

National Innovation Foundation (NIF)

A synonym for Indian Rural Innovations

NIF is a flagship organization promoting Rural Innovation in India. It was set up in March 2000 under the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India. It is to strengthen grassroots technological innovations and support outstanding traditional knowledge in India. It encourages grassroots innovations via awards, exhibitions, and publications. This mission supports rural innovators by documenting, validating, and supporting their innovations.

So far, NIF gathered 3,45,000 unique and distinct technological ideas, innovations, and traditional knowledge practices from 625 districts of the country. It recognized 1145 grassroots innovators and school students at the national level in its annual Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Ignite Awards and National Biennial Grassroots Innovation Awards.

Every year, DST and NIF organize the INSPIRE – MANAK competition for Indian High School Students. INSPIRE stands for Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research and MANAK is Million Minds Augmenting National Aspiration and Knowledge. School students compete with unique and creative ideas and innovations.

By organizing Awards like these, NIF encourages innovators through recognition. NIF also publishes research reports, case studies, and success stories. Offers training and mentorship for grassroots innovators.



Key Functions

Scouting, Documentation & Database Management: It identifies, gathers, and records grassroots innovations and recognizes the outstanding traditional knowledge and practices all over India. Works with the Honey Bee Network to contact rural and tribal communities, particularly, villagers, farmers, artisans, and students.

Value Addition, Research & Development: NIF collaborates with research institutions, laboratories, and supports the prototype development. It enhances and filters the grassroots innovations through scientific validation.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Protection: NIF helps innovators in patent filing and protecting their IPR, i.e., patents, copyrights, and trademarks.

Business Development and Commercialization: NIF facilitates innovators to commercialize their ideas through partnerships with industries and businesses. It runs Micro Venture Innovation Fund (MVIF) for financial support.

Policy Advocacy and International Collaboration: NIF advises policymakers on innovation-led development and collaborates with international organizations to promote Indian grassroots innovations globally.

Recent focus of NIF is on Agriculture and Farming, Healthcare and Traditional Medicine, Renewable Energy and Environment.