

Startup Development Strategic Framework

2020 - 2023



Table of Contents

Αb	obreviations and Acronyms	ii
Lis	st of Tables	iii
Lis	st of Figures	iii
Ex	kecutive Summary	iv
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Strategic Framework	3
3	Strategic Direction and Core Program	6
	3.1.1 Strategic Direction	6
	3.1.2 Core Program	7
	3.1.3 Program Output	15
4.	Program Responsibilities Structure	16
Ar	nnexes	18
4	Annex 1: Priority Actions from Q4 of 2020 to 2021	18
	Annex 2: Kev Activities Timeframes from Q4 of 2020 to 2023	20

Abbreviations and Acronyms

DE Digital Economy

GDP Gross Domestic Product

SMEs Small and Medium Enterprises

TAP Techo Accelerator Program

TSC Techo Startup Center

RI Reverse Innovation Program

List of Tables

Table 1: Startup Nurturing Program Descriptions and Indicators	8
Table 2: Digital Platform Program Descriptions and Indicators	11
Table 3: Research Program Descriptions and Indicators	12
Table 4: Community Program Descriptions and Indicators	14
List of Figures	
List of Figures	
Figure 1: Strategic Framework	5
Figure 2: Strategic Direction	6
Figure 3: Four Core Programs of Startup Cambodia	7
Figure 4: Outputs of the Core Programs	15
Figure 5: Responsibilities Structure of the Core Programs	16
Figure 6: Program Unit	17

Executive Summary

Cambodia's 2030 and 2050 visions are to become a middle-income country and higher-income country, respectively. The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has been developing several legislative documents including policies, strategies, and action plans to turn the visions into reality. One of the strategies is to establish a strong Digital Economy (DE) in which startups will be an important pillar to catalyze the growth of national economy. Currently, DE contributes approximately only 0.51% to Cambodian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and by propagating startups and digital technology, DE is expected to account for 5% to 10% of Cambodian GDP by 2040.

Given the significance and the benefits startups will bring to DE, a vibrant startup ecosystem with fully supported functions is certainly required in order to nurture startups and address their challenges. Despite growing support for startups, Cambodia has yet to witness a healthy startup ecosystem. Startups remain constantly encounter a range of challenges. While there is an increasing number of young talents who are looking to venture into the tech industry, they still lack digital capabilities to match the demand of the market. In addition, startup founders still find it hard to seek for business mentoring and technical assistance as well as funding while cruising their startups journey. Accessibility to platform and community with recommendation or up-to-date reliable resources is also limited.

In an effort to address these challenges, there should be a strategic framework for startups in Cambodia. The framework will be a comprehensive roadmap to guide startup stakeholders in an effort to promote a strong startup ecosystem. This document aims to propose a strategic framework for startups with four objectives: (1) to connect startups through community-based events and digital platforms; (2) to nurture startups through acceleration and mentorship programs; (3) to provide stakeholders with the most updated startup ecosystem-related information; and (4) to create a bridge with other international programs, linking Cambodian startups to wider international communities. Four core

programs, under the umbrella of this strategic framework, are designed as innovative approaches to effectively and efficiently achieve those objectives. They are Startup Nurturing, Digital Platform, Research, and Community program. The core programs consist of its own sub programs together with interactive activities designed to generate the desired outputs.

1. Introduction

A startup is an organization designed to scale rapidly. It is this emphasis on growth that differentiates a startup from a small business. Technology has the power to fundamentally change the way we live and work, to address complex problems, to transform traditional businesses, and to create new markets. Startups leverage innovation and technology as a core to develop and bring new products, solutions, and services to the market. For instance, a startup can build a digital market platform equipped with technology that allows businesses and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to offer goods and services more efficiently to consumers.

We can trace back to the first start of digitalization in Cambodia in the form of an email service and the availability of Internet in a few years later after the first Cambodia national election in 1993. Recently, it can be clearly seen a growing number of young people with their quick adoption of technology, rapid growth in the use of smart devices with high usage rates, and fast technological spillovers. During this time, Cambodia has seen the rise of startups from almost non-existent to over 300 startups in the technology sector alone as of 2018¹. However, a research study carried by Mekong Strategic Partners in 2018² and a research study conducted by Techo Startup Center (TSC) in 2020³ commonly found that the startup ecosystem in Cambodia is still nascent and that each sector is not fully interactive. Although the stakeholders such as the government organizations, universities, service providers, and investors have different roles in the ecosystem, they are ideally required to interact as a system to create conducive environment to support startups. Based on the best practices of some countries to strengthen the startup ecosystem, they have a national program with a clear strategic framework to support startups such us Startup Thailand, Startup Nation (Israel), Startup

¹ See Kem, B., Sou, J., Ng, Z., & Chan, P. (2018). *Startup Kingdom: Cambodia's Vibrant Tech Startup Ecosystem*. Phnom Penh, Raintree and Mekong Strategic Partners.

² Ibid.

³ See Vong, R., Ty, M., & Chhoeun, L. (2020). *Financial Technology Landscape in the Kingdom of Promising Startups*. Phnom Penh, Techo Startup Center.

Singapore, Startup Sweden, etc. These programs have a similar purpose that is to contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the startup ecosystem allowing talents and innovators to reach their full potential. Following global and regional trends, there are four integrated approaches that the public sector and the private sector can collaboratively work together to create supporting mechanisms to build a robust, vibrant, and interconnected system.

Firstly, a conducive environment putting in place assisting programs to upskill talents is created. The programs should be able to help them access to business mentors and technical advisors. They are professionals who can provide startups with the in-depth understanding of business operation, and who can guide them in identifying key tech elements and practical approaches to lead tech projects.

Secondly, various mechanisms and platforms that effectively connect investors with startups are put in place. Doing this will help startups scale quickly, and consequently lead to the development of a healthy ecosystem. The platforms will close the gap of the disconnection between startups and investors as it allows startups to showcase their innovative projects and possibly get funded from investors. It is also a place where possible investors can search for initiatives and identify potential startups.

Thirdly, collaboration in the form of sharing sessions, keynotes, in-depth conversation, meetups, or workshops could potentially concentrate the convergence of ideas, creativity, and innovation. As a result, this would ensure the high success rate and address common ecosystem challenges.

Lastly, through collaboration between the public and private sector, innovators or startups and companies who possess high demand market industry problems can be matched. There are a number of companies and big corporations who are constantly looking for innovation to meet customer needs and improve the quality and convenience of their services and products. They are facing technical difficulties that require the use of advanced and innovative technology. Talents and driven young startups have the

capacity to deliver innovation using digital technology to tackle those problems. Connecting the problems from companies and solutions from startups with collaborative mentality meaningfully create new value that leads to an improved startup ecosystem.

It is undeniable that innovation is essential to the growth of the digital economy. Startups are valuable change makers and disruptors, giving rise to innovative ideas across industries. As they scale up, they need a conducive environment where they can flourish. Our startup ecosystem is still in its infancy and further development is needed to deliver success. Therefore, in order to harvest the benefits, it is crucial to build a vibrant and healthy ecosystem in which startups can be nurtured, and where they can effectively access to funding, mentorship, useful resources, and entrepreneurship and technical assistance, as well as the whole interactive ecosystem.

2. Strategic Framework

TSC's vision is to become a center of excellence where Cambodia's startups innovate and grow. To achieve that, **our mission** is to nurture startups to grow into successful businesses by enhancing talents' entrepreneurship and innovation capabilities with well-supported programs.

The proposed strategic framework will provide a detailed execution roadmap to promote a healthy startup ecosystem. To realize this goal, in order to tackle startups' challenges with a fast pace, we develop four core programs⁴ below:

- 1. Startup Nurturing
- 2. Digital Platform
- 3. Research
- 4. Community

Startup Nurturing Program aims at creating a supportive environment to enhance entrepreneurial and technological capability of the startups. Digital Platform will provide

⁴ See a number of priority actions in Annex 1 and key activities' timeframes in Annex 2.

startups a place to access useful resources and a coordinate body connecting startups with investors and the general public. Research Program intends to empower innovators and startups with a better insight of startups and digital agriculture value chain by providing data and research findings. Community Program offers a meeting point for all the relevant stakeholders in the startup ecosystem to share, network, and discuss.

Under the core programs, there is a range of sub-programs that are designed in accordance with TSC's vision as a core, aiming to accelerate ecosystem growth and successfully achieve the four objectives. The sub-programs will be elaboratively described in the following sections.

The creation of an interactive ecosystem will require the participation, expertise, and experience of different stakeholders. Hence, they all play a key role in the strategic framework to assist in supporting and implementing the programs. Figure 1 illustrates the overview of the strategic framework.

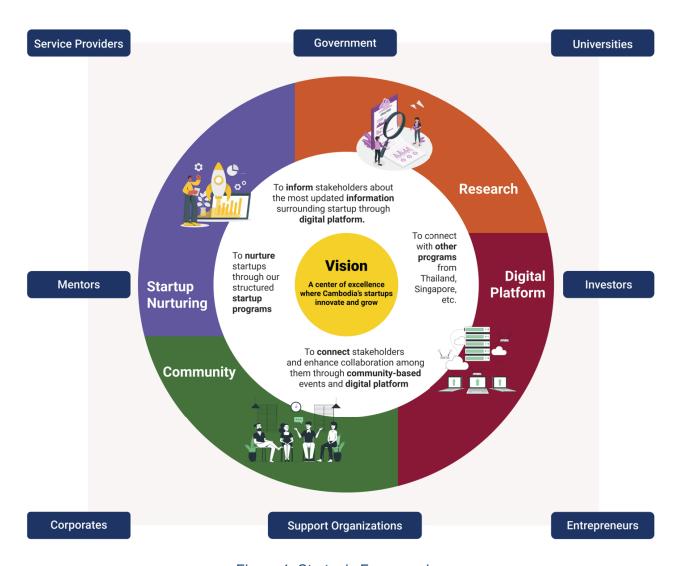


Figure 1: Strategic Framework

Source: Author (2020)

3 Strategic Direction and Core Program

3.1.1 Strategic Direction

The strategic direction depicts the visionary program called "Startup Cambodia". Startup Cambodia consists of four core programs developed to reach our objectives that aims to connect startups through community-based events and digital platforms, to nurture startups, to provide stakeholders with the most updated information, and to create a bridge with other international programs. It is designed to align with the vision and mission of TSC while staying ahead of emerging trends. We want to ensure that the challenges faced by startups and the stakeholders in the ecosystem are well-addressed in an effective and cohesive manner. Figure 2 shows the strategic direction.

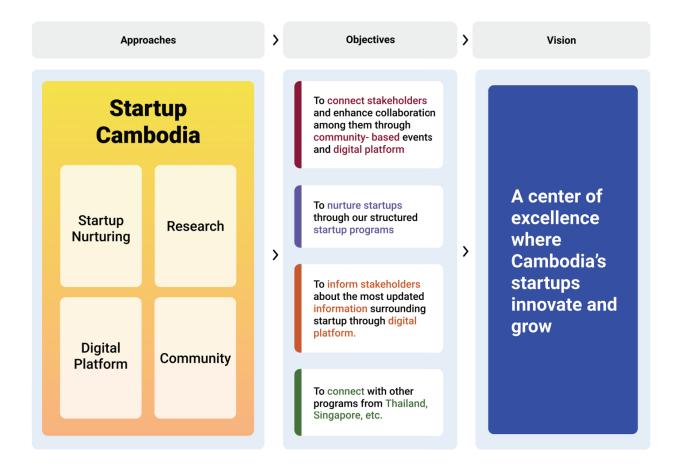


Figure 2: Strategic Direction

Source: Author (2020)

3.1.2 Core Program

The four core programs of Startup Cambodia are designed to respond with the main four objectives and ultimately achieve its goals. Figure 3 shows the sub programs in each core program.

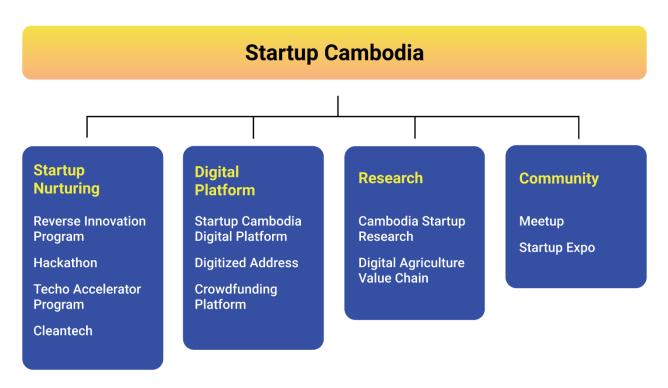


Figure 3: Four Core Programs of Startup Cambodia

The details of activities in each core program will be elaboratively planned in separate documents. However, all the core programs will be implemented by the Startup Development Office team of TSC. Below are the detail descriptions of each sub programs.

A. Startup Nurturing

Startup Nurturing Program is a supportive entrepreneurial and tech program that focuses on strengthening talents through several on-going up-skilling programs. The programs will partner with various leading tech companies, academic institutions, and government agencies to create initiatives, models, and a unique environment within which the talents and innovators flourishes and thrives. Startups will have the opportunities to strengthen their digital capabilities while learning how to solve real problems, develop their ideas into

actionable innovative solutions, and create sustainable business models to be investment-ready. Table 1 shows the details of Startup Nurturing Program.

Table 1: Startup Nurturing Program Descriptions and Indicators

Programs	Descriptions	Indicators
Reverse Innovation Program (RI)	A tailored projected based program designed for startups, talents, and innovators who can deliver innovation using digital technologies to tackle problems of corporates or companies. Selected institution executives' leaders share their companies' challenges to seek solutions and bring them to the market. It focuses on equipping startups with an innovative mindset focused on LEAN processes, innovation, and creative solutions. The program will provide the participants with technical and entrepreneurial mentoring, coworking space, pre-seed funding, and opportunity to get support from partners. Target per batch: 10-15 teams	 At least 5 corporates or industries signed up for the program in the first year. The program can train at least 10 teams per batch. At least 5 teams successfully completed the program in one year. At least 40 events of workshops, mentorship, or training programs organized in one year. At least 5 products, services, or solutions developed to address corporate problems. A RI Alumni Network established.

Hackathon Program

It is a one-week program designed for every Cambodian (high school and university students, fresh graduates, experienced and inexperienced officials from government ministries, NGOs, or the private sectors)

It intends to gather those individuals together to solve a particular problem. Often groups of 3-5 people with different or similar areas of expertise form around a project. Participants will have the opportunities to dive into problem-based learning, come up with their own solution, and pitch it at the end.

Target per batch: 30 - 40 participants

- The program can train at least 60 participants in the first year.
- At least 15 solutions or concepts created per batch.
- At least 3 teams per batch selected as winners.
- A Hackathon Alumni
 Network of established.

Techo Accelerator Program (TAP)

An industry-themed and technology-oriented accelerator program designed as the first local tech accelerator to co-innovate with entrepreneurs to create Minimum Viable Product (MVP), gain customer validation, and accelerate their path to viability through a technology-oriented designed curriculum based on each industry.

The program is an equity-free 6 months program for early-stage startups based on digital platforms in any industry.

Target per batch: 10 - 15 teams

- The program can train at least 10 teams per batch.
- At least 40 workshops, mentoring, or training for participants.
- At least 5 teams successfully completed the program and their startups created per batch.
- At least 1 startup funded per batch.
- A TAP Alumni Network established.

Cleantech Program

As an Executing Entity to the Global Cleantech Innovation Program, we run this program to accelerate cleantech innovation and entrepreneurship in startups and SMEs in Cambodia. The project objective is to accelerate the uptake and investments in cleantech innovations and promote coordination and ecosystem connectivity. The program focuses on green innovation, renewable energy, and energy efficiency, seeking to support entrepreneurs with additional access to finance, technical support, and capacity enhancement.

Target per batch: 10 - 15 teams

- At least 15 start-ups or SMEs pursued innovations in clean energy technologies.
- At least 10 roadshows and outreach events organized.
- At least 10 training or capacity building sessions held.
- At least 15 market
 feasibility studies
 conducted and product
 verification assessments
 or business plans
 developed.
- A Cleantech Alumni
 Network established.

B. Digital Platform

Digital Platform is the approach to develop innovative platforms that startups can plug into, reuse, and build upon. The platforms could provide information-centric models by allowing reliable information and data to be openly shared and accessible. It also acts as a coordinate body to understand what and where resources are available. The platforms are also a center for startups to showcase their solutions, receive valuable feedback, and get funded. Table 2 presents the details of Digital Platform Program.

Table 2: Digital Platform Program Descriptions and Indicators

Programs	Descriptions	Indicators
Startup Cambodia Digital Platform	With a wide variety of entrepreneur and startup related resources, Cambodia Startup Digital Platform is developed to encourage dialogue and knowledge sharing. It is designed so that startups, mentors, talents, investors, startup support organizations, and the government have effective communication and networking channels and platforms that would potentially lead to investment, hiring, collaboration and policymaking.	 A secure and complete website and mobile platform developed. At least 5 programs and events posted within one year. At least 3 research studies, learning contents, blog posts, or publications uploaded per year. At least 30 mentors, investors, or instructors' profile posted. At least 500 active users on the platform within one year.
Digitized Address	We map the OpenStreetMap and GoogleStreetMap's geo-data with the collected actual address to develop an accurate open data of the postal address in Cambodia. It pinpoints accurate home postal addresses. This open data will be a platform that could help startups working on logistics and last mile delivery.	 A secure and complete website and mobile platform. At least 500 users signed up to use the platform in the first year. At least 50 active users use the platform each month.
Crowdfunding Platform	A reward-based platform where Startup Nurturing Program's teams as well as other startups can present their concepts, validate the market, and ask	 A secure and complete website and mobile platform developed. At least 50 campaigns

for financial support. For the general public, they can find inspiring innovations and provide support in funding (capital) to their favorite campaign. It is a community of startup journey and story, product evaluation and feedback.

- posted in year 1.
- At least 5 successful funded campaigns in year
 1.
- 1000 active users
 accessed the platform
 during the pilot's periods.
- At least 500 financial backers supported during the pilot's periods.

C. Research

In the program, the research studies conducted could enable entrepreneurs and startups to better understand the landscape of startups and digital agriculture value chain. The There will be collaboration with educational institution as well as the relevant stakeholders to conduct the research studies. The data and finding from the research will play a significant role in giving recommendations to the decision makers and startup ecosystem players. Startups could also leverage the findings as an evidence-based tool to improve the quality of their services and catalyze ingenuity and innovation. Table 3 shows the details of Research Program.

Table 3: Research Program Descriptions and Indicators

Programs	Descriptions	Indicators
Cambodia Startup Research	Research studies conducted to investigate the current and future landscape, challenges, potentials, or opportunities related to startups. This could be resources to provide concrete guides to TSC in planning its programs and developing platforms. The data and findings will be used as resources posted in the	 At least 1 consultative workshop report. At least 5 knowledge sharing materials such as blog posts, infographics, journal, or short and longform contents written to

	Startup Cambodia Digital Platform.	encourage deeper dialogue and understanding related to startups produced in one year At least 1 research paper produced in 1 year.
Digital Agriculture Value Chain Research	The purpose of this research is to understand the current state of the digital agriculture value chain in Cambodia as well as to provide recommendations to the government of Cambodia for the improvement of the digital ecosystem in the agriculture value chain. This research requires data collection in the target provinces. The research topics could be the challenges to link agriculture value chain actors via digital technology and how to build trust between each actor in the ecosystem. The data and findings will be used as resources posted in the Startup Cambodia Digital Platform.	 At least 1 consultative workshop report. At least 5 knowledge sharing materials such as blog posts, infographics, journal, or short and longform contents written to encourage a deeper dialogue and understanding related to digital agriculture value chain produced in one year. At least 1 research paper produced in 1 year.

D. Community

It is a program that aims to promote in-depth conversations around technology and innovation in the form of workshops, meetup events, keynotes, and networking events. The discussion could take the form of identifying, sharing, and discussing new and emerging issues to encourage the culture of thinking outside the box. This community program could truly provide new startups an effective exposure to the ecosystem, integrate them in the community, and connect them to potential investments and partnerships. The purpose of the program is also to deepen stakeholders' engagement

so as to spur and encourage more entrepreneurship and startup idea generation. Table 4 shows the details of Community Program.

Table 4: Community Program Descriptions and Indicators

Programs	Descriptions	Indicators
Meetup	It is a gathering event for people with similar interests to learn new things, find support, and get out of their comfort zone. Activities range from presentations, discussion, sharing sessions to team building and debate. The targets participants are the innovators, leaders, and other key players in the startup ecosystem.	 At least 6 Meetup events held in one year. At least 25 participants attended in one Meetup event. At least 6 reports or blog posts produced in one year. At least 10 mentors, trainers, or speakers from different disciplines to host the events within one year.
Startup Expo	A yearly exhibition of startup successes where crowdfunding platform's successful campaigns showcase their products to the world and get funded on the spot. For them, it is an opportunity to present their venture to potential investors, engage with customers, and get feedback. For the audience, it is a place where they discover their favorite startup stories and solutions, attend knowledge sessions, and network with experts.	 A group of 20 young project volunteers who can facilitate the Startup Expo program and run it according to plan. At least 3000 participants from all over the country. At least 25 startup exhibitors. At least 50 mentors, investors, and experts. At least 10 workshops, training, or panel discussions.

3.1.3 Program Output

There are numerous approaches to achieve the results of the programs. However, this strategic plan lays out what activities need to be done and how we set the indicators that allow us to monitor progress and to measure the success. Figure 4 illustrates the output produced by the core programs.

Vision: "A center of excellence where Cambodia's startups innovate and grow"

Programs Activities Indicators Outputs Talents and innovators **Nuturing startups with** Number of talents participated in nuturing well supported training participated in nuturing their startups. programs and mentors their startups. **Startup** to tackle corporate Products or solutions **Nurturing** problems and society Number of startups created by startups to issues using digital tackling society issues solve society issues and technology. and corporate problems. corporate problems. Innovative products or Developing platforms, Number of Innovative solutions implemented solutions, or services solutions that startups that startups can plug and used by the public can plug into, reuse, or **Digital** into and build upon. and startups. build upon. **Platform Developing platforms** Number of platforms to Platforms to share invest in startup and that startups can find knowledge, invest, and resources and investors. share knowledge. connect with startups. Number of research Conducting research Research conducted conducted related to studies to gather related to startups. startups. accurate trusted data Research and information that Knowledge sharing Number of publications, startups could use as materials published articles, blogs, or reports resources. each month. published each month. Mentors, investors, and Number of mentors, experts connected with Organizing events, investors, and experts startups to share meetups, startup expo connected with startups knowledge. to build a community of to share knowledge. Community startups that gather Mentoring events, Number of mentoring and connect relevant meetups, and expos events, meetups, and stakeholders. organized to build a expos organized. community of startups.

Figure 4: Outputs of the Core Programs

4. Program Responsibilities Structure

Startup Cambodia consists of four program leaders who will lead the teams of specialists, analysts, researchers, engineers, and designers working closely together to plan, support, and implement the core programs.

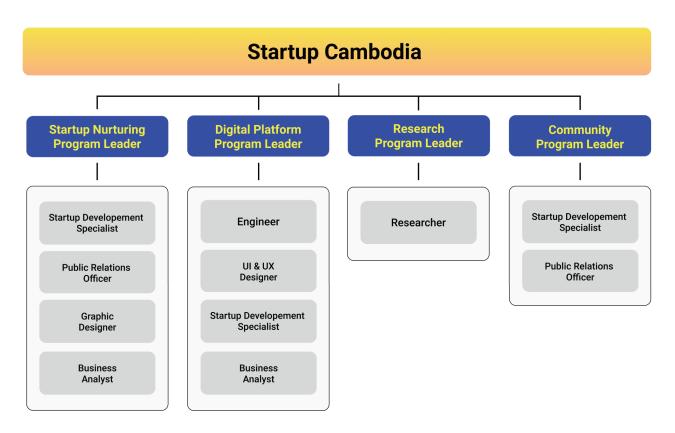


Figure 5: Responsibilities Structure of the Core Programs

The main responsibility of the program unit is to implement the programs to support and achieve the mission of the organization. Each program unit personnel has the main responsibilities and expertise that align with the objectives of the programs. The individual will carry out the program activities laid out in the program's strategic plan. They are:



Develop a strategic framework.

Develop guidelines and processes for programs.

Establish and maintain a network from different disciplines.

Organize events and workshops.

Perform researches on startup pain points.

Plan and develop all digital platforms



(Cambodia Startup Platform, Digitized Address, Crowdfunding Platform)



Engineer



Researcher

Conduct research studies related to startups.

Produce knowledge sharing materials such as blog posts, infographics, journal, or short and long-form contents.

Train startups on conducting researches.



Public Relations Officer

Develop a communication plan.

Develop Programs' Administration manual.

Update website with updated information.

Update social networks to include updated information daily.

Communicate with core relevant stakeholders in the community.



Graphic Designer

Gather and evaluate design requirement in collaboration with other team members.

Creating original graphic deisgns for logos, branding materials, etc to be used in programs, events, and digital platform.



Business Analyst

Develop business and financial strategy using data analysis.

Develop investment plan on startups.

Analyze financial and market opportunities on new ideas and innovation.

Figure 6: Program Unit

Source: Author (2020)

Annexes

Annex 1: Priority Actions from Q4 of 2020 to 2021

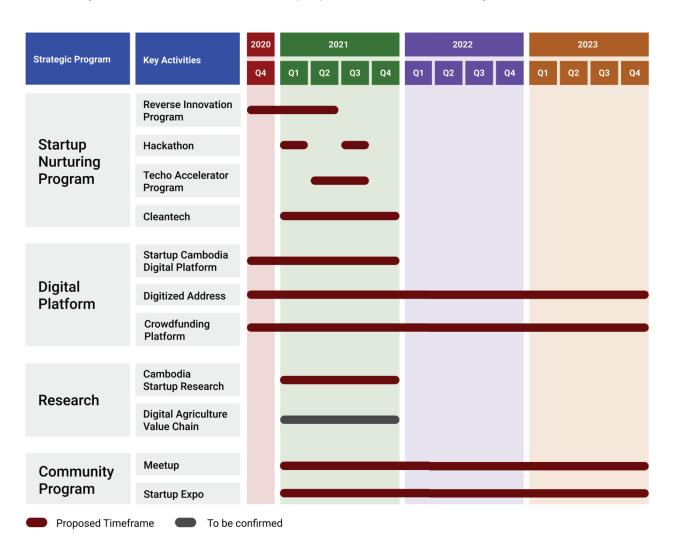
Obj	ective	Key Actions	Indicators	Timelines
1.	Members recruiting and allocating resources to implement strategic action plan	A Graphic Designer and Public Relation Officer recruited and onboard A program responsibilities structure developed and endorsed by the board	Full staff recruited and onboardA clear structure developed and endorsed	By December 2020
2.	2. Plan and implement programs to nurture Startup Nurturing Programs - Reverse Innovation program guideline and process planned - Reverse Innovation program guideline and process planned	Start in October 2020		
	startups		Hackathon program guideline and process planned	
			- TAP launched and implemented	
			- Cleantech program guideline and process planned	February
3.	Develop digital platforms	Digital platforms developed, improved, and used	- Crowdfunding platform case studies created for internal discussion	By November 2020

			- Crowdfunding concept note and guideline planned - Startup Cambodia Digital Platform developed - Digitize Address improved, tested and used by the public Start in November 2020 Start in December 2020 Released by November 2020
4.	Conduct research studies related to startups and digital agriculture value chain in Cambodia	Research studies conducted	- At least 1 research related to Cambodia Startup conducted - At least 1 research related to Digital Agricultural Value Chain conducted Start in January 2021
5.	Plan and run community event programs to connect startups stakeholders	Community events planned and run	 Meetup event's guideline and process planned Meetup event run Start in January 2021 Meetup event run Start in February 2021 Startup Expo's guideline and process planned Start in February 2021
6.	Maintain and promote Startup Cambodia's programs to	Startup Cambodia's programs, activities, and events promoted via social media and other mass media	- Startup Development Office website and social media regularly updated - Programs' material

partners and general public	designed, printed and distributed to the public and its partners	
	Public startup events or workshop joined to promote Startup Cambodia	

Annex 2: Key Activities Timeframes from Q4 of 2020 to 2023

The plan is expected to be implemented from the fourth quarter of 2020 to the last quarter of 2023. Implementation will take into account the complexity, priority and resource availability of each of the initiative. The proposed timeline is heavily loaded towards 2021.



This page is intentionally left blank.





CONTACT US

Hotline: +855 81 922 329

Email: info@techostartup.center

Website: www.techostartup.center