



ASSOCHAM Odisha State Development Council
Presents
O-LEADS Startup Excellence Awards 2026
Call for Nominations





Introduction

The **ASSOCHAM Odisha State Development Council** is pleased to present the **O-LEADS Startup Excellence Awards 2026**, an initiative to recognise and celebrate outstanding achievements by startups, entrepreneurs, incubators and ecosystem enablers who are driving innovation, investment, job creation and economic development. The Awards seek to honour organisations that have demonstrated excellence in innovation, scalability, business growth, technology adoption, sustainability and entrepreneurial leadership.

The **O-LEADS Startup Excellence Awards 2026** will be conferred during the **O-LEADS 2026**, providing winners and nominees with a prestigious platform before policymakers, investors, industry leaders, academia and ecosystem stakeholders from across India and beyond. Through this nomination, ASSOCHAM invites eligible startups and ecosystem organisations to showcase their achievements, gain national recognition and contribute to strengthening Odisha's position as a leading hub for innovation and entrepreneurship in Eastern India.

The Significance of Startups and Innovation in Odisha's Economic Development

Startups are emerging as key drivers of economic growth, technological advancement and employment generation, playing a vital role in shaping the future of Odisha's economy. By fostering innovation, encouraging entrepreneurship and developing scalable business solutions, startups contribute to increased productivity, investment attraction and the creation of sustainable livelihoods across sectors. They also strengthen local value chains, promote indigenous technologies and enhance the competitiveness of the State in national and global markets.

With proactive policy support, a growing network of incubators and academic institutions, and an expanding base of entrepreneurs, Odisha is steadily building a vibrant startup ecosystem. Encouraging and recognising entrepreneurial excellence through initiatives such as the **O-LEADS Startup Excellence Awards 2026** will inspire innovation, accelerate business growth and reinforce Odisha's vision of becoming a leading startup and investment destination in Eastern India.

ASSOCHAM: Driving Industry, Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Established in **1920**, **ASSOCHAM (The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India)** is one of the country's premier industry bodies, representing the interests of more than **4.5 lakh members** with over **70 Sector and State Councils** through its extensive network of companies, trade associations and professional bodies. For over a century, ASSOCHAM has played a pivotal role in shaping India's economic and industrial landscape by fostering policy advocacy, promoting sustainable growth and strengthening collaboration between government, industry and academia.



Nomination & Selection Process

The evaluation process will be conducted through a structured and transparent assessment methodology.

Stage 1: Nomination Review

All nominations will be screened for eligibility, completeness and category relevance.

Stage 2: Technical Evaluation

Shortlisted nominations will be assessed based on predefined evaluation criteria by the Jury Panel.

Stage 3: Jury Assessment

The High level Jury Panel will review shortlisted entries and determine the final award recipients.

Jury Panel

The nominations will be evaluated by an independent and distinguished Jury Panel comprising eminent leaders from the startup ecosystem, venture capital firms, industry, academia and innovation institutions. The jury will assess entries through a transparent and robust evaluation process based on innovation, scalability, business performance, market potential, sustainability and overall ecosystem contribution.

Jury Composition

- Senior Government Officials from Startup Odisha and Government of Odisha
- Leading Venture Capital Fund Managers and Angel Investors
- Successful Startup Founders and Entrepreneurs
- Industry Leaders and Corporate Innovation Heads
- Heads of Incubators, Accelerators and Innovation Centres
- Academic Leaders from Premier Institutions
- Technology, Investment and Startup Ecosystem Experts

Evaluation Criteria

Entries will be evaluated on the basis of:

- Open to recognised startups, emerging ventures, incubators and accelerators operating in India, with a preference for organisations having a presence or significant contribution in Odisha.
- Applicants should demonstrate a strong commitment to innovation, entrepreneurship, technology adoption, business growth and ecosystem development within their respective sectors.



- Nominations will be evaluated based on innovation, scalability, market impact, business performance, sustainability, social or economic contribution, and overall excellence in the selected award category.
- For the Emerging Startup of the Year category, the startup must have been incorporated within the last two years from the date of nomination.

Award Ceremony

The **O-LEADS Startup Excellence Awards 2026** will be presented during the **O-LEADS 2026** in a high-level ceremony facilitated by **senior representatives of the Government of Odisha**. The event will bring together policymakers, industry leaders, investors, venture capital funds, startup founders, incubators, accelerators, academia, international business leaders and **foreign delegates**, providing a prestigious platform for recognising excellence in entrepreneurship and innovation. It will serve as a distinguished forum to showcase Odisha's entrepreneurial success stories and reinforce the State's growing position as a hub for innovation, investment and startup-led growth.

Award Nomination



Nomination Fee	Deliverables
Rs. 20,000/- + 18% GST	• Nomination for one Category • 3 Complimentary Delegate Passes • Access to All Panel Discussions • Access to Startup & Innovation Exhibition • Access to B2B & Networking Sessions • 10% Discount on Exhibition Stall 

Bank Details for Payment:

Beneficiary Name	The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)
Bank Name & Address	HDFC Bank Limited, 4/48, Malcha Marg Shopping Complex, New Delhi
Savings Bank A/c Number	05031110000062
IFSC Code	HDFC0004711
MICR Code	110240432



Annexure 1

O-LEADS Start-up Excellence Awards 2026

10th October 2026, Bhubaneswar

Nomination Form

(Last date of Award Nomination is 15th September 2026)

(Award Nomination Fee is Rs 20000/- per award category plus 18% GST)

1) Name of the Start-up:

2) Location (City, State):

3) Complete Address:

4) Website:

5) Name of the Director/Head:

6) Name of the Contact Person

7) Telephone & Email:

8) Mobile No.:

9) GST No (If not applicable, please share declaration letter):

10) Year of Establishment:

11) Recognition Details:

12) Award(s) Applied for (Nomination Fee Rs 20,000/- per award entry plus 18% GST also included one delegate):

A) _____

B) _____

C) _____

13) Payment Details:

Cheque No. & Date	Bank Details & Branch Name	Amount (Rs)	Note if any

Bank Transfer transaction No	Bank Details & Branch Name	Amount (Rs)	Note if any

Documents to be Enclosed:

- **A brief project report (maximum 1,000 words)** outlining the startup's journey, business model, innovation, key achievements, market traction, scalability, and its contribution to the selected award category, including its impact on **job creation, wealth generation, economic development and societal value**.
- **For multiple award category nominations**, a separate project report and supporting appendix must be submitted for each category.
- **Supporting evidence**, such as product brochures, pitch decks, case studies, client testimonials, photographs, media coverage, patents, certifications or other relevant documents demonstrating the startup's **innovation, impact, growth, customer adoption and business excellence**.
- Organisation profile or company brochure, along with the **Certificate of Incorporation** and **DPIIT Recognition Certificate (if applicable)**.
- **Details of funding, revenue growth, employment generated, strategic partnerships, customer base, exports, market expansion or other business milestones** that demonstrate the startup's progress and contribution to the economy.
- **Any additional supporting documents**, including awards, innovation credentials, intellectual property, ESG or sustainability initiatives, social impact metrics, or recognitions that strengthen the nomination.

Terms & Conditions:

- The nomination fee is non-refundable and non-transferable under any circumstances.
- Only duly completed nomination forms submitted along with the applicable fee and supporting documents will be considered for the evaluation and shortlisting process.
- Organisations may apply for one or more award categories, provided separate nominations are submitted for each category.
- The identity and contact details of the screening committee and Jury Panel shall remain confidential. Any attempt to influence the evaluation process may result in immediate disqualification.
- ASSOCHAM reserves the right to verify the information submitted and may seek additional documents or clarifications, wherever necessary.
- Any false, inaccurate or misleading information provided in the nomination may lead to rejection or disqualification at any stage of the evaluation process.
- The Jury's decision shall be final and binding on all applicants, and no correspondence regarding the outcome will be entertained.

Award Categories

O-LEADS Startup Excellence Awards 2026 – Award Categories (Please select the appropriate Award Category and indicate whether you are applying for Startup of the Year or Emerging Startup of the Year)							
Sl. No.	Award Category	Startup of the Year (For startups incorporated for more than 2 years with demonstrated business growth and impact)			Emerging Startup of the Year (For startups incorporated within the last 2 years, showcasing high innovation and growth potential)		
1	AI & Deep-Tech						
2	Health-Tech & MedTech						
3	Best FinTech						
4	AgriTech & Food Innovation						
5	Climate-Tech & Sustainability						
6	Renewable Energy & CleanTech						
7	EV & E-Mobility						
8	Aerospace & Defence						
9	EdTech & Skilling						
10	Women-led Startup of the Year (Minimum Shareholding 50%)						
11	Incubator of the Year	Categories					
		Agri & Forestry	HealthTech	DeepTech	FinTech	EdTech	Impact in Rural & Social Economy

For any further clarification(s), please contact the undersigned:

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THE ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY OF INDIA (ASSOCHAM)

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