

Template – Session Outcome Document

(2 pages max)

Summary of Session: Tech Hubs in Africa post-Covid

International Trade Centre

2-3 pm CET, Wednesday 26 April 2023

Session 481: <https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2023/Agenda/Session/481>

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- The shift by Tech hubs from physical events, trainings, and other beneficiary support activities to a fully online/virtual model during Covid-19 means that there is more hybrid now than ever before. The reach of tech hubs has increased dramatically: where the Innovation Village used to be limited to Kampala’s ecosystem, it has now access to entrepreneurs across the country. Carbon13 can identify climate tech founders outside of the UK. Afrilabs members offer hybrid acceleration programmes.
- 5 major Business/Revenue models of tech hubs were identified and discussed; Grantees, Networkers, Consultancy, Revenue sharing and the builders: We discussed the most and least resilient of these models, building on ITC’s research on the topic: <https://intracen.org/resources/publications/tech-hubs-in-africa-supporting-start-ups-second-edition>
- The need for tech hubs to take on a more specialised approach: Carbon13 for instance only onboards founders that have the ambition to “achieve our minimum target of emissions mitigation potential of 10 million tonnes of CO2e per year when at scale”. Resources are better aligned around a specific purpose; in the case of startups; sectors and maturity levels could be considered by tech hubs to tailor relevant support.



- New services that have since been established by the different tech hubs and how their beneficiaries have responded to these services.

Towards WSIS+20 and WSIS beyond 2025, please share your views on the emerging trends, challenges, achievements, and opportunities in the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines to date (5-8 bullets)

❖ **Information and communication infrastructure: an essential foundation for an inclusive information society**

- Affordability remains a challenge: The cost of devices such as smartphones is still very high in Africa and as a result, fewer people are transacting online.
- Broadband network infrastructure is still not accessible to everyone: Low bandwidth and the slow internet speed in Africa negatively affects online business transactions.
- Remote and marginalized areas remain underserved: These continue to be left out and most support programmes set up in major cities – ITC is working with secondary cities in beneficiary countries to better support small businesses.
- Investment is still hard to get by: It is still a gap within the startup tech ecosystem. Most African startups are generally underfunded leading to their collapse.
- Digital inclusion means a third of the world population remains unconnected: The digital divide continues to leave many behind. The unconnected in Africa are the majority.

Tangible outcomes (such as key achievements, announcements, launches, agreements, and commitments (3-5 bullet points))

- ITC's most recent research/report on Tech Hubs in Africa was discussed and will soon be published and distributed.
- Commitment from the different hub Managers to continue innovating in the way they are supporting small businesses and startups for more efficiency.
- Hub managers also committed to more establishing more partnerships and collaborations between Africa and the EU.
- Hub managers agreed to specialize more in their support programs for startups while also diversifying their revenue streams.
- Introduce more channels of engagement for tech hubs. The Innovation village in Uganda has established both online and offline communities of beneficiaries: Agent networks have been put in place to cater to both communities.

Actionable plan (2-5 points)



- None

Suggestions for thematic aspects that might be included in the WSIS Forum 2024 (WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event) (one paragraph)

- ❖ Not related to the topic: Organizers of the different sessions and topics need access to attendee registrations info to better mobilize participants.
- ❖ The current registration system is cumbersome and results in lower attendance.