



The Negev High-Tech Faculty Startup Accelerator focuses on supporting faculty members and graduate students in establishing startups in computing disciplines. The accelerator is located in the Benhamou Incubation Center, Alon Building for Hi-Tech, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

The creation of a silicon wadi (similar to the Silicon Valley) near Ben-Gurion University is becoming a reality. The establishment of the Advanced Technology Park <http://in.bgu.ac.il/en/bgn/Pages/ATP.aspx> is a key element which greatly progressed the local ecosystem. Many leading companies such as Dell-EMC, IBM, Deutsche Telekom, and many investors such as Jerusalem Venture Partners, Incubit Technology Venture, and Innovation BaseCamp are located in the proximity of Ben-Gurion University.

The concept of faculty pre-seed accelerators is rapidly spreading around the world <http://skydeck.berkeley.edu/> and <https://www.cmu.edu/swartz-center-for-entrepreneurship/>. The involvement and the role of universities in society is changing, as the internet facilitates knowledge that spreads to all, and the format of studying is shifted from a classroom with lecturers to more up-to-date formats (e.g., video, animation). The universities continue to enhance their focus on research and innovation, and at the same time plan to establish industrial activities based on the state of the research results. The gap between basic research and its application to industrial activity and reality has become much smaller over the years.

Supporting faculty members in new business and industrial aspects is a mission that universities may benefit from, as Stanford benefits from the existence of the Silicon Valley in its proximity. In fact, universities can establish the best seed accelerators, as the business aspects can be covered by advisors from management schools and by volunteers who seek to work with professors and their new startups. Moreover, there is no need for financial support in the pre-seed stage, as faculty and graduate students are employed by the university and continue their full research and teaching activities.

The accelerator supports startup activities by exposing the startups to relevant experienced advisors, potential investors, and industrial customers. The accelerator will organize conferences, seminars, lectures and meetings to create an entrepreneurship atmosphere. The accelerator will also co-locate startups together in a prime location on the campus.

