



African Centre of Excellence in Energy for Sustainable Development (ACEESD)



Grid Innovation and Incubation Hub (GIIH)

GIIH First Edition Cohort Boot Camp 11th- 16th January 2021



GRID INOVATION AND INCUBATION HUB (GIIH) AT A GLANCE

Grid Innovation and Incubation Hub (GIIH) is a research, innovation and entrepreneurship initiative that is hosted by the African Centre of Excellence in Energy and Sustainable Development (ACEESD) in the College of Science and Technology (CST) at the University of Rwanda. The two main objectives of GIHH are (i) to create a bridge between the university and various sectors in the economy in order to make research relevant to emerging issues, and (ii) to support innovation and entrepreneurship through incubator and accelerator programs.

To provide support for innovation and entrepreneurship, GIHH has envisaged a business model approach which will be actualized through a proposed Grid Business Incubator Program (G-BIP). The flagship G-BIP will be supported by a collaborative consortium of partners from both Rwanda and outside Rwanda: The Swedish development agency SIDA, the World Bank, the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA), Chalmers University of Technology, and partner world-class incubators and accelerators such as Chalmers Ventures, Wadhwan Foundation, Chandaria Business Innovation and Incubation Centre - Kenyatta University, Westerwelle Startup Haus, KLab, 250 Startups, among others.

The Program will be sustained by the goodwill and support of relevant institutions in Rwanda that are coordinated under the Rwanda Initiative including: Rwanda Business Development Fund (BDF), Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum, Private Sector Federation, and local universities.

- **Our vision**

To create environments where young innovators and entrepreneurs can find support, and to foster entrepreneurial mindsets and thinking among the youths all across Rwanda and beyond.

- **Our Mission**

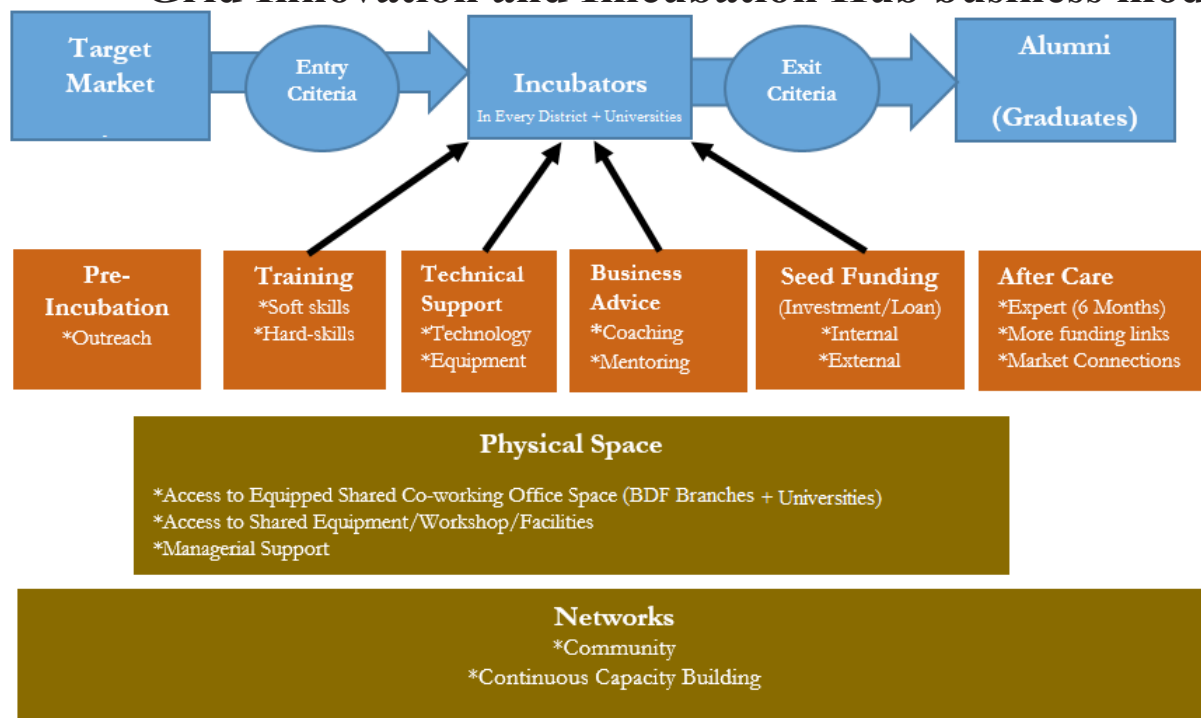
Creating new opportunities for mentorship, coaching, and various forms of support for innovation-based entrepreneurship among the youth.

- **Our Objectives**

G-BIP has the following objectives:

1. Create new jobs for youth
2. Translate research output into doable businesses
3. Utilize Public-Private-Partnerships (PPPs) in achieving the Mission of the Centre
4. Innovate and increase production in all the areas that drive the national economy
5. Provide high-level professional mentorship to incubates
6. Provide adequate and excellent facilities for the incubates to develop their ideas
7. Seek funding to support incubation activities
8. Design incubator Programs that are inclusive in regard to gender, economic status, and other vulnerabilities of potential incubates.
9. Promote innovation and entrepreneurship activities that have potential to improve livelihoods for the most vulnerable people in society (i.e. low-income communities, persons with physical disabilities, etc.
10. Promote innovation and entrepreneurship activities that lead to environmental sustainability.

Grid Innovation and Incubation Hub business model



How did the process start towards the successful 15 best innovative ideas to be incubated?

Young entrepreneurs with the best innovative ideas were called to apply to be incubated at the African Centre of Excellence in Energy for Sustainable Development's Grid Innovation and Incubation Hub (GIIH) at University of Rwanda.

GIIH is established in a bid to inspire and mentor innovation-based entrepreneurship with the view to create environment where development of start-up enterprises can be inspired and supported.

Some of the requirements for these innovative ideas were to be the ones that are innovative, scalable, and have huge transformational potential.

Pascal Nyiringango, the Head of GIIH said that exceptional ideas and exceptional founders should be matched with exceptional support. "Grid Innovation and Incubation Hub seeks to discover amazing,



The pitching exercise took place online due to ongoing Covid-19 pandemic

out-of-the-box, disruptive, highly innovative, scalable, and potentially transformational ideas from youth interested in different business but mostly focusing in renewable energy", he said.

The Hub offerings are designed in a way that increases the chances for the incubated startups to develop and grow beyond what they could achieve on their own. The value-adding services are the key to enable our startups to spin out in to the community and create

jobs and prosperity in Rwanda and beyond.

Incubatees will benefit from assistance with prototyping, Patent drafting and IP, Mentoring, Coaching, and Access to seed funding among other services. So far 40 start-ups with innovative business ideas have expressed interest in being incubated among which 20 were selected to be to the final phase of selection. In a one-week pitching exercise, 20 innovative ideas owners were

given opportunity to showcase their ideas and explained how these innovations would benefit not only themselves but also the community at large.

During the official launch of first edition-online pitch event, Dr Emile Bievenu, the UR Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Accademic Affairs and Research commended everyone who came up with innovative ideas and said promoting innovation and entrepreneurship is the main concern of UR.

“I was impressed by different ideas that were proposed. Although all of them will not be selected to receive funding, we are very committed to supporting innovations”, he said.

“This is in line with the global vision of UR. We want to produce young graduates equipped with entrepreneurship and employability skills”, he added.

He reminded the contestants that “entrepreneurship is about inventing and innovating[...]

to be willing to devote yourself fully to make your business idea a reality[...] it is about creating a competitive environment”.

Among 20 contestants, 15 best innovative ideas would be incubated for a period of 6 months getting mentorship coaching and funds for the implementation of the project.

The panel to select the best innovation business ideas was composed of experts with extensive experience in entrepreneurship from Rwanda and the region.

15 Final entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas get incubated

15 final entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas completed a week-long bootcamp in a bid to transform potential and innovative business ideas into viable business ventures. During this boot camp, experts in entrepreneurship provided coaching and mentorship for these ideas to be more innovative, scalable & have huge transformational potential and making them financially viable, freestanding and competitive in the open market.

This boot camp was facilitated by Bag Innovation and FAB lab, two companies who have expertise in running such kind of boot camp and leveraged on its systems and networks to make the first cohort boot camp most colorful and successful.

15 finalists are competitively drawn from 40 young entrepreneurs with innovative ideas who expressed interest to be incubated.

The main objective of this boot camp was to discover, nurture, and potentially fund exceptional youth's business ideas which are innovative, scalable, and have huge transformational potential, making them financially viable, freestanding and competitive in the open market.

During the boot camp period, incubatees got skills in Marketing for Startups, business and financial planning and sales strategies among others.



One of the incubatees presenting his business idea during the bootcamp

Philbert Dusenge is one of the incubatees whose business idea is to find a solution to the insufficient cooking resources that the Country is facing where 83% of population rely on firewood and charcoal.

“My business idea is finding an alternative solution, which can use wastes (rice husks, sawdust and other wastes from industries) to clean cooking energy, using a gasifier stove, that I will

manufacture myself”, he says.

Dusenge argues that, through the boot camp, he got skills that will help him during the implementation of his business idea. “I didn't know about the product market validation, which is the critical step of business. During this boot camp, I learnt the skills of validating a product from prototype to commercial/business point, and pitching”, he said.

This boot camp is the kick off of the six month entrepreneurship journey where incubatees will be hosted at the Grid to get the incubation services, such as high level professional mentorship, adequate excellent facilities and seed funding to fine tune their prototype to a minimum viable product.

15 Incubatees and their innovative business ideas

Incubatee's name	Venture name
Marcus Dushimirimana	Shared meter
Philbert Dusenge	Biomass best energy production
Remy Turatsinze	Helo farmer
Perfect Mfashijwenimana	Agatebo biomass
Joseph Kagabo	Careme bioplastic
Armel Ouedraogo	Solar smart Public bench
Jean Bosco Nshutiyimana	Indintabwe imwe
Silas Ndagijimana	UR Hostels management system
Junior Turatsinze	Smart parking
Rene Uwamugirimfura	Smart climate resilient harvest
Sunday Olusheyi Falaye	Eco Hub
JM Julien Dushimimana	PV Grid power
Samuel Mizero	Get it faster
Janvier Habinshuti	Exploitation Chitson
Japhet Kwitonda	Municipal waste incineration

Pictorial:

