



Canadian International
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de
développement international

infoDev

Innovate. Connect. Transform.

EPIC mInnovation model

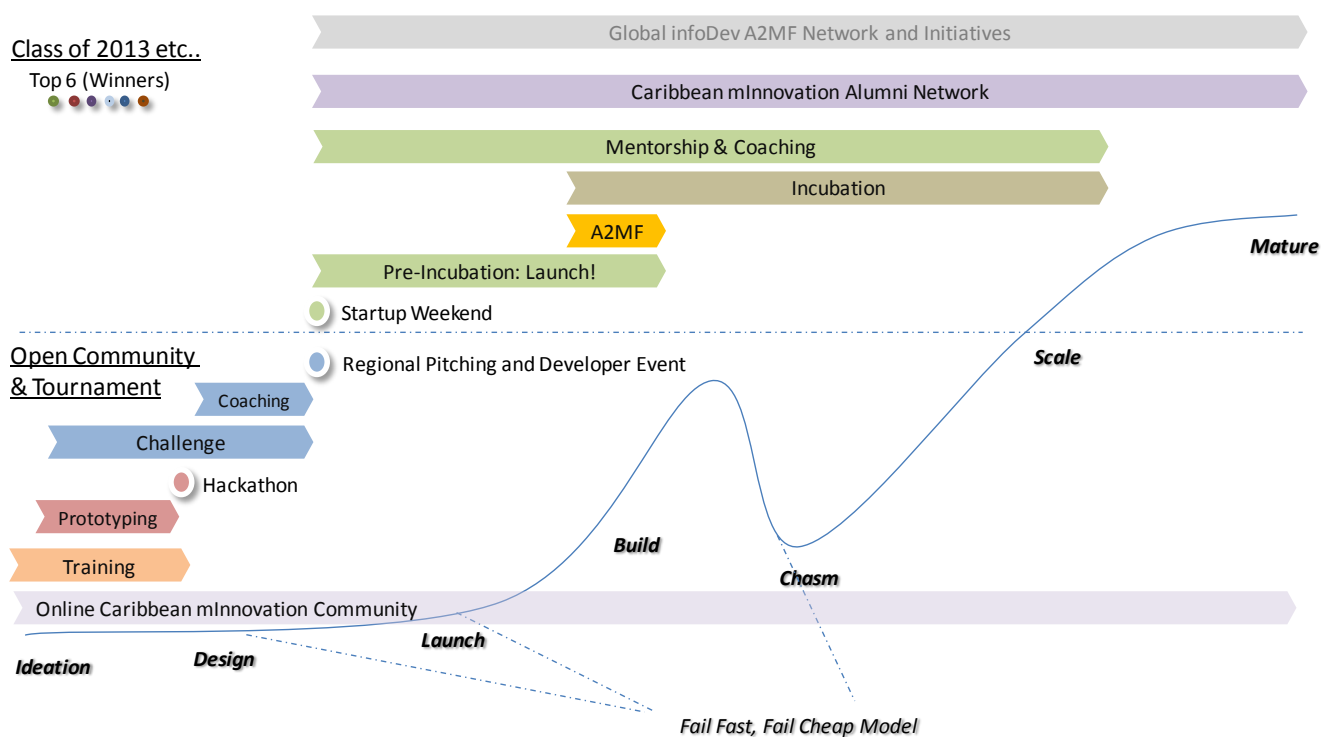
Activities - Overview

July 3, 2012

EPIC

infoDev’s mInnovation model for the Caribbean proposes to stimulate the region’s mobile innovation ecosystem in order to create and grow competitive mobile startups. Through a regionally coordinated effort, the model will support several local activities that will source and support talent, including innovation challenges, training, prototyping, and coaching events, and run an annual pitching event for the most promising innovators. Winners of the annual event will further be accelerated through access to seed funding, and additional pre-incubation and incubation support.

The mobile innovation communities on the islands are still in an early stage of development and currently would not supply sufficient clients to ensure sufficient deal flow for a full capacity mobile incubator. It is therefore important to ensure that client base of potential entrepreneurs will be developed through activities such as a virtual community, training, prototyping, challenges and coaching on a local and regional level. The figure below illustrates the main elements of the proposed model.



Virtual Caribbean mInnovation Community

The activity will strengthen the regional efforts and provide a channel for ongoing interaction and exchange between innovators and developers, which may include online community of practice portals, virtual social meetups, and social media efforts. It can also serve as an outreach channel for all the project activities.

Annual mInnovation Challenge

To identify and motivate the most talented mobile innovators local and regional challenges with attractive incentives will be organized. These challenges follow a competitive and iterative selection process, with expert jurors selecting the winners out of a larger pool of submissions. Annual programs of this kind will maintain interest and generate new entrepreneurial potential on a regular basis. The challenge will include a coaching phase and culminate in a regional developer and pitching event. Winning ideas and entrepreneurs should

receive prizes and offered a possibility to receive further support as a part of a group of regional winners (Annual Caribbean mInnovation Class).

Training and Prototyping

Training on technical and business skills is required and programs should be timed so that they increase the participation rate of the annual mInnovation challenge. A few technical training activities are already undertaken on a regional level, but these efforts should be supported and expanded further. A regional co-ordination of efforts will enhance the output from these programs.

The training should be complemented with prototyping efforts and events such as hackathons. Multi-platform testing is currently very difficult as the infrastructure to test applications and their compatibility is not easily accessible or available. Local physical testing facilities with the required equipment would be of benefit to the community, but at the regional level the training curriculum should include the necessary guidance, and encouragement to peer-to-peer support via the virtual mInnovation community.

Caribbean mInnovation Class / Alumni Network

Winners of the annual mInnovation Challenge will be offered additional support to guide a successful product launch. This support will include events (e.g. a startup weekend can be organized immediately after the pitching event), as well as pre-incubation support such as mentorship and coaching. Capable teams and start-ups may also qualify for access to international markets and finance support, and they may be incorporated into existing local incubation programs.

Participants will form a Caribbean mInnovation Alumni Network to encourage peer-to-peer support and interactions, and to be used as a source for mentors and coaches at a later stage.

Global infoDev Networks and Initiatives

High potential mobile innovators will benefit from the access to finance and markets program of infoDev, which facilitates global initiatives and networks. Past examples include infoDev Top 50 competition.

Also a regional Access to Markets & Finance (A2MF) approach for the mobile project is envisioned. In particular, the Regional MSME Seed Fund that will be developed within EPIC can become a resource for mobile innovators and incubators. *infoDev* explores the potential to establish a regional Angel Network in the Caribbean and to create linkages with Diaspora interested in investing in the region. Also for the mobile industry, the diaspora plays a strong role, and a mobile startup investment component could be integrated in the seed fund. To achieve the tie-in between the fund and mobile incubators, we will promote the fund to mHub managers, also further emphasizing the role of inclusive innovation and the privileged access of women-managed MSMEs to the fund.