

Building and Sustaining the Davao Innovation Ecosystem

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Abstract

The study's primary aim is to understand the success factors for technology business incubators (TBIs) and accelerators in the Philippine ecosystem. This research program focuses on the ecosystem predominantly in Davao City and augmented by accelerators in Makati, Metro Manila. We recognize that all the players in the ecosystem need to be addressed for analytical completeness, including incubators, accelerators, start-ups, government agencies, investors, and consultants. A qualitative, exploratory design was used to discover the dynamic nature of the innovation ecosystem in Davao, with incubators and accelerators as the primary focus. The study was conducted through interviews with 18 incubator, accelerator, foundations, and government organizations to obtain a comprehensive view of the Davao ecosystem. A semi-structured interview script was developed to capture the topics in the literature review. After conducting a series of interviews with directors of ecosystem organizations, we systematically synthesized the case studies of the qualitative data. The findings in this paper are summarized into three cases based on the interview data collected: USEP Advanced Great Innovation Laboratory (AGiLab) incubator, Upgrade Innolab accelerator, and Wadhvani foundation. After looking for the emergence of themes, the findings of this paper provide a practical strategic framework for designing the business models for incubator and accelerator leaders, particularly in Mindanao and other resource-constrained regions. Across both Upgrade Innolab and USEP AGiLab, capacity building emerges as a central theme. All of the case studies show the collective reinforcement of the value of non-financial support systems (e.g., pedagogy, mentor networks, curriculum integration, leadership development).