The Strategic Edge presents **Insight Signals**
Crisp, curated intel for thinkers & doers

Government Grants & Tenders: The Missed Growth Engine for Startups

GovTech, Policy, & Incentive Intelligence | Vol. 1

Governments aren't just regulators — they're buyers, funders, and innovation partners. Yet many startups miss out. This edition spotlights untapped public-sector opportunities: grants, tenders, and pilot programs. Discover how to align your startup with policy priorities through case studies, readiness checklists, and key GovTech initiatives.

Where Startups Can Sell to Government

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) & Startup India

- **GeM** enables registered startups to bid for procurement contracts directly
- **Startup India** offers access to tax breaks, tenders, and pilot funding through DPIIT-recognized startup status

📌 *Over 90,000 startups are registered under Startup India, with procurement worth INR270 Bn via GeM (2024)*

Horizon Europe & EIC Accelerator

- **Horizon Europe**, the EU's innovation fund (EUR95.5 Bn), offers R&D grants and pilots in sectors such as energy, health, and AI
- **EIC Accelerator** offers blended finance (grant + equity) to early-stage tech startups

📌 *Target: DeepTech, Cleantech, AI, Mobility, Health*

Public Sandbox & Pilot Frameworks

- **Dubai and Abu Dhabi** offer regulatory sandboxes (via DIFC, ADGM) for startups in FinTech, HealthTech, and GovTech
- Government accelerators (e.g., Dubai Future Accelerators) co-create pilots between startups and ministries

📌 *Startups get access to enterprise-scale testing, credibility, and procurement entry*

How Startups Can Win with Governments

✅ Register Early on Government Platforms

- Get listed early on portals like India GeM, EU Horizon, or Dubai Future Accelerators

👉 ***Why:*** *Many grants require pre-registration — early access speeds up funding or pilot eligibility*

✅ Build a Public Sector–Ready Pitch

- Tailor your deck to emphasize social impact, cost-efficiency, and policy alignment

👉 ***Include:*** *Clear use cases, measurable outcomes, compliance-readiness, and stakeholder plans*

✅ Target High-Trust, High-Growth Sectors

- Prioritize government-backed sectors such as Healthcare, MedTech, ClimateTech, & AI for Public Infra (Mobility, EdTech)

👉 ***Why:*** *These come with pre-allocated budgets and easier access to grants/pilots*

✅ Use Pilots to Build Credibility

- Even small public-sector pilots can boost trust, media visibility, and investor appeal

👉 ***Use pilots to:*** *Show traction, prove compliance, and build B2G + enterprise relationships*

Case Studies: Startups Winning with Public Sector GTM

Niramai (India – Healthcare AI)

Impact: Adoption of non-invasive early detection tools across India's public health ecosystem

- » **Program:** Biotech Industry Research Assistance Council + Startup India
- » **Approach:** Participated in govt innovation grants and health-tech accelerator programs
- » **Public Sector Win:** Secured pilots for AI-based breast cancer screening in public hospitals and health camps

Derq (UAE/US – Mobility AI)

Impact: Reduction in potential traffic incidents and real-time insights for urban safety planning

- » **Program:** Dubai Future Accelerators – Government of Dubai
- » **Approach:** Partnered with Dubai's Roads & Transport Authority to launch mobility AI pilots
- » **Public Sector Win:** Granted access to live city data and road infra to test safety and traffic AI solutions

Breathe London (UK – Urban Air Quality Monitoring)

Impact: Scaled across boroughs, shaped city planning, and attracted global smart city interest

- » **Program:** Backed by Greater London Authority & C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group
- » **Approach:** Deployed low-cost air quality sensors to track pollution in real time
- » **Public Sector Win:** Received pilot funding, policy partnership, and access to public infra for sensor deployment

Paysky (Middle East & Africa – Digital Payment Access)

Impact: Enabled inclusive digital payment access, positioning Paysky as a leading GovFinTech partner

- » **Program:** National payment modernization programs (Egypt, Qatar, West Africa)
- » **Approach:** Provided full-stack fintech infra to central banks and government partners
- » **Public Sector Win:** Rolled out Qatar's national payments gateway and digitized Egypt's public transactions

Is Your Startup Government-Market Ready?

Check for

- ✓ Compliance & Certification
- ✓ Value Proposition Fit
- ✓ Documentation
- ✓ Operational Readiness
- ✓ Trust Signals

Sources: Startup India, Gem Gov, Horizon Europe, The Central Bank of UAE, Derq, Greater London Authority, Paysky, Other Press Releases

*DIFC (Dubai International Financial Centre), ADGM (Abu Dhabi Global Market), DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade)