

PROGRAM INFORMATION: EDITION 1

1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

THE GAP: You Have Momentum, But Do You Have Scale?

You have crossed the hardest hurdle: you have a product, and people are willing to pay for it. And now you face the "Growth Chasm." The strategies that got you to this stage won't get you to your first ₹10 Crores.

Startups at your stage often stall due to invisible friction:

- **Business Model Maturity:** You have sales, but your unit economics are bleeding.
- **Market Position:** You are competing on price rather than value or differentiation.
- **Capital Access:** Investors want to see a machine that turns ₹1 into ₹10, but your financial story is still "under construction."

"Walchand e^xponential" is a high-intensity, **growth-stage accelerator** designed to transition validated ventures from **Market Validation Stage to Market Scale**.

Moving beyond generic incubation, e^xponential covers four critical sectors of the Indian economy. Uniquely, our selection process is governed by a "4-Point Impact Framework." We do not filter startups merely by technology; we filter them by their ability to act as specific levers of impact.

2. THE CORE PHILOSOPHY: THE 4 IMPACT AREAS

Every applicant must map their value proposition to at least one of these four impact areas.



Impact Area 1: The Human Aspect (Reducing Labour & Drudgery)

- **The Mandate:** To humanize the workforce by eliminating the "3D" jobs—**Dirty, Dangerous, and Difficult**.
- **The Focus:** We seek technologies that remove the physical burden from the human body. This includes mechanization that replaces back-breaking farm labor, robotics that eliminate hazardous manual scavenging, and ergonomic solutions that reduce fatigue. The goal is to improve the **Human Physical Drudgery Index (HPDI)**.

Impact Area 2: The Business Aspect (Efficiency & Profitability)

- **The Mandate:** To boost profitability, productivity and efficiency in industry through superior unit economics.
- **The Focus:** We look for products that drastically improve yield, speed, or safety. Whether it is precision agriculture increasing crop output or industrial IoT reducing machine downtime, the solution must demonstrate a clear, quantifiable ROI. This area focuses on **Productivity, Inclusivity, and Safety**.

Impact Area 3: The Industry Aspect (Future Ready & Resilient)

- **The Mandate:** To build systems that can not only create industry-wide improvements but also withstand external shocks—be it climate change, pandemics, or supply chain disruptions.
- **The Focus:** We prioritize solutions that improve, strengthen and immunize the industry. This covers IT-enabled upgradation, climate-risk management, digital twinning, import substitution and cybersecurity. The objective is to ensure **Excellence, Continuity and Stability** in a dynamic and unpredictable world.

Impact Area 4: The Pioneer Aspect (Transformative Frontier Technologies)

- **The Mandate:** To leapfrog incremental improvements and establish entirely "New Norms" of operation.
- **The Focus:** We support deep-tech ventures that fundamentally rewrite the rules of the game. This involves shifting from land-based farming to aeroponics, from kinetic weapons to directed energy, or from road transport to hyperloop. This area is dedicated to **Transformative Innovation**.

3. EDITION 1: PRODUCTION TECH (Mar 2026)

Focus Areas: **Agriculture and Manufacturing**

In **Agritech**, we prioritize solutions that transition farming from subsistence to high-value commerce. This includes smart mechanization and drones to drastically reduce physical drudgery, alongside precision technologies that ensure chemical-free, export-compliant produce. By leveraging IT-enabled systems for quality enhancement and traceability, startups can secure global market access while maximizing yield.

Simultaneously, the **Manufacturing** track drives the transition to Industry 5.0, emphasizing a symbiotic Human-Machine Interface (HMI). We seek Robotics, Automation, and IIoT innovations that set new global benchmarks in process development and efficiency. A key focus lies on import substitution for critical industrial components and fostering export-oriented, environmentally friendly manufacturing ecosystems.

4. OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

The program is delivered in a **Hybrid Mode** to ensure founders can scale their business without pausing operations. The 6-month journey is split into two distinct phases.

Phase 1: The Startup Clinic (Months 1-4)

Focus: Strategic Refinement & Documentation

This is the intensive "Refining" phase. Startups undergo a rigorous restructuring of their business to meet industry and investor expectations. This includes the following aspects [note: (G) indicates group session; (I) indicates 1-on-1 session; all sessions are 2 hours]:

1. **Assessing the current business situation (week 1)**
2. **Opportunity definition (week 2)**
3. **Positioning strategy planning (weeks 3 – 7)**
4. **Execution and operations planning (weeks 8 – 10)**
5. **Market readiness planning (weeks 11 – 12)**
6. **Investor readiness planning (weeks 13 – 14)**
7. **Finalise all documentation and media (weeks 15 – 17)**

Highlights of Phase 1:

- **Group Coaching: 8 Sessions (2 Hours each).**
- **Individual Mentoring: 10 Sessions (2 Hours each).**

- *6 Topics* by domain-specific **Experts**.
- *10 Sessions* with **WEIC Team**.
- **Industry Mentoring: 5 Hours for each Startup**
- **Key Deliverables:** By the end of Month 4, every startup must produce:
 - A 3-Year Strategic Scale-up Plan.
 - Investment-Grade Presentation Decks and Media Kits.
 - Standardized Product/Service Documentation.
 - A Due-Diligence Ready Data Kit.
- The flow of the program sessions is indicative only and may be varied by the organisers if required.

Phase 2: The Market Interface (Months 5-6)

Focus: Fundraising & Access

Once the venture is "Investor Ready," we open the doors to the ecosystem. This includes:

- **Investor Pitching:** Curated engagement with our pool of Angels, VCs, and Impact Funds.
- **Follow-on Access:** Facilitated 1-on-1 meetings with interested investors.
- **Market Enablers:** Direct connections to corporate partners for Paid Pilots and Proof-of-Concept (PoC) opportunities.

5. SELECTION CRITERIA

e^xponential is a growth accelerator. We seek startups that demonstrate maturity for scaling up their business to the next level. To identify such growth-ready startups, the following filtering criteria shall apply:

1. **Readiness: TRL 6+** (Operational Prototype demonstrated in a relevant environment).
2. **Validation: Revenue Potential** (Invoices generated; willingness to pay proven).
3. **Alignment:** Explicit mapping of the product to at least one of the **4 Impact Areas**.

6. SELECTION PROCESS

The cohort selection shall have the following steps:

1. Online application submitted by Startups
2. Internal screening by WEIC team as per following criteria:
 - a. Startup is registered with DPIIT
 - b. Revenue generation potential demonstrated
 - c. Technical due diligence to verify TRL 6+ status
 - d. Founder's commitment to full attendance
 - e. Value proposition assessment and impact area alignment
3. Selection committee pitch by shortlisted startups
4. Final 5 selected based on scores by committee members, based on following criteria having equal weightage:
 - a. Business viability and scalability – market size, growth potential, profitability
 - b. Technology and moat – differentiation, fit for use, IP defensibility
 - c. Manufacturing readiness – operations planning, process understanding, ease of manufacturing
 - d. Team and coachability – technical expertise, business acumen, depth of industry understanding, attitude towards coaching
5. If a startup declines offer of admission, the next ranking startup shall be made the offer.

7. PROGRAM TIMELINE

The 6-month accelerator timeline shall be as follows:

1. Preparation activities not included in the 6 month period:
 - a. Advertising call for applications (3 weeks)
 - b. Initial screening (2 weeks)
 - c. Scrutiny by committee (1 week)
 - d. Finalisation and onboarding (2 weeks)
2. Commencement of Phase 1 – Week 1 to 17 (total 4 months)
3. Commencement of Phase 2 – Week 18 to 26 (total 2 months)

8. KEY OBLIGATIONS OF STARTUPS

To ensure commitment and alignment, participating startups must adhere to the following terms:

A. Program Fees & Attendance

1. **Admission Fee:** ~~The selected startup shall pay a one time admission fee of Rs. 30,000/- (+ 18% GST, if applicable).~~ Waived off.
2. **Non-Refundable Policy:** This fee is non-refundable, if the startup chooses to discontinue the program after 3 weeks from commencement.
3. **Mandatory Participation:** Founders must commit to attend **all** scheduled coaching and mentoring sessions (online/offline) for the entire duration of the program.

B. Legal & Commercial Terms

1. **Agreement:** Founders must execute a formal Accelerator Agreement with WEIC prior to the commencement of the cohort.
2. **Consideration for Support:** Startups must choose **ONE** of the following three options as consideration for the services provided:
 - **Option 1 (Success Fee):** Payment of a **3% Success Fee** to WEIC on capital raised.
 - **Option 2 (Sweat Equity):** Transfer of **5% Equity Shares** to WEIC as sweat equity.
 - **Option 3 (Revenue Share):** Sharing of **5% of Net Revenue** with WEIC for the next **3 Financial Years** post program completion.

9. WHY US? The Legacy of Nation-Building

Walchand College of Engineering (WCE): You are not joining a pop-up accelerator; you are joining a legacy. For over 75 years, WCE has been a pillar of engineering excellence in India. Our alumni have built the infrastructure, industries, and technologies that power this nation. This deep technical DNA ensures that your product is validated against rigorous engineering standards, not just market hype. *Visit:* www.walchandsangli.ac.in

Walchand Innovations (WEIC) WEIC is the specialized innovation vehicle of WCE. We bridge the gap between ideation and commercial viability. We function as a "Testbed for Frontier Technologies", offering you access to technical labs, deep-tech mentors, and a network that understands the nuances of building a successful venture. *Visit:* www.walchandinnovations.org

10. EXPECTED IMPACT

Walchand e^xponential aims to deliver:

1. **Social ROI:** Elimination of **100x hours** of human drudgery/hazardous labor.
2. **Financial ROI:** Creation of **Scaled Ventures**.
3. **Strategic ROI:** Indigenous development of **critical technologies**.
4. **Visionary ROI:** Establishment of **WEIC** as a test-bed for **Frontier Technologies**.

READY TO SCALE?

Applications Close: 20th February 2026

Program Starts: April 2026

Click here to apply - <https://www.walchandinnovations.org/incubation/exponential>

Don't just grow. Go **e^xponential**