White Paper from the Roundtable Discussion

on

Ecosystem Support for Startup Innovation in Climate Action

Organized by AIC-IIIT Hyderabad

on

17th October, 2024

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Acknowledgments

The success of this white paper and the roundtable it summarizes would not have been possible without the support and insights of numerous individuals and organizations.

- **Host**: This event was made possible by AIC-IIITH and IIITH, and we extend our gratitude to the staff of IIITH for their assistance in arranging the venue and catering. Special thanks to AIC-IIITH's Director, Prof. Ramesh Loganathan, and CEO, Ravi Sarkunan, for their leadership, and to Abdul Mujeeb of AIC-IIITH for his role in organizing logistics.
- **Contributors**: We wish to thank Simmi Sareen of Climake and Rashi Agrawal for their comments on the concept note. This event would not have been possible without the aid of Charu Dhyani and Shantanu Sharma of ProZero Carbon, Kunjpreet Arora of Angirus Ind Pvt Ltd., Ms Archana Suresh and team from T-SIG, Roshan D'Souza of Surge Impact, and Priyanka Sajja of Artha Samarth Consultancy in identifying relevant participants. Our gratitude also goes to Mr. Gareth Wynn Owen, British Deputy High Commissioner of AP and Telangana, for providing an international perspective. Also, thanks to Aravind Kannan of The Sustainability Mafia for helping connect with relevant startups for the survey.
- **Minute Keepers**: A special thank you to Anasua Tewari from AIC-IIITH and Vaishnavi Beerapalli from Surge Impact for capturing key discussions and insights.
- **White Paper Author:** This document was authored by Rinkesh Dharod of AIC-IIITH and edited by Ravi Sarkunan.
- **Volunteers**: Our appreciation extends to Iraa Swasti and Rakam Thirupathi, Climate Fellows from Surge, for their invaluable help in organizing the event.

Finally, we thank all participants for their engagement, insights, and commitment to advancing climate action. This collaborative effort reflects the collective drive for sustainable innovation and impactful climate solutions.

Executive Summary[1]

The roundtable on "Financial and Non-Financial Support for Startup Innovation in Climate Action," organized by AIC-IIITH, served as a closed-door session that brought together diverse stakeholders including startups, innovators, government representatives, corporates, investors, incubators, and academicians. The event's purpose was to explore ways to strengthen the financial and non-financial support available for climate-tech startups in India.

Key Themes and Insights

The roundtable discussions centered around two primary themes:

1. Partnerships and Collaborations in support of Startup Innovation in Climate Action: This was divided in two sub themes
    a. **Policy Environment and Support**
        i. Participants highlighted both opportunities and challenges in the current policy framework supporting climate-tech startups. While policies like Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) create new avenues, existing policies often lack the specific focus needed to help startups secure initial customers and scale.
        ii. Participants pointed to knowledge gaps, process inefficiencies, and delays in policy updates as barriers. Notably, the need for streamlined, proactive policy-making was underscored, especially in comparison to other regions like the EU.
        iii. Suggestions included a call for incubation centers to act as centralized repositories of curated, startup-relevant policy information, as well as for startups to proactively engage with these resources to stay informed on evolving policies.
    b. **Non-Financial Ecosystem Support**
        i. The discussion also covered the critical role of non-financial support, where incubators, academia, and industry associations emerged as key enablers. Academia contributes through research, validation, and resources like testbeds, while industry associations can connect startups with corporations and help in industry-driven innovation.
        ii. Recognizing the fragmented ecosystem, attendees emphasized the need for structured platforms and open access to tools like impact measurement and

[1] The executive summary was generated with support by OpenAI's ChatGPT

decarbonization platforms to help startups navigate challenges beyond funding. The urgency for targeted support in Tier II and Tier III cities was also highlighted to promote regional growth and inclusivity in climate action innovation.

2. **Funding Landscape and Alternative Finance Options**
    a. A significant portion of the discussion was dedicated to the gaps in funding for climate-tech startups. While there is substantial early-stage funding from the government and private investors, mid-cycle funding is often lacking. The mismatch of expectation between Investors and Climate Startups and the limited availability of patient capital remains a key issue.
    b. Participants underscored the need for climate startups to build visibility, develop scalable business models, and clearly communicate their value propositions to appeal to investors. They also discussed the importance of investors bringing sector-specific expertise into their evaluation processes.
    c. Alternative financing options such as carbon credits, green credits, and the Social Stock Exchange were reviewed, though challenges like market inaction, policy uncertainty, and eligibility restrictions continue to limit these as viable funding options.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The roundtable highlighted the critical gaps and opportunities in supporting climate-tech startups. While India's policy environment is generally favorable, additional alignment with international standards, dedicated incubation support, and enhanced mid-cycle funding mechanisms are needed. This collaborative effort underscores the potential of climate-tech innovation and the shared responsibility of all ecosystem players to enable sustainable impact through policy, financial backing, and ecosystem support.

Context

AIC-IIITH the social-tech incubator of IIIT Hyderabad organized a closed-door brainstorming roundtable meeting on "*Financial and Non-financial Support for Startup Innovation in Climate Action.*" The objective of the roundtable was to bring together key stakeholders to explore opportunities and address challenges in financial and non-financial support for climate-tech startups in India. By facilitating discussions and collaborations among startups, innovators, government representatives, investors, incubators, and academicians, the roundtable seeks to catalyze investment, accelerate innovation, and drive tangible impact in the fight against climate change. The list of participants who attended the Round table discussion is appended [Annexure I].

Format and Methodology

The discussion was structured in 2 parts with each part having a focused discussion on specific topics listed below where panelists share their inputs, observations & suggestions.

Sub-topics for Discussion:

1. **Partnerships and Collaborations**: Explore the importance of partnerships and collaborations between startups, investors, government bodies, and academia in driving climate innovation.
2. **Funding Landscape and Finance Options for Scaling Impact:**
   Delve into the current investment landscape and various finance options available for investing in climate-tech startups, including venture capital, impact investing, schemes, CSR and green bonds.

The sub-topics were shared with participants in advance in a concept note with the invite. In preparation for the roundtable discussions, a short anecdotal survey of startups within our network was conducted to better understand the needs of startups, based on the recommendations of Ms. Simmi Sareen, a fellow participant. The results of the survey [Annexure III] were used to guide our conversation and shared with participants beforehand. To ensure a collaborative and productive exchange of ideas, a set of scaffolding pointers were shared with all participants a day before the round table. [Annexure II]

I. **Partnerships and Collaborations:**

The first round of discussion focused on ecosystem support available for Startups working in the area of climate action. The survey results were shared with participants via a presentation to frame the discussion. The same was divided into two sub-topics of policy environment and non-financial support.

A. Policy Environment

Policy support, gaps and barriers

Policy itself is a leveler. Policies like Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) can provide a lot of opportunity for startups creating new opportunities. Government has also mandated Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) for ESG reporting for the top 1,000 listed companies, which creates opportunities. PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana is an important scheme. However, there are significant barriers and gaps exist like:

- **Primary aim is broader**: Primarily policy especially at broader level is not designed for startups or innovators and may or may not help startups to get their first customers
- **Knowledge gap**: There exists a significant knowledge gap in dissemination of policy to entrepreneurs as Innovators and Entrepreneurs are focused on their products and are not policy experts.
- **Process issues**: While policies are curated to help; process is difficult; Monetizing Policy opportunities may be difficult.
- Moreover, there are significant gaps and delays in the implementation timeline.

Fluidity of Policies

Policies need constant updating. Yet, unless the changes in policy take into account all the implications, there could be detrimental effects.

- **Pace of change**: Generally, the Government is slow in coming up with policies and updating them. There is a need for urgency on part of the Government to be more proactive on climate. BRSR introduced by the government is a great step but needs to be fast tracked in its adoption and reach.
- **Fast tracking policy**: Policymakers are slow to react, especially in India, compared to other countries. Policymakers must align with international policies like CBAM, which is a bold step

by EU to monitor export to Europe. Understanding CBAM and enabling Indian exporters and suppliers needs to be on the radar.

- **Risks:** At the same time too many policy changes happening in quick succession makes investments in Climate Startups extremely difficult. Founders also find it difficult to stay updated with changes.

Policies happen at multiple levels

Policies are made at all levels (global, national, etc.) and these are at times scattered in terms of objectives and priorities.

- **Origin**: Climate action industry itself started as a compliance mechanism created by Kyoto Protocol which set targets for emission. This creates a need for solutions to reduce emission and for emissions trading. Startup innovation seeks to fill these roles.
- **Downstream implications** exist for everyone for policies. For e.g.: ESG reporting is mandated by SEBI only for top 1,000 listed companies. However, supply chain is also included and thus these guidelines also apply to MSME suppliers of the top 1000 companies. This awareness is lacking.
- **Interconnections:** Climate cuts across all multiple sectors and the government is trying to connect everything in policy terms.
- **State level focus:** Central and state level policies can be different. States are proactive when policies which attract investments and generate employment but are slow in cases where policies have significant fiscal implications like Climate Action where there is a need to conduct studies, understand long term impact and then design and implement policies. States also have integrated policies but they are working to address lack of awareness especially among MSMEs and get feedback from industries.

Role of Incubators and Ecosystem

Considering multiplicity and fluidity of policies there is need for one stop solution to help climate entrepreneurs keep a tab on all policies.

- **Need**: There is a need for a structured platform and/or repository as it becomes overwhelming for climate entrepreneurs to keep track on their own.
- **Repository:** Incubation centers can be a repository guide for entrepreneurs. They can create a set of curated policies for all startups. It will help entrepreneurs have clarity and leverage policies.

Responsibility of Startup Founders

Climate entrepreneurs have to keep themselves updated with all the policy changes to be able to identify risks and opportunities owing to policy changes.

- **Listen to Incubators**: Climate Startups need to spend time with incubation centers and incorporate their advice and implement.
- **Be proactive:** Startup founders also need to take responsibility to understand evolving policies.

Corporate Policies

Even corporate policies have a significant impact on Climate Action Startups.

- **Focus**: While Corporations create policies for their own business objectives, they are quite receptive to innovative climate solutions, especially if it aligns with their agenda. Climate Startups need to modify their pitch accordingly.
- **Support and Synergy**: Corporates need to proactively support Climate Startups, especially where there is synergy. For e.g. some of the CSR funds can be earmarked towards research and innovation focused startups.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** Generally, corporate engagement with Startups is via project-based mechanism and a long pay cycle is challenging for Climate Startups. However, many corporations have created special mechanisms to advance the pay cycles for startups.
- **Scale**: A core element that climate Startups need to keep in mind is that their innovation is relevant to Corporates only if they have the capacity to implement their solution at scale.

Academia

Academia can help in fast-tracking policies by providing research to direct policies. It can also provide talent to help in policy implementation.

Learning from International Experience

India can learn a lot from international experience like in the UK to understand the process of policy-making.

- **Start**: Policy-making is universally hard, especially in the beginning for new sectors.

- **Continuous Process:** Innovation related policies need a continuous review and correction as innovation moves faster than policies and regulations. This needs ongoing conversation with all stakeholders.
- **Funding**: In order for policies to be successful, there is a need for adequate funding which is the key element. In sectors like Climate Innovation there needs to be big investments from the government.
- **Support:** Government support is also needed to ensure success. Government support can be in the form of enablers in different sectors and hubs for all innovators. For e.g. UK Catapult Network.

B. Non-financial Support

There is a lot of Non-financial Support available for Climate Action Startups and Innovators. At the same time there are gaps and barriers.

Academia

Academia is an important support pillar to help Startup Innovation in Climate sectors.

- **Research:** Research done in academia forms the backbone of Innovation. There are programs and funding available to translate this research into solutions. Faculty routinely act as expert consultants to solve specific problems in a proposed solution.
- **Resource:** Academic institutions provide support to Climate Startups from Test beds for solutions, coworking spaces, mentors etc. For e.g. Smart City Living Lab test bed at IIITH. Startups can use this to validate solutions. These results then can be used to secure Government support and/or funding.
- **Synergies Exploration**: Best way to leverage academics is to help identify social problems which are easily solvable with tech. This can be done by mapping these problems to identify gaps. There is a need to connect with people who know problems and people who solve them. Startups can also arrive at problems from solutions.

Enablers

In terms of the support from enables like Incubators, the discussion highlights both opportunities and gaps.

- **Ecosystem Fragmented:** Support ecosystem for startups is fragmented.
- **Thought Process**: Our standard education does not facilitate entrepreneurship. It is difficult to make a researcher think like an entrepreneur. Incentives for enablers can help fill some of the gaps and help build a strong pipeline for startups. For e.g. Climate startups school by Climate Collective.
- **Industry Collaboration**: Industry associations should treat Startup founders as early industry leaders. They can act as a bridge to connect Startups with decision makers/CEOs in their sectors. They can provide some funding for startups and help in evaluation of startups by VCs. Associations can also collaborate with academia to help bridge some gaps. For e.g. ELECRAMA initiative of IEEMA.

- **Open Platform**: Enablers can also create/provide open platforms to provide hand-holding support to startups like impact measurement tools to quantify impact, designed based on specific business models, simple tools to auto generate results; provide impact certification as well; decarbonization platform to connect industries with startups; showcase solutions. These can be valuable and help ensure founders focus on core solutions.
- **Urgency of Focus and Action:** Climate crisis needs to be approached with urgency as a lot of time has been lost especially in the area of policy, which is a patience game. Also, policy makers and enablers need to focus more on Tier II and Tier III cities. Funding is also needed to scale solutions. The Carbon Trading market in India is not functioning. It needs to be designed with Indian filters. At present it has too many filters which are hurdles.

II. Funding Landscape and Finance Options for Scaling Impact

The second part of the roundtable focused on funding support for Climate Startups. The survey results were shared with participants via a presentation to frame the discussion. The discussion highlighted the following key insights into challenges and opportunities in both traditional investment and grant funding and in alternative funding options.

A. Investor and Grant Funding

The Opportunity and Gaps of Funding Landscape

- **Funding Available:** As a general view, funding in terms of money is available. Enough funding for early-stage startups is available from the Government, though it is uneven, and some startups are refusing funding. Over 250 Climate Startups were funded in India last year. Over the last decade, the UK Government has developed a strong investment partnership with India. The investment portfolio is around £2.3billion, supporting over 600 start-ups and MSMEs, including many in the climate innovation space, and targeted at technology driven entrepreneurs focused on inclusion and ESG.
- **Focus**: Most funding is in the agriculture and energy sector. But renewable energy is taking a back seat and seen as a mature sector. Grant/seed funding has especially moved on. For e.g. in Solar, it is not limited to community solar projects and not commercial scale ones.
- **Dual Dilemma**: There is a double dilemma in the funding landscape for Climate Startups. Investors complain about a lack of a good pipeline of fundable Climate Startups. On other hand, startups are unable to get necessary funding.
- **Gap in Landscape**: Available funding does not cover the full startup life cycle for climate startups. Pre-seed and seed funding are easier to secure (INR 50 Lakhs - INR 2 Crores) and so is scaling funding beyond INR 10 cr. Whereas, compared to these stages series A, B, and C funding is hard to come by.
- **Expectations Mismatch:** There is a mismatch between expectations of Climate Startups and Investors. Climate Startups, especially those seeded via grant articulate their story in terms of Impact, whereas investors are looking at startups in terms of business and scale.
- **Grant Landscape:** Similarly, gaps exist in the grant funding landscape too. There is a missing level between seed grant and scale up grants for Climate Startups.

What Startups Need To Do.

There are actions that startups can take to improve:

- **Visibility:** Climate Startups need to build visibility to gain traction with investors. Investors need at least some visibility on potential business and scale of Climate Startups. A well-spoken founder who can articulate this has an advantage with Investors.
- **Storytelling:** Telling a better story is an important element in gaining visibility. The founders of Climate Startups need to articulate their stories very clearly.
    - **Transition from Grant:** Storytelling helps raise more money and jumping from grants to commercial money is difficult. They need to articulate how their solution will move beyond grants and how it can become a big business.
    - **Value Proposition:** Startups need to articulate their specific gap in the problem that they are solving.
    - **USP:** Centre their comparative advantage in their presentations.
    - **Investor Language:** Startups need to speak the investor in an easy language, without technical jargons and articulate the solution in terms like ROI, etc.
- **Clarity:** There is a need for clarity on the position of the startups. Are they in the climate mitigation or climate adaptation sector? Whether impact is their core focus or a by-product of their solution, etc. They have to find funding accordingly as different investors have different focuses.

Nature and Role of Founders

An underappreciated element in securing investors is the nature of the role of founders. What they know and do can be a decisive element.

- **Understanding what Investors Want:** Investors are custodians of other people's money and they have their own commitments. Hence, if the value created is not communicated clearly there will be no investments. The Startups tend to have focus on short term and granular elements of startups whereas a long-term focus is needed to communicate value to investors.
- **Start Early:** Founders need to start the process of seeking funding early. Fundraising is an afterthought for new startups who are struggling with other challenges, until they utilize their existing funding. This can lead to failure in raising funds or low valuations.

- **Understand the Business:** Many startups have too much focus on solutions as they are product specialists and are good with technology. They have little idea of other elements like the financial side of a business, pitching, etc. Similarly, researchers who turn into product developers have no idea about scaling up processes. They need to templatize finances to get the language right. Also, they need to build capacity to cover all the elements of a business.
- **Awareness:** Founders need to have awareness of the wider ecosystem as funding is generally available.
- **Leadership Role:** It is clear that Founders of Climate Startups need to be allrounders but many are not. Founders need to be trained better and also learn how to manage others. More importantly, they need not be the leader. They can learn from the US and UK where founders are not always the leaders of the Startups they have started.

What Investors Need To Do.

There are actions which investors also need to take to ensure more support and better accessibility of funding for climate startups.

- **More Allocation:** More allocation of funding to the climate sector and more dedicated climate fund is essential first step.
- **Understand the Sector:** Investors need to understand how to evaluate Climate Startups and not use the same parameters as they do for the other startups right now. Funders have to have knowledge of everything that goes on in the sector to understand the potential opportunity.
- **Use Expert Help:** Investors generally are not experts in the climate sector. Getting relevant experts on their panels can be useful.
- **Patient Capital:** Funding for Startups in middle cycles is needed. And this funding needs to be from patient capital. There are many investors who invest small amounts of seed capital/grant in lots of startups and those who give scaling grants, invest in established ones. However, there are not enough funders for climate startups in the middle of this cycle.

Data Focused Investing

Data has become a focus of both investment and innovation. In the climate sector this is reflected in sectors like the carbon market and investor focus. But this is not always a positive.

- **Data Market:** There is a market to monetize data in the climate sector via mechanisms like Carbon market. Moreover, Climate Startups that have more data capturing ability can articulate more value to investors.
- **Data as Hindrance:** However, too many Venture capitalists are focused on data, which can hinder investing in Climate Startups, most of which are not data-focused.

B. Alternative Funding Options

Issues in Carbon Market

Overall, there are three distinct carbon markets - compliance, voluntary, certified. Voluntary market is not a main funding source. Carbon markets are also global in nature. However, Carbon markets which are a potential funding source are facing a lot of challenges.

- **Lack of Action:** There was inaction on climate for the last 12 years since 2012 and a lack of mandatory mechanisms. Even now the Paris framework is still under development. International policies need to be followed in India. Usage of Renewable Energy Certificates, and energy Attribute Certificates has stopped.
- **Dead Market:** Carbon markets have been dead for the last 18 months due to various regulatory/legal issues though they have a long-term future. However, uncertainty will continue for the next 12 months. Only carbon credits that can be monetized right now are afforestation related.
- **Moral Hazard:** There need to be minimum criteria for companies buying carbon credits to ensure that it doesn't become a source of increased emission.
- **Future Hope:** India has a complicated carbon credits policy which makes monetization difficult. However, the UN is going to come up with its own mechanism to monitor the carbon market which will help facilitate trade.

Green Credits

The green credits market is also not fully mature. Market needs implementation of DMRV (Digital Monitoring Verification) to ensure there is no chance of data manipulation. Market faces the problem of over-crediting. There is no recognized compliance mechanism for the likes of the U.N. Considering market uncertainties, the core business model should not be reliant on green credits. Plastic credits market is also not active. Most activity in the green credit market is seen in the bio charcoal market.

Social Stock Exchange (SSE)

SSE is another pool but it is growing very slowly. It faces systemic issues. Moreover, at present only non-profits can access SSE. The framework needs to change to make it an accessible and available pool for for-profit Social Startups.

Other Alternative Finance Options

There are quite a few alternative Finance options available for Climate Startups.

- **Lack of Awareness:** Term loan; supply chain financing, etc. can be good options but awareness is lacking in startups about these.
- **Guaranteed Funds:** Some organizations like Shell Foundation and SIDBI like guaranteed funds which help Climate Startups.
- **Assets Leasing:** Assets can be bought by investors and given to customers on lease, easing the capital requirements for climate startups. For e.g. Climake assets leasing

Conclusion and Takeaways

While there is a lot of support available for climate startups, there are also significant gaps.

Policy Environment

- Policies happen at multiple levels and there are downstream impacts which all stakeholders need to be aware of.
- At the National level policy is supportive, but it suffers from a lack of focus and arbitrary changes. At the same time, it is not responsive enough to the needs of Climate startups.
- At the State level, its focus is more on attracting investments and generating employment and not climate action.
- Corporate policy can be supportive, but depends on the needs of individual corporations and alignment with their goals.
- We can learn from international experience that policy needs to be a continuous process and most importantly backed by necessary resources.
- Policy advocacy is an important dimension that is generally ignored by startups and ecosystems.

Non-Financial Support

- Startup ecosystem, especially incubators and academia, need to take a leading role in making policies accessible to startups. Incubators can take a lead in policy advocacy.
- Academia plays an important role in generation and validation of tech solutions for Climate action.

- Industry collaboration is an important element in many areas like policy, customer connect, and market access.
- Startups need to be proactive in taking support of all the ecosystem resources. They also need to be aware of opportunities and risks owing to policy changes.

Financial Support

- There is financial support and investor interest in Climate Startups but there are significant gaps.
- Support is uneven across the startup lifecycle and patient capital is needed for mid-cycle startups.
- More funding needs to be allocated to Climate action sectors.
- There is a mismatch of expectations between Investors and Climate Startups.
- Climate Startups and Founders need to make an effort to make themselves investable by building a scalable business model, building necessary leadership capacity and presenting their story in a manner that meets investor needs.
- Investors should understand the needs of the sector better and use experts' help where necessary.
- Alternative finance options are available for Climate Startups, but there are a lot of problems and hurdles in options like Social Bonds, Carbon and Green Credit markets, etc.

About

AIC IIITH

AIC-IIITH is an Atal Incubation Center at IIIT Hyderabad, focused on incubating and supporting technology-based social enterprises. AIC-IIITH's mission is to leverage entrepreneurial energy and technological innovation to address critical societal challenges, including climate change, and to help India meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The incubator offers startups access to resources, mentorship, and financial support, creating a robust environment for innovation.

AIC-IIITH, launched with support from AIM, NITI Aayog, has supported **60+ Social Impact Startups**, including **20+ in the Climate, Circular Economy, and Waste Management** sectors. Through its programs, it has facilitated the creation of 430+ jobs and helped its startups raise over ₹78 crore in funding.

For more information, please contact: aiciiith@gmail.com
Visit our website: https://aic.iiit.ac.in/
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LinkedIn: AIC-IIITH Foundation

IIITH

The **International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad (IIITH)** is one of India's premier institutions for computer science research. Founded as a not-for-profit public-private partnership in 1998, IIITH is known for its research excellence, applied solutions, and robust startup ecosystem. The institute houses **CIE**, one of the country's largest academic incubators, and **AIC-IIITH**, a social tech incubator focused on sustainable and social impact-driven startups.
IIITH has supported over **400+ startups** and engaged **10,000+ entrepreneurs**.

Annexure

Annexure I: List of Participants

Name	Organization
Aditya Arya	IEEMA
Aftab Hussain	IIITH
Aravind Kannan	Sus Mafia
Bharadwaj Purihella AVP	State Street
Charu Dhyani	ProZero Carbon
Gareth Wynn Owen	UK Govt.
Harsh Shah	Oikocredit
Jeeten Desai	Ambiator
Jeewak Jadhav	EVRE
John Mota	EPAM Systems
Kiran Kumar Alla	Plug Power
Manish Tiwari	Cero Smart Mobility
Nikita Naidu	Climate Action Consultant
Poulomy Banerjee	Climate Collective
Priyanka S	Arthasamarth
Rashi Agrawal	Banyan Nation
Roshan DSouza	Surge Impact
Dr. Sachin Chaudhari	IIITH
Simmi Sareen	Climake
Sreyashee Das	AIC-Synapses Innovation Foundation
Srinivas Cherla	RICH
Swetha Tipparaju	Caspian
Vijay Kumar Machcha	Climate Change and Sustainability Advisor
Asmita Tiwari	Caspian
Naga Durga Babu Nainala	RICH

Annexure II: Scaffolding pointers

For Partnerships and Collaborations

1. How are the policies, programs, and processes set up by the ecosystem helping or hindering climate innovation? **[For innovators/startups/NGOs]**
2. Based on the issues identified in the survey, what actions or proposed actions do you have that support innovators? **[For Ecosystem]**
3. What areas do you feel innovators and/or other actors are lacking? **[For Ecosystem]**
4. What areas do you feel you are lacking, if any? **[For Ecosystem]**
5. What are the opportunities and gaps in the ecosystem for collaboration with startups? **[Academicians]**
6. Any opportunities, ideas, or experiences regarding collaboration opportunities? **[Everyone]**

Funding Landscape and Finance Options

1. How is the traditional funding landscape serving climate innovation? **[For innovators/startups/NGOs]**
2. What barriers do innovators face in the traditional funding options landscape, especially non-ROI barriers? **[For innovators/startups/NGOs]**
3. What areas related to funding do you feel innovators and/or other actors are lacking? **[For Ecosystem]**
4. What funding opportunities (investments/grants/connections) do you offer for climate innovators? [For Ecosystem]
5. Are there collaboration models in terms of funding that link research with market application and the translation of research into market solutions?
6. Any opportunities, ideas, or experiences on alternative funding opportunities? [Everyone]

Annexure III: Startup Survey result

AIC-IIITH
TECHNOLOGY FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY HYDERABAD | CIE ACCELERATING DEEP TECH

Roundtable On Financial and Non-financial Support for Startup Innovation in

Climate Action

17th October 2024

AIC-IIITH

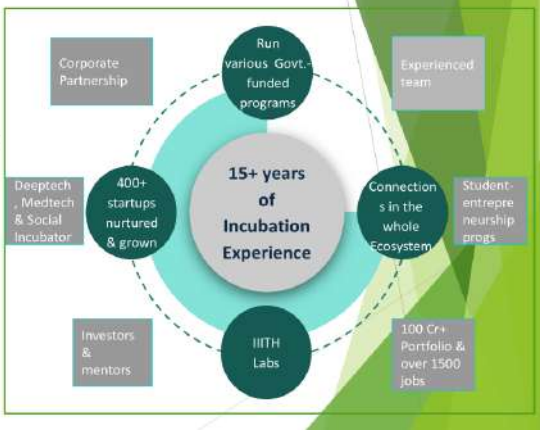
About AIC-IIITH

- AIC-IIITH FOUNDATION is an Atal Incubation Center exclusively supporting tech-based social startups.
- **Mission**: Deploy entrepreneurial energy & technological innovation for social impact to help India achieve the SDGs.
- AIC-IIITH is based in the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE), **IIIT-Hyderabad** and is supported by **Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog.**
- CIE is a cluster of incubation centers and research labs in IIIT Hyderabad.

AIC-IIITH

About IIITH

- Leading institution for computer science research in India
- Apart from strong research, IIITH houses one of the largest academic incubators
- What sets IIITH apart is the institute's focus on Applied Research, Innovation, Industry Connect and Startup Ecosystem.
- Supported 400+ startups and engaged 10,000+ Entrepreneurs.



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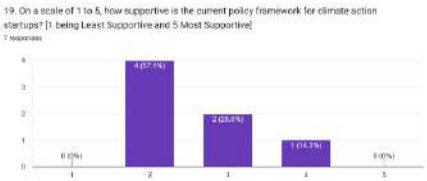
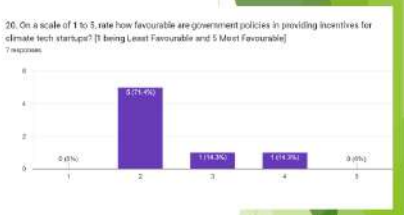
Survey Results -**Policy**





1. Existing policy frameworks and incentives are not seen as supportive enough

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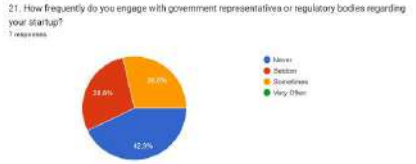
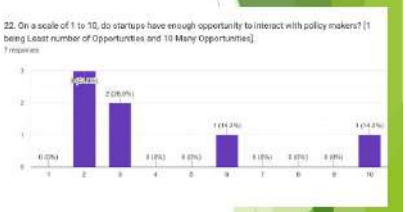
Survey Results -**Policy**





1. Level of Interaction and engagement with Govt and Policy makers is low to never.

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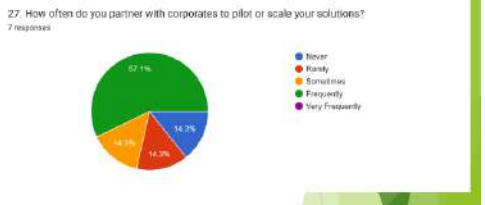
Survey Results -**Policy - Summary**

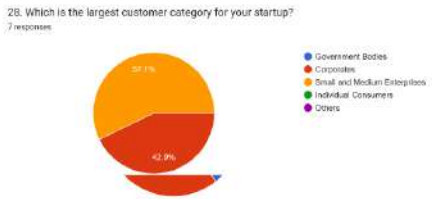
- **Key policy hurdles**
  - Lack of mandates for climate resilience and/or compliance/implementation for climate action by stakeholders
  - Policy infrastructure is lacking [undeveloped Carbon market /platforms for credit transfers]
  - Regulatory environment lacks clarity and is described as chaotic
- **Specific policy changes or support programs that would significantly benefit your startup**
  - Increased disclosures
  - Carbon credit framework & mandates
  - Tax concessions
  - Labs to test the product

Survey Results -Customer and Corporate Access



- Corporate support in terms of access for sales and pilot ranges from average to good.

Survey Results -Customer and Corporate Access



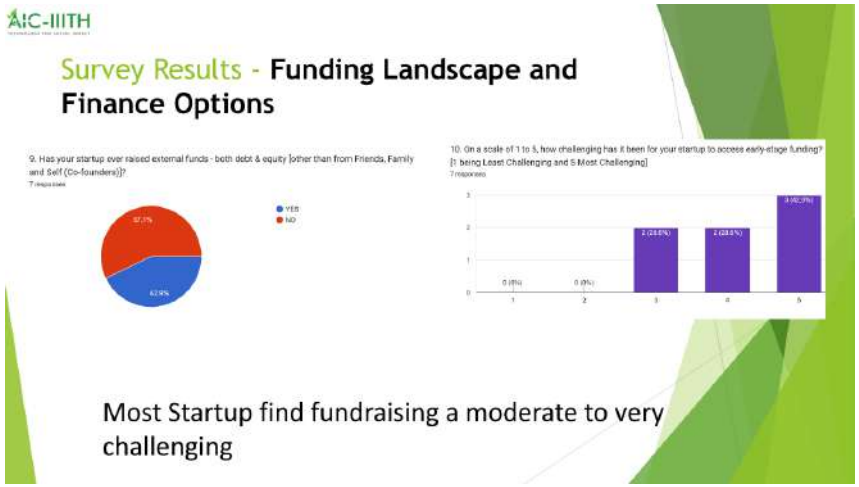
- However most of the customer base is still SMEs.

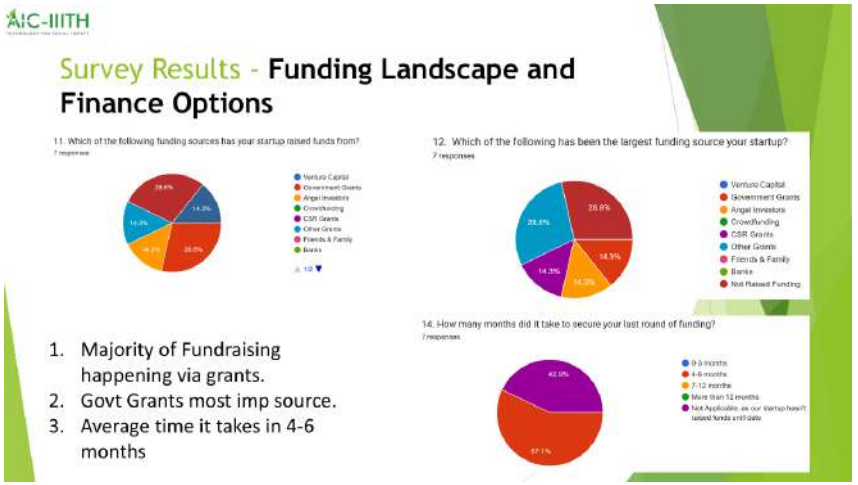
Survey Results -Customer and Corporate Summary

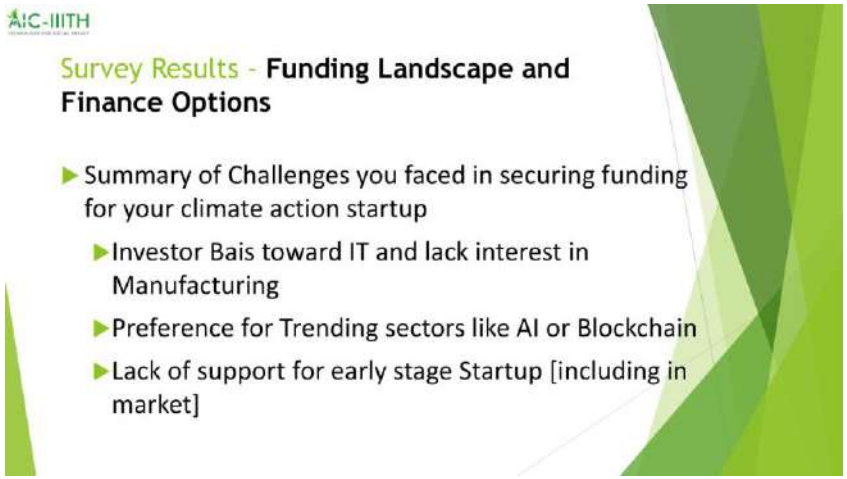
- Main barriers your startup faces in order to access corporate clients
  - Long Pay cycles and lack of support from Procurement Unequal bargaining power and lack Brand Credibility
  - Lack of access and Need for POC
- Receptiveness of are corporates towards adopting climate action solutions from Startups
  - Mixed experience, some are receptive but the barrier in terms of awareness, data availability and slow response times

Survey Results -Customer and Corporate Summary

- Support or initiatives to help better reach potential customers, especially in corporate sectors
  - More access to decision makers
  - Improve budgeting provisions for Climate action
  - More compliances
  - More corporate pitching sessions/Match making sessions







Links:

- Full PPT: AIC-IIITH_2024 Roundtable On Innovation in Climate Action.pdf

Annexure III: Gallery