

IAF BUSINESS INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM (E6)
Entrepreneurship and Innovation: The Practitioners' Perspectives (1)

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LESSONS LEARNED FROM SGAC'S PRE-ACCELERATOR PROGRAM ON LEGAL/IP
PROTECTION, SUSTAINABILITY TESTING, AND RELEVANCE OF ACCESSIBLE NETWORK
FOR MARKET VALIDATION FOR SPACE ENTREPRENEURS

Abstract

Setting up a space business brings with it a set of challenges for entrepreneurs which does not necessarily occur when doing business elsewhere. Amongst these challenges specific to space entrepreneurship include (i) intricate and or limited resources to understand legal and intellectual property protection rights for space ideas, (ii) failure or difficulty to design sustainability frameworks of space businesses and efficiently test/verify it with its integrated ecosystem, and (iii) inaccessibility of a network for lean market validation of ideas for new entrepreneurs! Thus, having a program designed explicitly for these unique nuances of space entrepreneurship is a timely opportunity, especially in the New Space Age. On top of the unique circumstances of space entrepreneurship, the new era of space has offered opportunities for entrepreneurs both from advanced space-faring nations and emerging space economies! This is healthy but can be daunting for new entrepreneurs. Therefore, the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC) through its Commercial Space Project Group (CSPG) created the Pre-Accelerator Programme to provide an avenue, tool kits and regularly transformed repository of materials for up and coming entrepreneurs to address these challenges, and that combines for cohort sharing the experiences from both ends of the spectrum. This paper focuses on sharing the lessons learned from the implementation of the pre-accelerator gathered through both (i) end-of-sprint cohort surveys and (ii) short interviews of the programme's mentors, organizers, advisors, and cohort members. Understanding these is a relevant source of information for designing and or enhancing other similar entrepreneurship programmes that chooses to address space-centric challenges! The qualitative approach taken culminated with insights on how the pre-accelerator effectively addressed the chosen three programme core values, and briefly illustrated the potential programme design pivot points as a result of the lessons learned—such as the actual challenges for space entrepreneurs at a scaling phase, and the impact of regional ecosystems for a scaling space business.