KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 85% say they could not have carried out their activities had it not been for infoDev
- 70% have leveraged the infoDev grant to obtain funds from additional sources
- infoDev reached over 1,000 practitioners, policy makers and donors through regional and global learning events.

DEVELOPING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The Incubator Initiative is supported by the contributions of Japan, Finland, India and Brazil.

"Incubators in India have graduated 1,600 enterprises and another 1,000 are at various stages of execution. Our partnership with infoDev has helped the incubators in India to develop cross-cultural ventures and partnerships."

H. K. Mittal, Department of Science and Technology, India

Background

Throughout the developing world, innovative entrepreneurs are working to establish businesses that are “ICT-enabled”—offering ICT services or, in some way utilizing ICTs as a fundamental aspect of their business model.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are key to job creation and national competitiveness. However often times the obstacles facing technology entrepreneurs seem insurmountable. Common barriers to converting an innovative idea to a viable business venture include limited and costly access to information and communication services, burdensome business regulations, the absence of basic business support services, the lack of advice, mentoring and best practice guidance, limited market knowledge, and lack of access to appropriate financial services.

infoDev launched the Business Incubator Initiative in 2002 to respond to these challenges. The Initiative aims help developing countries create an enabling environment for technology entrepreneurship through business incubation.

About the Initiative

The Incubator Initiative has supported more than 70 business incubators in over 50 developing countries worldwide with financial and technical assistance, leading to the establishment of five regional networks in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, East and Central Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East, as well as a global network of 130 business incubators in 70 developing countries. infoDev’s Incubator Network therefore now touches more than 1800 fledgling enterprises around the world.

infoDev’s incubators focus on helping these entrepreneurs to build competitive businesses through the early, high-risk stages of development by providing business advisory services, mentoring and coaching, infrastructure, such as offices, electricity, and internet access, and linkages with financiers and other business stakeholders.

infoDev’s impact assessment reveals that these incubators have had a tremendous effect on realization of local innovation, SME and job creation, economic empowerment of women and youth, and on creating an enabling environment beyond the walls of the incubator that will benefit generations of entrepreneurs to come.

infoDev Services

- Financial and technical Assistance to start and strengthen business incubators
- Facilitation of south-south peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing and networking between incubators to share lessons and ideas for how to best operate and affect change.
- Capacity building products and services, including the web-based business incubation toolkit (www.idisc.net) and the business incubation management training program
- Monitoring and Evaluation to assess the impact of business incubators and provide business incubators and their support organizations with tools to monitor performance and impact
- Research on ICT-enabled private sector development, particularly the policies and programs conducive to technology entrepreneurship and ICT sector development.

Current Areas of Interest

Sustainable incubation business models; up-scaling of successful incubators; incubator models targeting youth, women, rural communities, small island states, and post-conflict societies; Access to appropriate financing for technology entrepreneurs.
Participants Call for Action:

"We the assembled delegates call for:

- Enhancing policy-maker’s knowledge, understanding and support for Business Incubation
- Addressing the financial and fiscal needs of growth enterprises and business incubators
- Building incubator capacity, leadership and management
- Maintaining and enhancing quality to enable continuous improvement
- Facilitating regional, national and global networking of incubators”

Over 400 delegates from more than 40 countries gathered in Hyderabad, India, November 2006.

What is Business Incubation?

Business incubation is about nurturing growth-oriented start-up enterprises to grow and become sustainable competitive companies.

Incubation is a continuous relationship between the incubator and the start-up entrepreneur targeting graduation when the start-up has reached sufficient maturity.

Local Innovations Commercialized by infoDev Incubators

- Cost-effective ATMs to enable secure access to cash in environments where this has never been possible (India)
- A UV light to make river water drinkable by using solar electricity (Ecuador)
- Software designed to enable financial institutions to better evaluate and reduce the risk associated with lending and microfinance institutions (Mexico)
- A hepatitis C vaccine which will be brought to market in 2006. This company is now listed on the NYSE with a capital base of $19mm (China)
- Software acquired by Synopsis, a large French company

Marginalized Communities Reached by infoDev Incubators

Women in China
- The Hedong District is an old industrial district of Tianjin with a high level of laid-off women workers from state factories and government organizations
- TWBI aims to generate employment for these women through enabling small-scale, low-tech and service-oriented start-ups
- To-date more than 3000 jobs generated by incubator clients have been filled by formerly unemployed women

Rural Poor in Brazil
- ITCP has advised and trained members of close to 80 cooperatives who have created more than 1200 jobs in marginalized communities.

Conflict-affected Youth in Angola
- INEFOP offers assistance for young entrepreneurs to start up their own business

Enabling Entrepreneurs

"I had no advisory and support network until I came to the incubator. The Company has benefited a lot from the services of the incubator, such as infrastructure, ICT and technical support. The incubator has also exposed us to formal markets skills on how to attract clients. The biggest challenge faced by entrepreneurs in our country is that it is expensive to acquire a suitable infrastructure to operate on. It discourages people to invest in business. To overcome some of the challenges, we get technical advice from the incubator and its partners on how to go ahead."

Entrepreneur, Angola

infoDev, is a global partnership of international development agencies works to maximize the impact of ICTs in development efforts. Using its cutting edge research and analysis, infoDev is a global resource of knowledge on ICT for development. Through innovative pilot projects, support for training and capacity building, and action-oriented toolkits and handbooks, infoDev helps policy makers and donors turn ICT knowledge into action.