

Incubators and Accelerators within National Systems of Innovation

Africa NDE Forum | 23 - 26 March 2026 | Hammamet, Tunisia



United Nations Climate Change
Technology Executive Committee

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What are incubators and accelerators?

Incubators

An incubator is any sort of environment designed to support start-ups, often over a period of 1-5 years, including by providing a physical location and business, marketing, technical and/or financial support services

Accelerators

An accelerator typically provides mentoring, peer learning and skills development support to entrepreneurs over a period of 3-6 months, often in exchange for a small equity stake in the resulting venture.

What are the main differences?

1

Incubators have a longer **history**, hence more experience, learning and standard operating models

2

Incubators often support all types of business, while accelerators are often more **focused** on high-tech entrepreneurship.

3

In terms of **operational model**, incubators often support entrepreneurs for a longer **durations**, with less competitive **selection process** compared to accelerators.

4

The **source of funding** for incubators is often public entities, while accelerators are often funded by corporates and venture capitalists.



Linkage: What is the role of incubators & accelerators in NSIs?

One of the functions of national systems of innovation is supporting the **entrepreneurial experimentation** – to reduce uncertainty with new technologies, applications & strategies.

Actors

Private firms
Government
Risk-capital providers
Philanthropists

Policies

Ease of starting a business
Risk-capital policies
Start-up support programmes
Incubator programmes

Indicators

Start-up support services
SMEs introducing innovation
Market introduction of new technological products
Experimental application projects

Advancing the climate agenda: development, acceptance and diffusion of **new mitigation and adaptation technologies**; creation of **green jobs** and **skills**; strengthening **innovation ecosystems** for climate action and SDGs; and more.



Services: How incubators and accelerators support innovation for climate action?

Incubators and accelerators, as part of the NSIs, play an important role in generating new products, services, businesses, organizational models and behavioural changes, to speeds up and scales up national efforts to address climate change.

Addressing challenges

- Weak entrepreneurial support systems
- Fragmented linkages to climate technology markets
- Inadequate finance for entrepreneurial activities

Fostering enablers

- By reducing risk and providing support for business development, marketing, and technical services
- By providing the opportunity to interact with potential partners, markets of suppliers and buyers, customers and supporting firms
- By connecting entrepreneurs with sources of finance and investment



Strengthening climate technology I&As in developing countries

- A strong national systems of innovation fosters entrepreneurial activities and could help unlock financing for incubators and accelerators, including by crowding in private finance.
- Despite the potential benefits, incubators and accelerators focused on climate technology constitute a small share globally, and specifically in developing countries. More in-depth analysis of the topic is needed.

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2017



2018



2018



2026 (forthcoming)

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