

# Global Innovation Institute Business Incubator Accreditation

GUIDEBOOK



## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	04
The Benefits of Business Incubator Accreditation .....	04
GInI Accreditation Eligibility – Compliance Demonstration .....	05
GInI Accreditation Eligibility Requirements .....	05
The Accreditation Process for Business Incubators .....	06
The GInI Business Incubator Assessment Tool & Questions .....	08
Conditional Assessor Approval .....	09
Application Fee for Initial GInI Business Incubator Accreditation .....	09
Biannual Re-Assessment / Re-Accreditation .....	10
Maintenance Fee for Continued GInI Business Incubator Accreditation .....	10

**GInI** - The **Global Innovation Institute**- [www.gini.org](http://www.gini.org) - is an international membership organization providing professional membership associations and certifications in the field of Innovation.

GInI aims to advance individual careers and transform organizational achievements by advancing the profession of innovation leadership. It does this through its globally recognized standards, tools, publications, resources, professional development courses, certifications, applied research, and networking opportunities.

All certificates and accreditations available through GInI reflect the most current methods, trends, and strategies in innovation leadership.

GInI sets the standard for innovation excellence around the globe.



## Introduction

Accreditation of a Business Incubator by GInI assures all affected stakeholders that this Incubator has been thoroughly assessed, and that its design and operation therefore conform to GInI's strict accreditation standards. No other organization prescribes this same level of accreditation standard for Business Incubators as does GInI. Accreditation by GInI is therefore the global standard of accreditation for Business Incubators.

## The Benefits of Business Incubator Accreditation

The world as we know it is changing at an unprecedented pace. Indeed, as we enter into the Fourth Industrial Revolution, countless new world-changing technologies are being developed and put to use for a wide range of new purposes. In many cases this is changing not only the products and services we consume, but also how our societies operate. For businesses, this is opening up a whole new world of opportunity, not only for new offerings, but also for completely new business models that never existed before.

And so the time is ripe for new entrepreneurial ventures to rise up – ventures who are prepared to deliver the fresh new business models and value propositions that move us from the world of yesterday and today into the world of tomorrow. For this to happen however, the world needs the oases capable of nurturing and supporting these nascent young ventures as they begin their journeys forward. The world needs Business Incubators capable of giving these ventures the resources and leads they need to begin on solid ground.

Yet how does one ensure that a given Business Incubator has the necessary resources and capabilities it needs to get these new ventures off the ground in a robust and effective manner? What indicators are there that a particular Incubator has what it takes to succeed in getting new business ventures launched, operational, and eventually profitable? For this, a credible and reliable accreditation standard is required.

The GInI Business Incubator Accreditation is such a credible and reliable accreditation standard – a means by which leaders the world over can develop confidence in the design, operation, and capabilities of their Incubators. The GInI Business Incubator Accreditation stands alone as the only such standard in the world, setting the benchmark against which all world-class Incubators must be measured.

GInI awards three levels of accreditation for Business Incubators: Basic, Advanced, and Premium. Each of these represents an increasing level of value the Incubator offers to its resident business ventures.

Business incubators accredited by GInI will bear GInI's Accredited Business Incubator badge. This distinction offers significant value to both the Incubator's operating organization and its resident new business ventures, as well as to all those supporting these new ventures.

GInI remains fully committed to pursuing excellence and continuous improvement in all activities relating to the GInI Accreditation Center and the GInI Accreditation Program. The Business Incubator Accreditation Guidebook provided on this page sets forth the policies, procedures, and standards used to assess the design and operation of individual Business Incubators and to thereafter accredit them to GInI's standards.

Businesses wishing to secure GInI Business Incubator Accreditation must work through a GInI Authorized Innovation Provider (AInP)® and GInI Authorized Innovation Assessors (AInAs)® of their choice to complete the Business Incubator Assessment process and thereafter submit to GInI the Business Incubator Accreditation Assessment Report (BIncAAR). GInI Business Incubator Accreditations are valid for two years and must be renewed via re-assessment every two years. GInI awards three levels of accreditation for Business Incubators. Each of these represents an increasing level of value the Incubator provides to its resident business ventures. These three levels are:

Basic, Advanced; and Premium.

**Accreditation of a Business Incubator by the GInI Accreditation Center thus offers several valuable benefits:**

- Affirmation of the operating organization's ongoing commitment to entrepreneurship and the regional impact this offers.
- Confidence that the design, operation, and capabilities of the Business Incubator are optimized for its intended purposes.
- Peer recognition for achievement to a globally-recognized benchmark standard.

## GInI Accreditation Eligibility – Compliance Demonstration

In order for a Business Incubator to be **eligible** for GInI accreditation, it must be able to demonstrate **full compliance** to GInI's **eligibility requirements**, as outlined below.

Compliance to these requirements is demonstrated through an independent third-party **assessment process** utilizing GInI's **Authorized Innovation Assessors®**, or **AINAs®**. This process is explained below.

## GInI Accreditation Eligibility Requirements

In order for a Business Incubator to be **eligible** for GInI accreditation, it must be able to demonstrate **full compliance** to all of GInI's **Business Incubator Accreditation Eligibility Requirements**.

What this means is that, per the **Business Incubator Accreditation Assessment Tool** used, the Incubator must have all of the requisite resource elements in place, according to the following requirements list.

- **Incubator Management** – 4 assessment questions.
- **People Resources** – 8 assessment questions.
- **Ecosystem / Network Resources** – 8 assessment questions.
- **Community Resources** – 6 assessment questions.
- **Facilities Resources** – 48 assessment questions.

GInI awards **three levels** of accreditation for Business Incubators. These are:

- BASIC
- ADVANCED
- PREMIUM

Each of these represents an increasing level of **value** the Incubator offers to its resident business ventures.

## The Accreditation Process for Business Incubators

### Basis for Assessment

The **GInI Business Incubator Accreditation** is an all-or-nothing assessment-based accreditation.

This means the determination of whether or not to issue accreditation is based not on achieving a certain score, but rather on having in place all of the elements required by GInI. The assessment associated with the accreditation is therefore an overall binary assessment – pass or fail.

### The On Site Assessment Process

In order to secure accreditation, the operating organization must engage at least **two (2) external GInI Authorized Innovation Assessors® (AIAs®)** who will come to the Incubator and conduct an on-site assessment of its management practices, people resources, ecosystem/network resources, community resources, and facilities resources. These Assessors must be contracted and arranged through a GInI **Authorized Innovation Provider® (AInP®)**. Once the Assessors have completed their assessment, they will compile a standardized report and submit to GInI. Based on the Assessors' findings, GInI will then make the determination of whether or not to issue the Business Incubator Accreditation.

The assessment is conducted **live** inside the **Incubator**, such that over the course of working through the assessment questions the Assessors will move throughout the Incubator facility and that of its operating organization potentially multiple times.

In relation to the four **resource sections**, the Assessors will expect to engage directly with a selection of the **Incubator users**. This aids in ensuring appropriate **transparency** and **objectivity** in the assessment process.

The typical in-Incubator assessment generally requires **one working day** to complete. Thereafter the AIAs® will invest additional time in compiling and submitting their final report to GInI.

In order that it might properly prepare for the assessment ahead of time, the operating organization will be supplied with the BlncAAT questions prior to conducting the formal assessment. These will be provided by the AIAs® it has retained. This allows the organization to prepare **clear evidence** of its answers to each of the questions addressed. If so desired, the organization may also engage the AIAs® to conduct a pre-assessment prior to the formal assessment in order to improve confidence in passing the formal assessment.

## The GInI Business Incubator Assessment Tool & Questions

The **assessment tool** associated with **GInI Business Incubator Accreditation** – known as the **Business Incubator Accreditation Assessment Tool**, or **BlncAAT** – is comprised of **74 assessment questions**.

These are grouped into **eight (8) sections**, namely:

1. **Profile of the Operating Organization** – 5 informational questions.
2. **Operating Context** – 7 informational questions.
3. **Incubator Management** – 4 assessment questions.
4. **People Resources** – 8 assessment questions.
5. **Ecosystem / Network Resources** – 8 assessment questions.
6. **Community Resources** – 6 assessment questions.
7. **Facilities Resources** – 48 assessment questions.
8. **Comments** – Assessors note details on the “No's” they have entered, explaining them further.

The first two sections – **Profile of the Operating Organization and Operating Context** – are for information only. Their questions do not constitute a part of the assessment. They exist to help establish an appropriate context for the assessment questions that follow in Sections 3 - 7.

Each set of questions in **Sections 1 - 6** and the **first five subsections** of **Section 7** must be addressed in their **entirety**. The questions in the **last seven** subsections of Section 7 are **optional** and are reserved for higher levels of accreditation.

GInI awards **three levels** of accreditation for Business Incubators, namely BASIC, ADVANCED, and PREMIUM.

To achieve the **BASIC level**, the Incubator must be able to answer “YES” to each of the **mandatory questions** in **Sections 3, 4, 5, 6**, and the **first five subsections** of **Section 7**.

To achieve the **ADVANCED level**, the Incubator must – in addition to meeting the requirements for the BASIC level – also be able to answer “YES” to an **additional set of questions** found in **Sections 4** and **7**.

To achieve the **PREMIUM level**, the Incubator must – in addition to meeting the requirements for the BASIC and ADVANCED levels – also be able to answer “YES” to yet another **additional set of questions** found in **Sections 4, 5, 6**, and **7**.

Given the **binary** nature of the **GInI Business Incubator Accreditation**, **all** of the **mandatory questions** for achieving the **BASIC level** must be answered in the **affirmative** in order for the Incubator to qualify for GInI accreditation. Each question will be answered with an understanding of the **operating organization** and its desired outcomes for the Incubator. For any question to be answered in the affirmative, the organization must provide the Assessors with **clear evidence** that the answer is, in fact, affirmative.

## The GInI Business Incubator Assessment Tool & Questions (cont.)

There are **five (5) questions in Sections 3 - 7E** that allow for a “**not applicable**” answer. These are reserved for Incubators pursuing the **ADVANCED** and **PREMIUM** levels of accreditation. If the Incubator is not attempting those levels, these questions will be marked as **N-A**, meaning they are exempted from the assessment.

If any question cannot be answered in the affirmative, the **remainder** of the questions will **still be addressed**, such that the Assessors may issue their final report indicating the full list of elements preventing the Incubator from achieving GInI accreditation, should such be the case.

In either case of passing or failing the assessment, GInI will forward to the operating organization a copy of the Assessors' final report – known as the **Business Incubator Accreditation Assessment Report**, or **BlncAAR**. This report will be received directly from GInI only, and not from the **AlnAs®**. If questions arise out of the report however, the operating organization may contact the **AlnAs®** in order to seek clarification.

## Conditional Assessor Approval

In certain cases, a Business Incubator that has been assessed but did not fully pass will be granted a **temporary conditional approval** by the Assessors. What this means is that the Incubator was close to passing, but was still deficit in certain areas, and that if the operating organization can submit appropriate documentation to the Assessors within a period of **three (3) months** verifying that these deficit areas have in fact been **rectified**, so that the Assessors can then use it to issue a full “pass” to the Incubator, they will do so.

This implies that the Assessors will not submit their final report to GInI right away, but will instead wait upon the operating organization to provide this documented evidence. Once they have received this evidence and have updated their report accordingly, they will then submit their final report to GInI for review and processing, together with the organization's Accreditation Application Fee.

If the operating organization fails to submit this documented evidence to the Assessors within this three (3) month period, then the Assessors will consider the assessment to have been a “fail” and will not submit their report to GInI, though they will issue it to the applicant operating organization.

## Application Fee for Initial GInI Business Incubator Accreditation

The **initial fee** for GInI Business Incubator Accreditation is **3,500 USD**.

This is to be remitted to GInI at the same time as the Assessors submit their final assessment report – the BlncAAR – to GInI. Upon request, GInI will issue an invoice to the applicant operating organization for this fee.

## Biannual Re-Assessment / Re-Accreditation

In order to **maintain** ongoing Business Incubator Accreditation, GInI **Accredited Business Incubators** must submit to a **bi-annual** (every two years) **re-assessment** by a qualified external AInA®.

Failure to secure a bi-annual re-assessment will result in the **expiration** and **suspension** of that Incubator's accreditation, until such time as it submits to a new assessment and becomes **re-accredited**.

## Maintenance Fee for Continued GInI Business Incubator Accreditation

The **bi-annual maintenance fee** to maintain GInI Business Incubator Accreditation is **3,500 USD**, to be paid **every two years** upon re-assessment. This is to be remitted to GInI at the same time as the Assessors submit their final re-assessment report – the BlncAAR – to GInI. Upon request, GInI will issue an invoice to the applicant operating organization for this fee.



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