businesses with all the necessary resources/support that the startup needs to evolve and grow into a mature business.

Technology Commercialization: Technology commercialization is the process of transitioning technologies from the research lab to the marketplace.

Technology licensing Agreement: An agreement whereby an owner of a technological intellectual property (the licensor) allows another party (the licensee) to use, modify, and/or resell that property in exchange for compensation.

Technology management: Technology management is the integrated planning, design, optimization, operation and control of technological products, processes and services.

Venture Capital: It is the most well-known form of startup funding. Venture Capitalists (VCs) typically reserve additional capital for follow-up investment rounds. Another huge value that VCs provide is access to their networks for employees or clients for products or services of the startup.

Annexure I

**OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR:::ASSAM AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY:::
JORHAT-785013**

NOTIFICATION

With the approval of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Assam Agricultural University, a committee is constituted with the following members for formulation of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Policy for AAU under National Innovation and Start-up Policy (NISP) 2019 of Higher Educational Institution in India under Ministry of Education (MoE), Govt. of India.

1	Dr. J. Deka, Dean, FA, AAU, Jorhat	Chairperson
2	Dr. Danish Tamuli, Asstt. Prof., Dept. of Soil Science, CA, AAU, Jorhat.	Member
3	Mr. Prasanta Kumar Talukdar, AGM (North East Venture Fund), NEDFI	
4	Dr. Mantu Bhuyan, Scientist, CSIR, NEIST	
5	Mr. Hemendra Das, Innotech Agropostikum	
6	Mr. Akash Jyoti Gogoi, BAHUBOLI, Jorhat	
7	Dr. Atul Borgohain, Assoc. Director of Extension Education, AAU, Khanapara	Convenor
8	Dr. R.N. Sarma, Professor, Dept. of PBG & Co-ordinator, NISP, AAU	

Sd/- T.K. Gohian, ACS,
Registrar,
Assam Agricultural University,
Jorhat-785013.

Memo No. AAU/2.6(25)-2021/RG/2021-22/ 10,224-286

Dtd. 21/09/2021

Copy for information and necessary action to:-

1. The Secretary to the Vice Chancellor, AAU, Jorhat-13.
2. The Chairman & Managing Director, NEDFI, GS Road, Guwhati-06.
3. The Director, NEIST, Jorhat-06
4. The Dean, Faculty of Agriculture/Vety. Science/Community Science/Fishery Science, AAU, Jorhat/Khanapara/Raha.
5. Comptroller, AAU, Jorhat-13.
6. The Joint Registrar, AAU, Jorhat/Khanapara.
7. Dr. Atul Borgohain, ADEE, AAU, Khanapara.
8. Dr. Prasanta Kumar Talukdar, AGM (North East Venture Fund), NEDFI, Ghy-06.
9. Dr. R.N. Sarma, Prof., Deptt. of PBG and Co-ordinator, NISP, AAU, Jorhat.
10. Dr. Mantu Bhuyan, Scientist, CSIR, NEIST.
11. Dr. D. Tamuli, Asstt. Prof., Dept. of Soil Science, CA, AAU, Jorhat.
12. Mr. Hemendra Das, Innotech Agropostikum
13. Mr. Akash Jyoti Gogoi, Bahuboli, Jorhat.
14. Office copy.


Registrar,
AAU, Jorhat-785013.