



IIT Mandi Catalyst invites Applications for Startup Grand Challenge

- ***In the 5th Edition of Himalayan Startup Trek, Startups will get Rs. 5 lakh cash prizes and upto Rs. 50 lakhs funding opportunity***

MANDI, 15th November 2021: Indian Institute of Technology Mandi's Technology Business Incubator is hosting fifth edition of its Annual Flagship Event, Himalayan Startup Trek (HST) on 11th and 12th December 2021. In its fifth edition, ***HST 2021 will host the 'HST Startup Grand Challenge' - startup pitch competition*** in three thematic areas including:

- ***The New Age Alliance - Human-Computer Interaction*** with a prize money of INR 2 Lakhs [Sponsored by iHub and HCI Foundation, IIT Mandi]
- ***The Foothill Innovators Challenge - Build for the Himalayas*** with a prize money of INR 1.25 Lakhs [Sponsored by SJVNL and Compliance Support]
- ***The Habitable World Challenge - Environment and Sustainability*** with a prize money of INR 2 Lakhs [Sponsored by ALSiSAR Impact, Peak Ventures, The Solar Labs]

Startups, innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs can participate in this challenge and get an opportunity to win Rs. 5 lakh cash prizes and Rs. 50 lakhs funding opportunity during the event. The last date to apply is 25th November 2021.

The event aims at bringing together the stakeholders of the Indian Startup ecosystem and providing a platform to young entrepreneurs to pitch their ideas for incubation support and to raise funding from investors. The event is supported by HP Center for Entrepreneurship Development of HP Industries Department. Applications can be filled on the [event website](#).

Inviting the aspiring entrepreneurs to participate in Startup Grand Challenge, Prof. Puran Singh, Faculty-in-charge, IIT Mandi Catalyst, said, "HST has been the gateway to Catalyst's incubation program for startups from across the country. The thematic startup grand challenge this year is the latest feature in HST. We are building capacity and expertise in these three areas and intend to handpick committed startups for support."



The New Age Alliance - Human-Computer Interaction theme of HST Startup Grand Challenge will focus on usage of computer's intelligence and computation capabilities in decision making, prediction, estimation, communication, and processing. Under this theme, participants can pitch in their ideas related to -

- Brain-computer interaction
- Assistive technologies to aid and enhance human functioning and decision making
- Use of advanced technologies to enhance the cognitive abilities of humans
- Use of computer's intelligence to aid human decision making, prediction, communication, and processing

The Foothill Innovators Challenge - Build for the Himalayas theme will revolve around addressing the issues relevant to the local terrain, population, environment, ecology, or focus on taking local products and offerings to the world by building supply chains, storage, or building capacity at different value chain levels. Startups and aspiring entrepreneurs can participate under this theme with their ideas related to -

- Hill road safety, disaster prevention, and management
- Demand and supply-side challenges to Himalayan agriculture
- Vocal for local - interventions to scale local products and services
- Rural development - education, skill training, and employment

The Habitable World Challenge - Environment and Sustainability aims to enable startups and innovators who strive to make the world a more livable and habitable place for all species. The specific problem statements of interest under this theme include clean & renewable energy, waste management, e-vehicles, green solutions, recycling, and natural resource management. Climate change and natural resource management. Startups, innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs working in this sector or budding entrepreneurs can pitch their ideas related to -

- Renewable and clean energy solutions
- Waste management and recycling
- Any other solution in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals





Each thematic areas have prize money of up to INR 2 Lakhs to be distributed to the top 3 startups in the given themes. Apart from this, top startups will also be provided with incubation support and funding access for prototyping as well product development through various funding schemes hosted by Catalyst and provide upto INR 50 Lakh of funding.

It is notable that in its short journey, IIT Mandi Catalyst has supported over 160 startups in a range of sectors including clean energy, healthcare, enterprise management, agriculture, manufacturing, biotech, education, and consumer internet. Catalyst has hosted over 100 such programs to date. Further, the funding needs of startups in the early stages are also met through the funding schemes hosted at Catalyst. ***Catalyst, to date, has disbursed or committed over INR 6 Cr for prototyping and commercialization purposes to the startups.***

Through its support programs, IIT Mandi Catalyst guides early stage entrepreneurial initiatives by providing support in infrastructure, finances, mentoring, and industry connections, thereby making itself an attractive destination for startups across the country.

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About IIT Mandi

IIT Mandi has four Academic Schools and three major Research Centers. The Schools are: School of Computing and Electrical Engineering, School of Basic Sciences, School of Engineering, and School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Centers are: Advanced Materials Research Centre (AMRC; set up with an investment of Rs. 60 crores), Centre for Design and Fabrication of Electrical Devices (C4DFED; has Rs. 50 crores worth of fabrication tools), and BioX Centre (has acquired research equipment worth Rs. 15 crores).

The unique, project-oriented B.Tech. curriculum is centred around its 4-year long Design and Innovation stream. From August 2019, IIT Mandi started 3 new and unique B. Tech. programmes in Data Science and Engineering, Engineering Physics, and Dual Degree in Bioengineering. Since the inception of the Institute, IIT Mandi faculty have been involved in over 275 Research and Development (R&D) projects worth more than Rs. 120 crore.

IIT Mandi set up the IIT Mandi iHub and HCI Foundation (iHub; a section-8 company) on its campus at Kamand with significant funding of INR 110 crores from the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India. The iHub is planned to fuel research and technology development, skill development, startup and innovation, and collaborations in the



HCI and allied AI/ML areas in India. IIT Mandi is the only second-generation IIT to be featured at rank no. 7 in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements of the Innovation Cell, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

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