

NIFT Foundation for Design Innovation (NIFT Design Innovation Incubator)

(A Section 8 Company set up by National Institute of Fashion Technology)

(Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India)

NIFT Campus, Hauz Khas, New Delhi – 110016

I. Brief about the Project

A NIFT Design Innovation Incubator is being set up to provide a menu of services in the domains of Textiles for Home and Spaces, Lifestyle accessories, Smart wearables and Apparel including activewear and athleisure.

The NDII would give potential entrepreneurs access to infrastructure and specified services as well as facilitate collaborations relevant for business development. The facilitation provided by NIFT would include pre incubation, incubation and accelerator services. These would cover developing a viable product, validating the product and scaling up the validated product. The Incubation centres are being set up in 3 campuses of NIFT as:

1. Home and Spaces (New Delhi)
2. Smart wearable systems (Mumbai)
3. Fashion and Lifestyle accessories (Mumbai)
4. Apparel including athleisure and activewear (Chennai)

The three locations have been proposed keeping in view the presence of industry, advisors, mentors and experienced NIFT Faculty. The project will align with the objectives and deliverables of various incubation schemes, and will partner with other incubators in IITs, IIMs and Central Universities.

The three categories of stakeholders of the incubator would include:

1. The first category (incubatees) are the ones who wish to undertake an entrepreneurial venture and would include NIFT students, faculty, NIFT alumni and also other external candidates who wish to take up NIFT incubation support.
2. The second category (promoters) are potential sponsors of ideas and could include Industry or individual sponsors, Angel investors, venture capitalists, crowd funding sources, Government institutions and other funding organization.
3. The third category of stake-holders are the facilitators and could include Artisans and Master Craftspersons, Advisors, Industry mentors, NIFT faculty mentors, Collaborators & Networkers, IPR experts, Legal experts etc.

The NDII and its Regional Incubator will provide a unique opportunity to leverage the living legacy skillsets of the artisan community to develop product/business ideas to reach out to unexplored markets. Artisans and craftspersons will also be connected to the incubator through the textile repository database, and incubatees looking at ethnic wear and craft based interventions would be linked up with them. The artisanal community therefore would participate in the programme as trainer, enabler and facilitator, and as budding entrepreneur in their own right.

II. **Operational structure of NDII**

A Section 8 Company NIFT Foundation for Design Innovation is registered with the following structure under the Companies Act to house the NDII which will govern the three Regional Incubators:

Founder members

1. Chairman NIFT
2. DG NIFT
3. JS Ministry of Textiles
4. Dean (A) NIFT
5. Head Projects (NIFT)
6. Head Industry and Alumni Affairs (NIFT)
7. Two Industry representatives (to be decided)
8. Directors of the NIFT campuses hosting the Design Innovation Incubation Centres (Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai)
 - 1 CEO, selected from the market, located in New Delhi
 - 1 COO for each Incubator Lab (Faculty on internal deputation, failing which to be sourced from the market)

Members of the Board of Directors

1. Chairman (Chairman NIFT)
2. DG NIFT (Vice Chairperson and head of executive committee)
3. Industry Expert (Apparel)
4. Industry Expert (Home Textiles)
5. Industry Expert (Smart Wearable Technology)
6. Industry Expert (Fashion Accessories)
7. Representative of FICCI/CII/NASSCOM
8. Representative of Ministry of Textiles
9. Dean (A), NIFT
10. Head Projects NIFT
11. Head Industry and alumni affairs
12. COO Chennai
13. COO Delhi
14. COO Mumbai
15. CEO NFDI – Member Secretary

(All members would be ex- officio, except the Industry representatives, who would be nominated by the Board of Governors of NIFT)

III. **NDII facilities**

Incubation support Facilities -

- Infrastructure provider
- Service provider for Facilitating the Prototype development/ sampling process, Quality Assurance and Testing, Costing and Other services Industry support

- Identification of mentors from the industry specific to the product and the market, who can engage with the beneficiary on an end-to-end basis
- Expert lectures/ specific coaching by industry stalwarts for market understanding, pitching of ideas and technical understanding
- Networking with Alumni who run their own businesses, and benefitting from strategic partnerships / knowledge sharing with them

Knowledge support

- Access to investors – Identification of agencies for funding of projects, bridging to governmental schemes, venture capitalists and angel investors
- Facilitate Access to network to Leverage Brand partnerships with existing businesses, or Identification of supply chain opportunities with other businesses
- Peer learning – create platform for peer to peer interactions and workshops

Legal support

- Access to regulatory requirements, specifically for target markets identified
- Access to expertise on legal requirements- Bridging through to connect the beneficiary to resources who can handhold in correct documentation, testing, certifications and legal clearances as well as business practices.
- Creating a viable IP strategy through the use of market-friendly and acceptable trademarks, and providing knowledge for the leverage of good trademark practices. The Design Innovation Incubator can also provide able partnerships in the provision of GIs for product ideas and development involving indigenous arts and crafts.
- Aiding in best practices for an ethical business; with specific focus on sustainable practices. The DII also envisages an active network with CSR engagements in the fashion industry, and to connect the beneficiary with practitioners for the right fitment of initiatives.

IV. **Administrative support structure**

1. Finance officer cum Administrator: The administrator shall be responsible for coordinating the activities of the Incubator and organizing the screening committees meetings, monitoring activities and seeking approvals on day-to-day matters from competent authority. The overall handling of finance function including accounts, settlements, budgets and audits and reports will vest with this officer.
2. The Business support Officer: Shall be responsible for the overall liaison of the Incubator with all stakeholders like government agencies, angel investors, Venture capitalists, industry entrepreneurs, for funding of projects and organizing investor meets with incubatees.
3. The Legal Officer: Shall be sourced from the market. Will be responsible for IPR related interventions, management, and advice.

4. The Regional incubator shall have a COO who would be a faculty of NIFT taking up the work as additional responsibility as per the NIFT project policy, or on internal deputation, depending on the working hour requirement.

Each Regional Incubator would have its list of advisory services and mentors that would form part of the overall Design incubator pool. Each Centre will have an Internal Mentoring team. Once the team is allocated the mentoring and monitoring of the progress shall commence.

The infrastructure and professional expertise available at NIFT would be utilized to the optimum for supporting the DII. The existing lab facilities in NIFT campuses would be available at designated times for use by incubatees. The usage would be costed for which guidelines will be developed by the Society in consultation with NIFT. A database of NIFT students and alumni who are willing to provide portfolio development, visual documentation and/or social media promotion services to the incubatees on monetary consideration would be developed. Besides this, students and faculty would be involved in undertaking classroom projects/research work/internship/graduation projects, which would help address specific issues for which the incubatee is seeking solutions. The faculty of NIFT would also be part of the internal teams that will screen applicants, provide mentorship services and facilitate industry linkage.