Indian Institute of Science
भारतीय विज्ञान संस्थान

INDUSTRY INSTITUTE CONCLAVE

KNOW HOW SHOW HOW

COMPETITION

Innovation Pathfinders League IPL 2026

A dedicated IISc inventors track within the Industry-Institute Conclave — giving emerging innovators a stage to pitch their research commercialization plan to industry.

Participant Guidelines

IISc INNOVATION PATHFINDERS LEAGUE 2026

An IISc Research-to-Innovation Challenge

Transform Your Research into Real-World Impact

🏆 **Cash Rewards for Winners**

About the Challenge

IISc Innovation Pathfinders League (IPL) 2026 invites IISc students and researchers to explore and pitch how their research outcomes can create tangible, real-world impact.

Over one month period, teams will explore how to commercialize their research through one of three proven pathways — Technology Licensing, Startup / Spin-off, or Research Collaboration — and develop a clear commercialization strategy for their work.

Selected teams will then pitch their strategy at the Industry Institute Conclave (IIC) 2026, in front of a panel of technology transfer professionals, industry experts, entrepreneurs and investors.

Who Can Participate?

- Open to IISc researchers (Students, Staff, Faculty, Alumni)
- Team size: 2–4 researchers (at least one Faculty Advisor)
- Research should preferably be at Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 2 or above (proof of concept or beyond)
- Research must be supported by an intellectual property asset — a filed patent application, granted patent, design registration, know-how, or other protectable IP
- At least one team member must be a named inventor on the associated IP
- One application must be submitted per IP, per commercialization pathway — if a team wishes to pursue more than one pathway for the same IP, or is applying with more than one IP, a separate application is required for each combination

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Thematic Areas

Participants may submit under one of the following:

- **Life Sciences & Health Technologies:** Therapeutics | Diagnostics | Medical devices | Drug delivery | Digital health | Wearable & Remote Monitoring | Implants & Prosthetics | Biomaterials & Cell Engineering | Medical Imaging & Imaging Analytics | Biosensors & Bioelectronics | AI for Healthcare | Precision Medicine | Omics & Molecular Technologies | Biomanufacturing & Bioprocessing
- **Energy & Sustainability:** Batteries | Advanced materials | Polymers | Green chemistry | Water technologies | Circular Economy & Recycling | Waste Management & Valorization | Hydrogen & Renewable energy | Grid & Power Systems | Energy Efficiency & Conservation | Carbon Capture, Utilization & Storage | Critical Minerals & Resource Recovery
- **Physical–Digital Convergence:** AI & ML | Robotics & Autonomous Systems | Embedded Systems & Edge Computing | IoT | Semiconductors & Microelectronics | Quantum technologies | Sensors & Sensing Systems | Autonomous Vehicles & Mobility | UAVs | Digital Twins & Simulation | Industrial Automation & Smart Manufacturing | Human–Machine Interaction (HMI) | Extended Reality (AR/VR/XR) | Connectivity & Communication Technologies | Cloud, Edge & Distributed Computing | Photonics & Optoelectronics | Space & Defence Technologies

Choosing the Right Commercialization Pathway for your IP

Every team selects the route best suited to their IP: Technology Licensing, Startup/Spin-off, or Research Collaboration. Below are fundamental principles, drawn from established Technology Transfer practices, to help you evaluate the best fit.

1. Technology Licensing

Key Principles:

- Suitable when the IP is mature, ready for immediate application, and has clear market demand.
- Ideal for direct commercialization without heavy operational involvement from the inventor/team.
- Focus on revenue generation through royalties, fees, or milestones with an established company.
- Choose this pathway when the technology is validated (proof-of-concept or prototype stage) and can be integrated into an existing company's product line.
- Best when the inventor prefers limited ongoing involvement after transfer.
- Licensing provides faster market entry, lower risk for the inventor, and steady revenue streams (royalties, upfront fees).
- Consider if there is strong IP protection and interest from multiple potential licensees.

- Effective for incremental innovations or technologies that complement large firms' portfolios.

2. Startup / Spin-off

Key Principles:

- Appropriate for disruptive, platform technologies or early-stage innovations with high growth potential but requiring significant development.
- Best when the inventor/team is passionate about building a company and has entrepreneurial interest.
- Focus on equity, long-term value creation, and scaling the technology independently.
- Select this when the IP has strong differentiation, broad applicability, and the team is ready to drive commercialization.
- Ideal for novel solutions addressing unmet needs where no suitable licensee exists or where control over development is important.
- Startups allow higher upside potential through equity but involve higher risk, need for funding, and operational commitment.
- Global best practices show equity-based models work well for university spin-offs, especially with strong founder involvement.
- Consider market size, competition, and availability of incubation/support.

3. Research Collaboration

Key Principles:

- Suitable for early-stage or foundational IP needing further validation, co-development, or additional research.
- Ideal when the goal is joint advancement with industry while retaining academic control.
- Focus on shared R&D, funding, and future commercialization opportunities.
- Choose this pathway when the technology requires more data, testing, or iteration before licensing or spinning off.
- Best for building long-term partnerships, accessing industry expertise/resources, and generating sponsored research funding.
- Allows continued academic involvement, publications, and potential for future licensing/spin-off.
- Common in complex or interdisciplinary technologies where co-creation adds value.
- Practices emphasize clear agreements on IP ownership, milestones, and data sharing to align interests.

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General Advice for Decision-Making:

- Assess Technology Readiness Level (TRL): Higher TRL → Licensing; Lower TRL → Collaboration or Startup.
- Evaluate Market Readiness and your Team's Goals (revenue now vs. long-term impact vs. research focus).
- Consider Risk, Resources, and Control you are willing to take.

Note: This is a public conference — presenting confidential IP may be deemed disclosure and will constitute prior art. *If you are unsure, talk to IPTeL before finalizing your presentation*.

Timeline

Date	Milestone
23 Jul 2026	Applications Open
27 Jul 2026 – 21 Aug 2026	Workshops, Open House, Mentoring Sessions
23 Aug 2026	Application Deadline
3 Sep 2026	Shortlisted Teams Announced
10 Sep 2026	Final Pitch @ IIC 2026 Conclave Day

Submission Requirements

What to Submit?

- **Application Form** and **Pitch Deck** (Template given below)
- **IPL Registration link:** https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/wRHqJMBPn2
  Note: Need to be in IISc domain to access this form

How to Submit?

- Submit all materials through the registration link before 23 Aug 2026, 11:59 PM IST
- Name the file in the following format: TeamName_TeamLead_IPL2026

Pitch Deck Template

1. Team Details

- Team name
- Team Lead Name
- Team Members – Name, Degree, Department

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- Faculty Advisor – Name and Department
- Email and contact details

2. Research / IP Title

Provide a clear title for your research or intellectual property.

3. IP details

Briefly explain:

- What is your innovation?
- What are the unique features?
- What are the key performance parameters?

4. Commercialization Pathway

Select ONE pathway:

- ☐ Technology Licensing
- ☐ Startup / Spin-off
- ☐ Research Collaboration

5. Commercialization Plan (4-5 Slides)

Section	What to Address
Problem Statement	What challenge does your innovation solve?
Proposed Solution	How does your technology address this challenge?
Why This Route?	Why is licensing, startup, or research collaboration the most appropriate pathway?
Target Industry / Customer	Who would benefit? (e.g., pharma, semiconductors, automotive, hospitals, chemicals, renewable energy, agriculture, consumer products) How would they benefit?
Commercial Potential	Market need, competitive advantage, technology readiness, potential users/partners, business opportunity

Selection Process

- All applications are reviewed by a panel of experts against the judging criteria
- Shortlisted teams will be notified by email by 3 Sep 2026
- 15 shortlisted teams present their 10-minute pitch to the judging panel at the Final Pitch @ IIC 2026 Conclave Day on 10 Sep 2026
- Winners are selected by the judging panel
- The organizers' decisions on shortlisting and final awards are final

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Judging Criteria

- Uniqueness and strength of IP
- Problem definition & Impact of the solution
- Rationalization of the identified commercialization pathway
- Commercial Potential & Market Opportunity
- Quality and Clarity of Presentation & Pitch
- Presenting Team and contribution of each member

Judging Panel

The judging panel will consist of experts from a pool of industries / start-ups / MSMEs / legal firms / investors and representatives from IPTeL, FSID and BeST.

Awards

- Six award winning teams, selected across themes and commercialization pathways
- Total Prize Pool: ₹2 Lakhs, up to Rs. 50,000 per team for exceptional pitches
- Winning teams will receive certificates, cash prizes, and networking opportunities with industry leaders and investors

Learning Resources

To help participants prepare, organizers will provide:

- IISc research commercialization case studies
- Mentoring sessions, where applicable
- Workshops (on technology landscape, market assessment, guidelines for translation pathways)

Contact & Queries

- **Organizing Team:** IISc IPTeL, FSID, BeST
- **Email:** conclave@fsid-iisc.in | office.iptel@iisc.ac.in
- **Phone:** +91 8296038386

For questions on eligibility, pathway selection, or submissions, reach out to the organizing team well before the application deadline. The organizing team will be available during dedicated Open Office Hour for Queries.

Organized by

IPTeL

Foundation for Science Innovation and Development

IISc Innovation Council

BeST CLUSTER

Bengaluru Science and Technology Cluster