

# Innovate & Elevate

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[www.kiep.go.ke](http://www.kiep.go.ke)

MONTHLY ISSUE





## About KIEP

The Kenya Industry and Entrepreneurship Project (KIEP) is a six-year US\$50 million project being implemented by the Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry (MITI) under the State Department for Industry -SDI, with support from the World Bank.

KIEP aims to deliver on the Government's industrialization agenda by strengthening the entrepreneurship ecosystem, increasing firm level innovation and productivity, and developing technically skilled talent in Kenya.

The first component has three subcomponents namely: SKIES, Startup Savanna and iTATU.

Sub component 1a of KIEP, Strengthening Kenya's Innovation Ecosystem (SKIES) aims to build the capacity of ecosystem intermediaries ( Incubators, Accelerators and Techbootcamps) in developing their individual business models towards operational sustainability, expansion, and increased quality of services provided. SKIES will also provide subsidized tuition costs for Rapid Tech Skills Students to pursue in demand tech courses, soft skills and entrepreneurship in selected universities.

The International Acceleration Process is being implemented through a sub-component known as Startup Savanna which aims to position the Kenyan Startups and entrepreneurship ecosystem globally, connecting Kenyan Startups with a range of international resources and networks to assist them in their growth plans.

The Industry-Academia Platform dubbed iTATU sub-component plays a crucial role in connecting Kenyan corporates with talented students, who tackle challenges posed by companies, in delivering innovative solutions.

This collaboration aims to enhance corporate productivity, skills gap bridging and increase competitiveness. Beyond the increased competitiveness of the participating companies, iTATU also contributes to the employability of Kenyan students by exposing them to “real-life” problems and opportunities and giving them new networks.

The second component is called KIEP 250+. It invites small and medium enterprises in select sectors to apply for business training that includes enhancing the managerial and technical skills of their senior staff and improving their access to and use of technology. The goal is to significantly increase the competitiveness of SMEs. SMEs accepted into KIEP 250+ will receive an integrated package of diagnostic and advisory services as well as financial support to address identified gaps. This will enhance their innovation capacity, upgrade processes, increase use of technology and promote market linkages.

The third component provides support for communications, M&E and Project implementation.

*The intermediaries involved in the SKIES Pitch event.*

# SKIES

## **Bridging the Skills Gap: A Comprehensive Approach to Upskilling and Retention in the Tech Industry**

Kenya's tech sector is booming, but a widening skills gap threatens its growth. This disparity between demanded and available skills could cost the economy \$454 billion by 2028. Rapid technological advancements outpace educational systems, leaving many underqualified for tech roles.

This gap affects individuals, employers, and the nation. Job seekers face limited prospects, while employers struggle to find suitable candidates, hindering productivity and economic growth.

To address this, the Rapid Tech Skills Program, a collaboration between the Kenya Industry and Entrepreneurship Project and eight universities, aims to equip workers with in-demand skills. This program, including institutions like Mama Ngina University College and Kenyatta University, offers a comprehensive curriculum and practical experience through internships.

More than technical training, the program emphasizes soft skills and fosters an entrepreneurial mindset. Graduates are prepared not just for jobs but for creating their ventures and innovations, contributing to Kenya's tech evolution.



## Startup Savanna: March Events Highlights

Startup Savanna held 4 exciting events in the month of April, marking significant strides in our journey to support and link startups in Kenya to international opportunities.

From fostering international collaborations to diving deep into sector-specific insights, each event brought forth valuable opportunities for growth and learning.

### 1. Exploring Spain's Agri-food Landscape and Business Opportunities

In March, we hosted a captivating webinar featuring Margarita González R., Project Manager at ICEX Spain Trade & Investment, who delved into Spain's vibrant agri-food sector. Margarita covered key aspects including the current business climate, emerging trends in agriculture, highlights from the food industry, and the innovative ecosystem in Spain. This event was tailored for entrepreneurs seeking to expand into Spain's market.

### 2. Funding Opportunity for Kenyan Entrepreneurs

In collaboration with Kua Ventures, we organised a pitching event in March aimed at supporting Kenyan entrepreneurs looking to create positive social impact through their businesses. The event provided a platform for budding startups and seasoned entrepreneurs to secure funding and contribute to meaningful change. The

criteria included a minimum three-year track record with audited financial results, annual revenue of at least KES 5M, and a funding requirement of between KES 5M and KES 15M over 3 to 6 years.

### 3. Procurement Readiness for Global Markets: Empowering Women-Owned Businesses

Our session in March focused on empowering women-owned businesses to tap into global corporate markets. Led by Frida Owinga and Sydonie Neysmith, the event highlighted strategies for successfully navigating global procurement. Attendees gained valuable insights into leadership, business development, and leveraging technology to expand their businesses internationally.

We hope these events provided valuable insights and networking opportunities for all participants. Stay tuned for more upcoming events and opportunities to grow your startups.

At Startup Savanna, we remain committed to connecting the Kenyan ecosystem to international experts, investment, and support infrastructure, contributing to job creation, business growth, and sustainability.



*The iTATU pitch day in session.*

# Industry Academia Platform (IAP) - iTATU

## **1. iTATU Fosters Innovation Through Online Learning and Industry Collaboration.**

March was a vibrant month at iTATU, the Industry-Academia platform dedicated to driving innovation and solving real-world challenges. The month kicked off with an exciting online Future Foresight course conducted by the renowned EDHEC institution. This self-paced, five-week course organized by iTATU attracted 161 registered participants, with 39 having already completed it and more ongoing.

In a remarkable display of innovative thinking, 12 student teams showcased their solutions to the open innovation challenges posed by five leading companies: Endless Africa, Milly Fruits Processors, Latia Resource Center, Kenya Power, and Mobius Motors. After an eight-week design thinking process, these teams pitched their ideas on 26<sup>th</sup> March to a panel of experts who selected five outstanding teams, recognizing their innovative approaches to addressing complex industry problems.

As iTATU gears up for its Annual Event, the platform's staff took to the airwaves with a one-hour radio show. They shared insights into iTATU's activities and extended an invitation to the public to participate in this vibrant innovation space. The show aimed to raise awareness about the platform's mission and the opportunities it presents for industry and academia to collaborate and drive positive change.

With its commitment to fostering innovation, iTATU continues to empower students, researchers, academia and industry professionals alike, providing them with the tools and resources to tackle real-world challenges and shape a better future.

# Pictorials

## iTATU: Pitch Day





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#### Contact us



**Ministry of Investments,  
Trade and Industry**  
State Department for Industry

State Department for Industry  
Social Security House, Block A, 23rd Flr  
P.O. Box 30418-00100, Nairobi, Kenya  
Telephone: +254 20-2731531  
Fax: +254 20-2731511  
[www.industrialization.go.ke](http://www.industrialization.go.ke)  
Email: [ps@industrialization.go.ke](mailto:ps@industrialization.go.ke)