

**Institution Innovation Council (IIC) –
St. Francis College
IIC ID - IC202324361**

**IIC Policy Document
2023-24**

**St. Francis College,
Koramangala, Bangalore**

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1. PREFACE

St. Francis College, located in the center of Bangalore City, a pioneer institution in imparting world-class education, involves societally relevant research activities on multiple fronts. The vision of the college is to provide world-class education, foster research, and development, and encourage entrepreneurship, ultimately molding young men and women to assume leadership of the society for the betterment of the country. The Institution Innovation Council of St. Francis College (IIC) was established under the guidelines of MHRD and is dedicated to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship among its faculty members and students as a non-profit unit. The IIC of St. Francis College has been established to synthesize a vibrant innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem to develop indigenous and sustainable solutions for addressing societal needs. IIC supports staff, students, alumni, faculty members, and industry partners in creating successful business ventures that can translate the innovative ideas developed in the academic process to reach out to the public as products, processes, and services to benefit society at large, which reinforces the institution's overall vision.

The IIC policy document has been outlined by following the AICTE's 'National Student and Faculty Start-up Policy 2019' as a guiding framework. The IIC policy document will help the institution bring uniformity across various departments/academics and various cells with a multidisciplinary approach to promote entrepreneurship among the students and faculty members working with several domains of knowledge. It seeks to set clear guidelines and framework for innovative ideas developed by the college, IPR ownership management, idea-related licensing, and venture development thereby striving to create a smooth Innovation and Entrepreneurship ecosystem across the entire institution.

The vision, mission, and objectives of the IIC are given as under:

2. VISION

To establish a vibrant innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem to develop indigenous and sustainable solutions for addressing societal needs.

MISSION

- To create a strong innovation ecosystem encompassing young innovative minds of students and the research experience of faculty members to develop sustainable solutions for addressing the problems faced by industry and society.
- To promote entrepreneurship in the key thrust areas (as per MIC) by strengthening industry-institute collaboration.
- To partner with government, industry, alumni networks, angel investors, and venture capitalists to facilitate the smooth realization of innovations from ideation to the commercialization stage.

Long Term Objectives:

1. To establish an innovation hub with world-class pre-incubation facilities in collaboration with government funding agencies and ecosystem enablers.
2. To inculcate a culture of innovation and strong entrepreneurship capabilities among students and faculty members to incubate successful startups through the institution's incubation facility
3. To facilitate a good number of business ideas developed by faculty members and students.
4. Optimizing the use of resources towards innovation and entrepreneurship leading to attainment of higher ranks in various rankings of the Government of India and other start-up agencies.

Short Term Objectives:

1. To encourage the participation of students in various competitions involving innovation and business plan competitions and organize boot camps /Hackathons on campus at least once a year.
2. To encourage faculty members to attend and organize workshops /training/certificate courses on innovations, entrepreneurship, IPR, and venture development.
3. To develop a performance matrix to assess the contributions of faculty members/staff towards innovation and entrepreneurship and incentivize/reward the top performers on an annual basis.
4. To connect academic processes with innovation and entrepreneurship.

3 GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION

3.1 Institution Innovation Council

The institution has established an Institution Innovation Council (IIC) as per the guidelines of the MHRD Innovation Cell to promote and streamline the Research, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (RI & E) activities among the faculty members and students of the institution. The IIC and its functions are approved by the President, Governing IIC Council, St. Francis College.

3.2 Responsibilities

One of the primary objectives of the IIC is to develop and implement Research, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship (RI & E) strategy and policy for the entire institute in order to integrate entrepreneurial activities across various centers, departments, and faculties within the institute, integrating several disciplines of study.

The major responsibilities of the IIC shall include, but are not limited to:

- Organizing entrepreneurship promotion activities and events
- Supporting student and faculty members who work on entrepreneurial fronts with seed funding and organizing review meetings to monitor the progress of research, innovation, and entrepreneurship activities.
- Organizing networking events to create a platform for budding entrepreneurs to meet investors and pitch their ideas, in coordination with *Research and Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Incubation cells* at St. Francis College, wherever necessary.
- Coordinating with the *Research and Innovation Cell* at St. Francis College for IP licensing.
- Coordinating with the *Incubation Cell* at St. Francis College for incubation-related activities.

4. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The institution shall support the staff members and the students in innovation and entrepreneurship-related activities in the form of seed funding, mentoring, motivation, and incentives as detailed in the following sub-sections.

4.1 Use of College Resources and IP Rights

4.1.1 Use of Resources by college staff and students

The staff members and students are allowed to use the college resources such as laboratories, research centers, and other such facilities for their innovation and entrepreneurship activities. Certain facilities and instruments that are highly specialized will be charged nominally through the *Research and Innovation Cell* at St. Francis College. The use of space, resources, and incubation facilities available at the SFC Campus will be governed as per the *Incubation Cell* at St. Francis College norms if used.

4.1.2 Use of Resources by External Agencies and Alumni

The internal resources of the college are generally not accessible to anyone who is not associated with the college either as an employee or a student. When involving external agencies and collaborators, permission from the facility in charge or department head will be required duly forwarded by the *Research and Innovation Cell* at St. Francis College. This is applicable to the alumni of the college as well.

4.2 Seed funding

The institution may provide funding support in the form of seed grants to aspiring student innovators to develop early-stage prototypes. The ideas for funding will be identified through the *Research and Innovation Cell, Entrepreneurship Cell, and Incubation Cell Committees* at St. Francis College, set up for the purpose and the funds will be channelized through IIC. The IIC will be provided with a budget by the college to manage the activities. This allocation will be reflected in the college budget.

4.2.1 Inter-disciplinary clusters

Cross-departmental linkages shall be given special preference while selecting the ideas for seed funding described in the section. Hence, it is encouraged to form interdisciplinary innovation clusters to gain maximum utilization of internal resources and knowledge.

4.3 Mentorship and Guidance

The institution will provide the necessary mentorship and guidance for supporting innovation and entrepreneurship through IIC. An ICT-based *Innovation and Entrepreneurship* (I & E) Toolkit will be developed and made available for public access to faculty members and students of the institution through web and mobile user interfaces.

IIC will create and maintain a collaborative online platform for linking student start-ups so that they may be able to share their challenges, link with suitable mentors catalyze cross-pollination of innovative ideas, and leverage complimentary resources and skill sets.

4.4 Licensing of IPR to Startups

Ideally, the students are expected to create their startup based on the technology developed or co-developed by them. Alternatively, they may also use the technology that is owned by the college, by means of obtaining a license on the said invention, by paying a one-time license fee by following the existing norms of the *Research and Innovation Cell* at St. Francis College.

4.5 IP Rights and Ownership

Any IP developed by the incubated company while using college resources through the *Research and Innovation (R&I) Cell* at St. Francis College, procedures shall be the property of the company. However, before filing such an IP application, permission from the R&I cell of the college is necessary. Besides, the incubated company is expected to grant a non-exclusive, royalty-free license to the college to the IP generated by the company, so that the college can demonstrate them for noncommercial purposes and academic recognition.

5. ENTREPRENEURIAL ENGAGEMENT OF FACULTY MEMBERS

Supporting students in innovation and entrepreneurship-related activities will be considered a legitimate activity of the faculty members of the institution in addition to teaching, R&D projects, industrial consultancy, and other administrative duties. Senior faculty members are encouraged to mentor at least one startup in a year. Faculty members' participation in workshops/training programs/certificate courses on Research, Innovations, Entrepreneurship, IPR, and venture development would be encouraged so that they get better equipped to mentor aspiring student entrepreneurs. Product development and commercialization as well as nurturing of startups would be added to a bucket of faculty duties and such mentoring activities will be suitably motivated, rewarded, and reflected in the annual performance appraisal policy of the institution. The role of the faculty members in student startups may vary from being mentors, expert consultants, or technical advisors.

Depending on the kind of support provided by the faculty members, they may take their mentoring /consultation fee from the student startups in terms of profit share from the student startups after they start making profits. Such payments will be executed through the *Research and Innovation Cell* at St. Francis College, as per the prevailing norms of the institution.

Faculty members may dedicate up to four working days per month to start-up-related activities with due permission from the concerned Head of the Department, the Principal, and the Director/ Deputy Director (IIC-president) of St. Francis College. However, it is to be ensured that academic work of teaching, assessments, examinations, and research activities are not affected at any cost.

6. NORMS FOR STUDENT STARTUPS

The college will allow the students to work on their innovative projects and set up technology-based / non-technology-based start-ups or any other type of social start-ups or work as an intern in startups. During their enrolment, the students will be allowed to be owners of the companies, be a Director on the Board, or be employed in a staff member-led company. Also, they may be free to play an operational role like Technical Advisor, CEO, CTO, MD, etc. However, academic work is not to be compromised and startup-related activities are permissible towards the final year of their

studies. The designation used is notional and does not change the status of the student for any other purpose.

6.1 Student Engagement in Start-ups and Academic Benefits

To prepare the interested students to transform themselves into budding entrepreneurs, the integration of research, innovation, and entrepreneurship activities with academic processes will be exercised at a slow and steady pace with due diligence. Students are free to dedicate any time outside their regular academic hours and duties to their companies. Besides, student entrepreneurs may earn academic credits for their efforts in working on innovative prototypes/business models with the intent of setting up a start-up with a possible incubation under the *Incubation Cell* at St. Francis College. They will be allowed to earn credits by opting for startup-related activities in place of the courses under the category of Employability Enhancement Courses (EEC) in the UG and PG curricula. Interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary areas will be given special preference in such cases as described in section 4.2.1. This must be approved by the RI&E expert committee and subsequently ratified by the Academic Council. It is advised that such teams are to be formed from various disciplines and a single discipline is generally discouraged. The RI&E expert committee will review the startup/ innovation proposals submitted by students and give approval for credit conversion. Such proposals should clearly define the objectives and the expected tangible outcomes in a clear and objective manner. At the end of the designated semester, the student teams are expected to make a presentation on the progress to the RI & E expert committee which will then recommend grades based on the level of attainment of the stated objectives. Apart from undergraduate, postgraduate students may be allowed to base their startup on their theses or dissertations with due approval from their respective supervisors.

6.2 Use of College-owned IP

If a staff or a student intends to base their Startup on the college-owned IP for which they may or may not be the inventors, they will be required to incubate their company by taking licensing of the IP with due consent and approval from the concerned inventors and the *Research and*

Innovation Cell at St. Francis College. The financial commitments are to be followed as per the norms of the *Research and Innovation Cell* at St. Francis College.

7. DISPUTE

7.1 Violation

Breach of the provisions of this policy shall be dealt with under the normal procedures of the college and in accordance with the relevant provisions of laws and regulations as prescribed by the Governing IIC Council of the SFC.

7.2 Dispute Resolution

7.2.1 Any internal disputes or questions of interpretation arising under this Policy must in the first instance be referred to IIC.

7.2.2 If the matter cannot be resolved by the IIC within their purview of operation, then the dispute or question of interpretation must be referred to the I & E committee for mediation. In case of IPR-related disputes, the *Research and Innovation Cell* at St. Francis College will be consulted.

7.2.3 If the matter cannot be resolved by the RI & E committee, it may decide to refer the matter to the President of the Governing IIC Council, who will have a final say on the matter of dispute.

7.2.4 It's the sole discretion of the President of the Governing IIC Council to refer the matter to an independent committee for arbitration as the final arbiter of any disputed issues or for the final decision.

8. REVIEW

This policy is as per the MHRD's National Innovation and Startup Policy 2019 for students and faculty members and Karnataka Government Startup Policy 2018-23 based on the change in these policies from time to time. This policy is subject to review once in 3 years. However, minor amendments can be made as and when necessary and whenever policy changes are introduced in the central and state government start-up policies. The college is empowered to make suitable



changes in policies and introduce new policies as and when necessary.

References

<https://www.aicte-india.org/content/national-innovation-and-startup-policy-2019-students-and-faculty>