

Innovate & Elevate

A Publication of the State Department for Industry

April 2024

www.kiep.go.ke

MONTHLY ISSUE





The 2024 Policy Roundtable

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 reporting students pose for a group photo.

SKIES

Rapid Tech Skills Program Commencement

We are thrilled to announce that the first cohort of the KIEP-SKIES Rapid Tech Skills program officially commenced across eight esteemed institutions in Kenya on 8th April 2024. This marked a significant milestone in our mission to enhance rapid technical skills development in the country and pave the way for a brighter future in the technology sector.

The selected institutions for this groundbreaking initiative included **Mama Ngina University College (MNUC), Moi University, Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (DeKUT), Technical University of Mombasa, Kibabii University, and The Open University of Kenya.** These institutions were carefully selected for their commitment to excellence in education and their dedication to shaping the future of tech in Kenya.

Over the next **four months**, students enrolled in the program are undergoing rigorous training in Data Science, Software Engineering, Cyber security, Artificial Intelligence, Entrepreneurship, and Soft Skills. The curriculum was designed to provide practical, hands-on learning experiences that align with the evolving demands of the job market and equip students with the skills needed to thrive in the digital age.

Transforming Lives Through the Rapid Tech Skills Program:

The Rapid Tech Skills Program, a collaborative effort between the Kenya Industry and Entrepreneurship Project (KIEP) and eight universities, is poised to revolutionize Kenya's tech landscape. With a focus on empowering individuals through tech education, the program is equipping participants with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in today's digital age. In the words of Darryl Oloo, a beneficiary of the KIEP-SKIES program at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, "Embarking on this journey has been a game-changer for me. The opportunity to acquire cutting-edge tech skills and contribute to innovation has been truly transformative."

World Bank in collaboration with The Ministry of Investments, Trade & Industry, is Implementing Sub-component 1a of the Kenya Industry Entrepreneurship

Programme dubbed SKIES - Strengthening Kenya's Innovation Ecosystem through The Management firm - A JV between E4Impact and Spineberg Limited. SKIES focuses on strengthening the support ecosystem (e.g. incubators, accelerators and rapid technology skills providers such as boot camps) through financial grants based on individual improvement plans. In addition, KIEP-SKIES will also fund technology boot camp providers through subsidizing the cost of tuition for students, and through supporting boot camps through grant funding for scaling.

In a dynamic collaboration that exemplifies innovation in education, the eight universities strategically selected for the SKIES Job Readiness Program (Mama Ngina University College, Kibabii University, Open University, Technical University of Mombasa, Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture, Kenyatta University and Moi University) embarked on a journey of co-creation. Together, they curated a tailored curriculum for comprehensive tech coverage, ensuring that the educational content remains cutting-edge and relevant in today's rapidly evolving tech landscape. Additionally, these universities are committed to finding internship or work opportunities for the students after graduation, ensuring they gain practical experience in their field of study. The selection of universities for the SKIES Rapid Tech Skills Program was strategically planned to ensure effective implementation of the rapid tech skills training across different regions of Kenya, ensuring inclusivity for all. It is worth noting that a total of **267 students** are being sponsored in these institutions, illustrating the program's significant impact on individuals' aspirations for career advancement. Moreover, there is a notable demand from other students and alumni to "self-sponsor" for the program, showcasing the market demand for the skills and knowledge imparted through the KIEP-SKIES Rapid Tech Skills program.

For many participants, enrolling in the KIEP-SKIES program represents a significant step towards career advancement and financial stability. With the tech industry experiencing exponential growth, individuals recognize the importance of staying ahead of the curve by acquiring in-demand skills such as software engineering, data science, and cyber-security. The opportunity to delve into these areas presents a pathway to lucrative job opportunities and entrepreneurial ventures.



Attendees of the Cultivating Exceptional Sales Talent session pose for a group photo.

Startup Savanna: April Event 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. Rising up in Spain with the Embassy Of Spain in Kenya

Our collaboration with ICEX Spain Trade & Investments opened doors to a transformative experience at the Spain Embassy in Nairobi on April 4th. Entrepreneurs immersed themselves in discussions led by Enrique Álvarez and Martin Jerch, gaining invaluable insights into the thriving opportunities awaiting in Spain. This event marked just the beginning of our journey towards global entrepreneurship and collaboration. Some key discussions highlights included;

- Market expansion strategies: Entrepreneurs explored innovative approaches to expand their market reach beyond local boundaries, leveraging Spain's dynamic business landscape.
- Cultural understanding: Understanding cultural nuances and business etiquette proved crucial for entrepreneurs seeking to establish fruitful partnerships and ventures in Spain.

2. Doing Business in Africa with University of Michigan

On 15th April 2024, Startup Savanna joined forces with the University of Michigan International Investment Fund (UMich IIF) to showcase the vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in East Africa. Through engaging discussions and mentorship opportunities, entrepreneurs explored avenues for growth and collaboration, underscoring our commitment to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. Some key discussions highlights included;

- Sustainable innovation: The session highlighted the significance of sustainable innovation, exemplified by The Cricket Farming Co.'s utilization of crickets to create nutritious food ingredients, offering entrepreneurs insights into sustainable practices that resonate with health-conscious consumers.
- Operational excellence: Entrepreneurs gleaned insights into achieving operational excellence through technology, learning from BRAINR's cloud-based MES

system, which streamlines operations and enhances productivity, paving the way for efficiency and growth.

3. Kenya Meets Portugal: Agritech and Healthtech

Startup Savanna collaborated with Startup Leiria on 23rd April bringing together agri-tech and health-tech entrepreneurs eager to expand their horizons into Portugal's expanding markets. Speakers Maria Guarino, Gonçalo J. Costa, Ricardo Roque, and Sara Guerreiro illuminated the path forward with their expertise, providing key insights and strategies for success in Portugal's dynamic sectors, which included;

- Innovative solutions: Entrepreneurs delved into the importance of developing innovative solutions to address pressing challenges in agriculture and healthcare, drawing inspiration from the showcased startups.
- Sustainable Practices: The session underscored the significance of sustainability in product development and operations, encouraging entrepreneurs to adopt environmentally conscious practices.

4. Building Great Salespeople

Startup Savanna concluded the month with an exhilarating session on 29th April, delving into the art of cultivating exceptional sales talent with Nick Kingsley-Johnson from Whitten & Roy Partnership. Nick shared invaluable insights and unveiled the game changing WRP RACE performance framework, poised to catapult Kenyan entrepreneurs to new heights on their growth journey. Some key discussions highlights included;

- Sales leadership: Participants gained insights into the qualities of effective sales leadership, including resilience, active listening, and empathy, essential for nurturing successful sales teams.
- Performance enhancement: The unveiling of the WRP RACE performance framework provided entrepreneurs with a structured approach to enhancing sales team performance, focusing on attitude, competence, and execution.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all participants, collaborators, and speakers for contributing to the success of these events. Stay tuned for more exciting initiatives and opportunities on the horizon as Startup Savanna continues to empower entrepreneurs and drive innovation.

Industry Academia Platform (IAP) - iTATU

1. iTATU Focuses on Continuous Improvement and Stakeholder Engagement.

April was a month of internal activities alignment and growth in iTATU, the Industry-Academia platform driving innovation through collaborative efforts. Following the successful pitch day event in March, where students presented their innovative solutions to industry challenges, iTATU organized a debrief session with students to gather valuable feedback and insights. The students were also briefed on other KIEP components and opportunities to tap into.

The session provided an opportunity for students to share their motivations, experiences, and suggestions for improvement. Participants reflected on various aspects of the open innovation challenge including; their expectations, the role of mentors, the design thinking approach, the challenge format, team composition and dynamics, and networking opportunities.

Through open discussions and structured feedback, iTATU aimed to enhance its offerings and better cater to the needs of students and industry partners. The session covered a range of topics, from technical expertise and team support to the appropriateness of the design thinking process and the effectiveness of the challenge format.

Beyond the debrief session, iTATU continued with stakeholder's engagement activities, fostering relationships with industry partners and academic institutions. These efforts were crucial in preparing for the upcoming Annual Event, which promises to be a showcase of innovation and collaboration.

iTATU remains committed to continuous improvement and providing a platform that empowers students, researchers, and industry professionals to share with the aim of tackling real-world challenges and drive positive change through innovative solutions.



ASSEK members during the Policy Roundtable.

Policy Roundtable: Building an Enabling Environment for Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Actors

ASSEK successfully held the Policy Roundtable on 30th April 30, attended by over 130 key players from the ecosystem, including ESOs, policymakers, and key government institutions such as KIPI, KIRDI, KEBS, KIE, KIPPRA, MSEA, KRA, and BRS. The session served as a launchpad to discuss the findings of a rapid research report on the Kenyan entrepreneurship ecosystem.

ASSEK had the privilege of advocating for the needs of Entrepreneur Support Organizations (ESOs), ensuring that policies are tailored to support their growth and innovation. Through the dialogue, ESOs identified and addressed policy barriers hindering their growth, which we believe will drive systemic change, create a more favorable environment for ESOs, and enhance ecosystem success.

Additionally, ASSEK successfully met the key objectives of the meeting: strengthening the entrepreneurship ecosystem, increasing firm-level innovation, and developing technically skilled talent in the ecosystem. Key instruments included strengthening the capacity of innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem actors and boosting institutional support for ESOs.

“Empowering ESOs isn’t just about fostering innovation; it’s about shaping policies that nurture their growth, ensuring a thriving ecosystem where every idea has the chance to flourish”- Mercy Kimalat, ASSEK CEO and Cecilia Mwangi-Innovation Ecosystem Manager for Kenya Industry & Entrepreneurship Project added “We as Kenya Industry and Entrepreneurship Programme (KIEP) believe that collaboration fuels progress. Joining forces with ASSEK, we’re shaping policies to cultivate an ecosystem where ESOs not only survive but thrive” she added.

Pictorials

SKIES: Various Events in the Month of April



Pictorials

Startup Savanna: Various Events in the Month of April



Pictorials

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A Publication of the State Department for Industry - Ministry of Investments, Trade & Industry

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
Email: ps@industrialization.go.ke