FREE GUIDE FOR INDIAN FOUNDERS

How to get DPIIT Startup Recognition yourself, online, for free

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Government fee: ₹0. You don't need an agent.

I paid ₹15,000 to get my DPIIT recognition done. You don't have to. The government doesn't charge anything for it, and the whole application is online. This guide shows you exactly how, step by step.

1 What is DPIIT recognition?

It's the Government of India's official recognition that your company is a **"startup"**. It's issued by DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry). Many startup benefits and government schemes are open **only** to recognised startups. Recognition makes you **eligible to apply** for them; it doesn't give you money directly.

2 Are you eligible? Check all of these

- [ ] Your business is a **Private Limited Company, LLP, or registered Partnership Firm** (registered cooperative societies are also eligible). A sole proprietorship is not eligible, so register your company first.
- [ ] It's **less than 10 years old** from the date of incorporation/registration.
- [ ] Turnover has **never crossed ₹200 crore** in any financial year since incorporation.
- [ ] You're working on **innovation** (a new or improved product, process or service) **or** a scalable business that can create jobs or wealth.
- [ ] The company was **not formed by splitting or restructuring** an existing business.

Deep-tech startups get longer limits (20 years, ₹300 crore). Source: DPIIT Startup Playbook, April 2026 (based on the February 2026 notification).

3 Keep these ready before you start

WHAT	DETAILS
Certificate of Incorporation / Registration	PDF. You'll upload this.
Company PAN	PAN of the company/LLP, not your personal PAN.
Registered & postal address	As per your incorporation documents.
Authorised signatory details	Name, email, mobile of the director/partner applying. If someone else applies for the company, keep a letter of authorisation ready.
Short write-up on your innovation	How your startup is new/better, or how it can scale and create jobs. See the tips on page 3.
Optional	Website, app link or pitch deck. These help show your work is real.

4 Apply step by step (on NSWS)

The official application is on the National Single Window System: **www.nsws.gov.in**

1. Go to **nsws.gov.in** → `Login → Investor Login` → `Sign Up Now`. Enter your details and verify.
2. **Set up your profile:** choose your entity type and enter your **company PAN**.
3. Once the PAN is validated, enter your **postal and registered address**.
4. Add your **authorised signatory** details and click **Save**.
5. Go to `Homepage → Centre Approvals → All Approvals`. Search **"Registration as a Startup"** → **Add to Dashboard**.
6. Go to `Dashboard → Apply Now`. Fill in the startup application form and upload your **incorporation certificate**. (You can save a draft and come back later.)
7. **Review everything carefully, then Submit.** You can't edit the application after submitting.
8. Track it on your **dashboard**: click the form to see the status and your **DPIIT number**.

✓ After you submit

How long does it take?

Usually **within 2 working days** of a complete application, per the official NSWS guide.

Where's my certificate?

It's digital: download it from **NSWS** (under approvals) or from **DigiLocker** (search "Startup Certificate").

If you're rejected

A rejected application can't be edited. You can apply again **after 3 months** from the rejection email. So write the innovation part properly the first time.

Recognition is valid until 10 years from your date of incorporation.

5 Tips for the innovation write-up

- **The problem:** who has it, and how they handle it today.
- **Your solution:** what you built and what's new or better about it.
- **Proof it's real:** product live? users? pilots? Give a link if you have one.
- **How it scales:** how it can grow and create jobs.
- Write in your own words. Be specific, not buzzwords. Keep it short and clear.

6 What recognition unlocks (you apply for each separately)

- **Income-tax exemption:** 100% of profits for 3 consecutive years out of the first 10. Needs a **separate application** to the Inter-Ministerial Board on the Startup India portal. Generally for Pvt Ltd companies and LLPs. Check the current conditions before applying.
- **Government funding schemes** such as the Startup India Seed Fund (via incubators), Fund of Funds and the Credit Guarantee Scheme.
- **Cheaper, faster patents & trademarks:** reduced filing fees and expedited processing.
- **Government tenders:** exemption from earnest money deposit, relaxed prior turnover and experience rules.
- **Easier compliance:** self-certification under certain labour and environment laws, and faster closure (90 days) if you ever wind up.

Official links

Apply: **www.nsws.gov.in** · Info & benefits: **www.startupindia.gov.in**

Based on the official NSWS DPIIT recognition user guide and the DPIIT Startup Playbook (April 2026). Rules change, so always check the official portal. This is a practical guide, not legal or tax advice.

Stuck anywhere? DM me on Instagram @s.livingstn. I'm building Pingerbird from 0 → 1 and sharing everything I learn about startup funding, grants and credits along the way.