Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Who can apply to the Cisco Startup program?
The program is open to early-stage technology and technology-enabled startups. The program focuses on Cisco's core technology areas: Networking and Infrastructure, Collaboration, Security, IoT, and Video. Additionally, enabling technologies like Analytics, Cloud, Machine Learning/Deep Learning/Natural Language Processing, Visualization/UX, Virtual Reality, Smart Things, and Last Mile Connectivity are also in focus.

2. What is the program duration? How many startups are in each cohort?
4-6 startups are selected for each cohort. The cohort runs for four months.

3. What is the selection criteria for the program?
Startups should have an innovative and scalable idea coupled with a great team known for execution excellence. The more the idea is relevant to the program focus areas, the better.

4. What is the selection process?
Startups apply online. The applications are evaluated and shortlisted applicants are invited for a face-to-face pitch session with Cisco leadership. The final selection is based on the strength of the business idea/plan, team capabilities, and relevance to the focus areas.

5. What is included in the program?
The program includes co-working space, workshops, speaker sessions, mentorship program and investor/industry connects. Startups also have access to industry leading Cisco technology platforms in Wireless/Mobility, IoT, Collaboration, Security, Networking, and Cloud.

There are monthly reviews to monitor the progress of startups. The program ends with a demo day.

6. Where is the co-working space located?
The program runs out of the Cisco Campus at Cessna Business Park, Bangalore.

7. Does Cisco take equity in startups as a part of the program?
No. The goal is to support startups in their entrepreneurial journey and help them scale.

8. Do startups need to work from the Cisco premises during the program?
No. While the program provides startups with co-working space for the duration of the program, startups (on a case-to-case basis) may choose to work from a remote location. They, however, have to be present at Cisco premises for regular pre-defined touch points.

9. Do startups have to be based out of Bangalore?
No. The program is open to startups across India. Startups should be willing to work from the premises for the program duration. They may choose to work from a remote location (on a case-to-case basis) but should be willing to travel to Bangalore for regular touchpoints.

10. Does Cisco provide accommodation during the program?
No. Startups need to make their own lodging and travel arrangements.

11. We have/are developing proprietary IP for our product. Are there any IP obligations towards Cisco while being part of the program?
Startups have sole ownership and confidentiality of any of their existing IP as well as IP developed during the program. Cisco has no interest in ownership or disclosure of the startup's IP. However, if a startup ends up contributing to Cisco's IP during the program, that IP will be owned by Cisco.

12. What time commitment do startups have to make?

At least one co-founder has to be available for the weekly review meetings in person/audio/video conference. They also have to be present in person for monthly touch points.

13. Can you tell us about the mentoring process?

Startups are mentored by both Cisco leaders and external experts. Each startup is assigned two internal Cisco mentors. External mentoring is provided by CTO/CIO's of startups, industry experts, investors, and VCs who are pioneers in their respective fields.

14. What happens after the program?

The program culminates with a Demo Day where startups present their idea and demonstrate to Cisco leadership, prominent investors, and industry experts. The graduating startups are enrolled in the Cisco Startup Program's Alumni Network.