



ETHIOPIAN INVESTMENT HOLDINGS



JumpStart Ethiopia

Corporate Open Innovation & Venture Building: 2-Year Pilot Program

Let's Build Ethiopia's Innovation Future!

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01

Program Overview

- Context,
- Vision & Strategic Objective
- Value Proposition

Ethiopian Investment Holdings (EIH)

Ethiopian Investment Holdings (EIH) is **Africa's largest sovereign wealth fund**, dedicated to advancing national development through the **strategic management of public assets**. We enable **high-impact investments and cultivate transformative partnerships** that drive sustainable economic growth. As a catalyst for Ethiopia's long-term prosperity, EIH is committed to delivering value, transparency, and innovation across all sectors of the economy.



Diversify

Diversify national assets to unlock new economic potential



Drive

Drive innovation and strategic investments that fuel long-term, inclusive growth



Deliver

Deliver sustainable value for current and future generations

"As the Walia Ibex scales 89⁰ cliffs, EIH navigates steep economic terrain with purpose and agility."

ElH portfolios

41+ state-owned enterprises

7 Shareholding

9 clusters



**Agriculture &
Agro Processing**



**Mining, Engineering
& Chemicals**



**Financial
Services**



Hospitality



**Construction
& Real Estate**



**Transport &
Logistics**



**Energy &
Connectivity**



Trading



Manufacturing

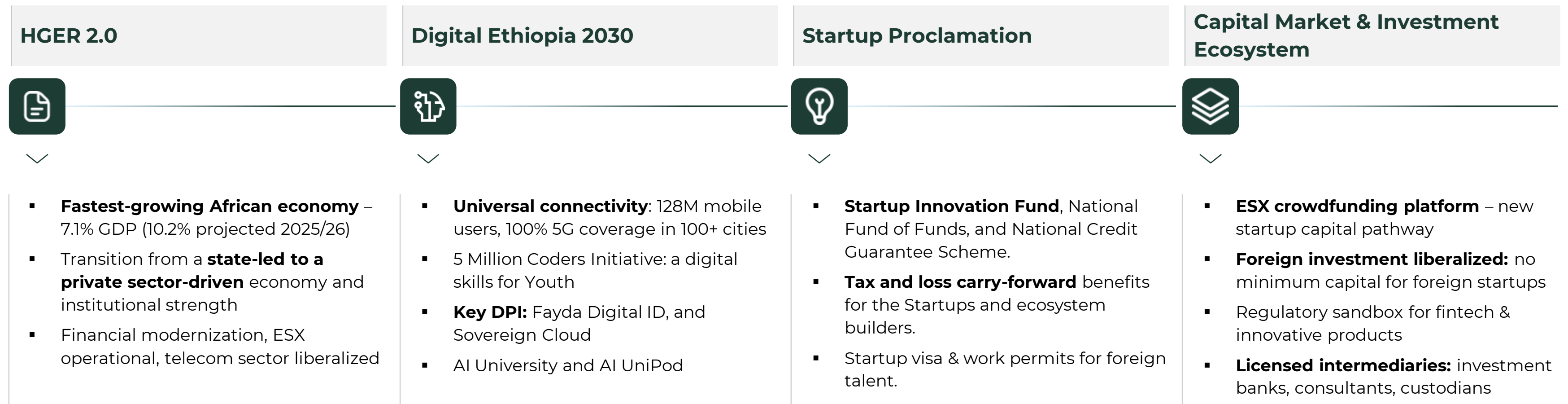
EIH portfolios

EIH Equity Holdings



JumpStart Ethiopia Program (JSE)

Initiated by **Ethiopian Investment Holdings (EIH)**, Jumpstart Ethiopia is a transformative program that links State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) with high-potential startups through venture clienting and targeted investment (CVC/direct investment). This creates mutual growth, drives economic transformation, and positions Ethiopia as a leader in African innovation.



Landscape: SOE Innovation Gaps

01. Slow R&D Cycles

Limited internal innovation; slow for today's changing global economy.

02. High Cost of Failure

Traditional innovation projects require multi-million Birr investments before any validation, making failure financially costly.

03. Limited Talent Access

Institutional structures & constraints limit talent access.

04. Siloed Knowledge

Innovation efforts are isolated within an SOE, with no mechanism to share learnings or scale successes across the portfolio.

The lost opportunity

- SOEs are forced to rely on expensive foreign innovation and vendors.
- They miss both exploitative opportunities (incremental gains) and explorative opportunities (radical innovation)—failing to protect current revenue while losing the chance to build entirely new industries & future-proof services.
- Homegrown solutions are untapped.

Ethiopia's Startup Ecosystem Gaps

01. Validation Gap

Promising ideas remain theoretical; no structured, low-cost pathways exist to test assumptions, build prototypes, or run pilots with real enterprise customers.

02. Context-specific knowledge

Founders operate without deep business and technical support tailored to fast-changing local market realities, and physical infrastructure remains underdeveloped.

03. Market Access

Startups lack first customer access for testing, launching their venture require high burn rate, and miss direct client feedback loops to iteratively refine solutions.

04. Financing Shortfall

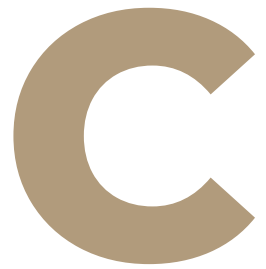
Limited risk capital and absence of local VC & growth capital, forcing reliance on grants and stalling growth.

Result

High-potential entrepreneurs struggle to validate and commercialize ideas locally, missing both frontier ventures that could build new industries and drive the economy.

JSE As a Bridge to the Innovation Eco-System Gaps

Startups



Challenges

- › Weak business environment & financing constraints.
- › Fragmented support & lack of infrastructure.
- › Scarce Patient capital; reliance on grants.
- › Lack of a first customer for testing and validation leads to a high burn rate.



Opportunities

- › Agile R&D (3–6-month pilots).
- › Specialized talent without hiring overhead.
- › Low-cost, de-risked innovation with a pilot test.

JumpStart Ethiopia

SoEs



Opportunities

- › Validation test bed
- › First customer (venture clienting)
- › Infrastructure, data, domain expertise
- › Long-term capital (EIH, CVC)



Challenges

- › Slow R&D cycles; internal innovation too slow
- › Hard & costly to hire top tech talent
- › Multi-million Birr risk before validation
- › Siloed innovation – successes never scale

Vision & Strategic Objective

VISION

To position Ethiopia as Africa's leading innovation hub through systematic corporate–startup partnership and investment facilitation

Strategic Objectives

At the SoEs

Build a future-ready, diversified portfolio by strengthening internal innovation capacity for long-term sustainability and developing frontier ventures.

At the Ecosystem

Accelerate the commercialization and scaling of high-potential Ethiopian startups.

Success Metrics

Primary Goal: At least 10% of Program Ventures achieve sustainable market penetration and operational self-sufficiency within 2 Years.

Impact: \$2M follow-on Investment Catalyzed, \$3M revenue generated, 1000 jobs created.

Core Value Proposition

For EIH & SOEs	For Startups & Founders	For the Ecosystem
 Accelerated Problem-Solving Address critical operational bottlenecks faster than traditional R&D cycles using startup agility	 Structured growth support Guidance & support from idea to investment, fully backed by SOE market insights and infrastructure	 Venture commercialization Provide a structured pathway for startups to commercialize and scale.
 Unlock innovation Gain access to innovation to future-proof operations and services.	 Strategic Test-bed & market access Use SOEs as a launchpad; gain market validation; and secure first customer.	 De-risked Investment Opportunities Investors access startups validated through real SOE demand and structured support.
 Derisked frontier ventures opportunities Opportunities for strategic equity positions in frontier ventures to diversify and future-proof businesses.	 Funding Pathways Access to pilot funding and Seed investment from VC, PE, EIH, CVC, and ESX platforms.	 Venture Development Pipeline of capable entrepreneurs and designated startups with tested MVPs.

02

Program Framework

- Program Flow & Scope

JSE Is The First Open Innovation Pilot In Ethiopia

Open innovation is a model where organizations intentionally leverage external ideas, talent, and partnerships—alongside internal capabilities—to solve challenges, seize opportunities, and accelerate innovation faster than internal R&D alone.

✗ CLOSED INNOVATION (Traditional Model)

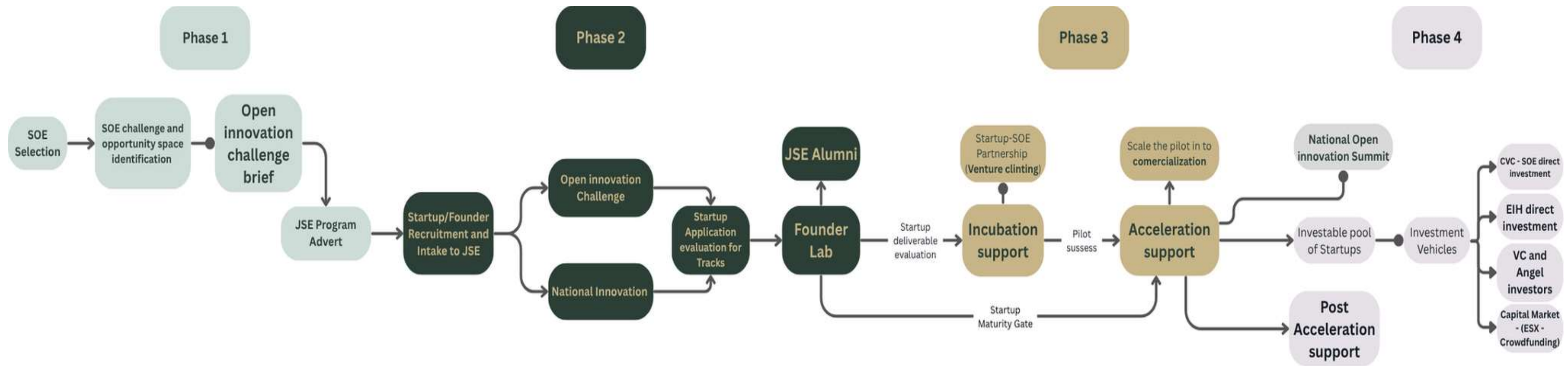
- Internal R&D only—slow and expensive
- Siloed knowledge within SOE departments
- Innovation cycles take 5–10 years from idea to deployment
- High failure risk with massive upfront capital commitment
- Limited exposure to market disruption signals
- Talent bottleneck: 'best people work for us.'

✓ OPEN INNOVATION (JSE Model)

- Tap the startup ecosystem for specialized solutions
- Rapid 3–6-month pilot cycles with measurable KPIs
- Low-cost paid pilots before large commitments
- SOE as first customer (Venture Clienting)
- Continuous exposure to frontier technologies
- External talent & entrepreneurial mindset infused into SOE teams
- Cross-SOE knowledge sharing—one startup solution scales across all EIH SOEs

Global evidence: Companies with open innovation programs launch solutions 40% faster, at 60% lower cost than internal R&D alone. BMW, Bosch, Telkom, Safaricom — the world's best SOEs and corporations are already doing this.

JSE Process Flow



Program Scope & Innovation Framework

The JSE Program executes its strategy through **two synergistic tracks** with SOEs positioned at the center as partners, customers, and investors.

TRACK 1 – SOE Challenge & Open Innovation

Accelerate SOE Innovation Adaptation - Leveraging startups as a source of innovation to solve innovation challenges and explore new frontier industries for long-term resilience

- **Focus:** Solve specific SOE Innovation challenges via the Open Innovation model
- **Engagement Model:** SOEs act as the primary test bed and customer, de-risking adoption while guaranteeing demand. **SOE Role:** Active challenge owner + venture client
- **Sector Focus:** EIH portfolio sectors
- **Investment Pathway:** EIH Direct, VCs, Angels, ESX, SOE CVC

TRACK 2 – National Innovation Program

Strengthen Ethiopia's National Innovation Ecosystem - Empower high-potential startups with structured Venture building support, market access, and financing pathways to build a resilient, self-sustaining innovators that drive national growth.

- **Focus:** Innovative startup ideas, building for the open market, with no direct link to an SOE.
- **Engagement Model:** Structured venture building support, backed by SOEs.
- **SOE Role:** Resource provider, exposure host
- **Sector Focus:** Sector agnostic.
- **Investment Pathway:** EIH Direct, VCs, Angels, ESX, CVC if SOE fit is identified.

1. EXPLOITATION

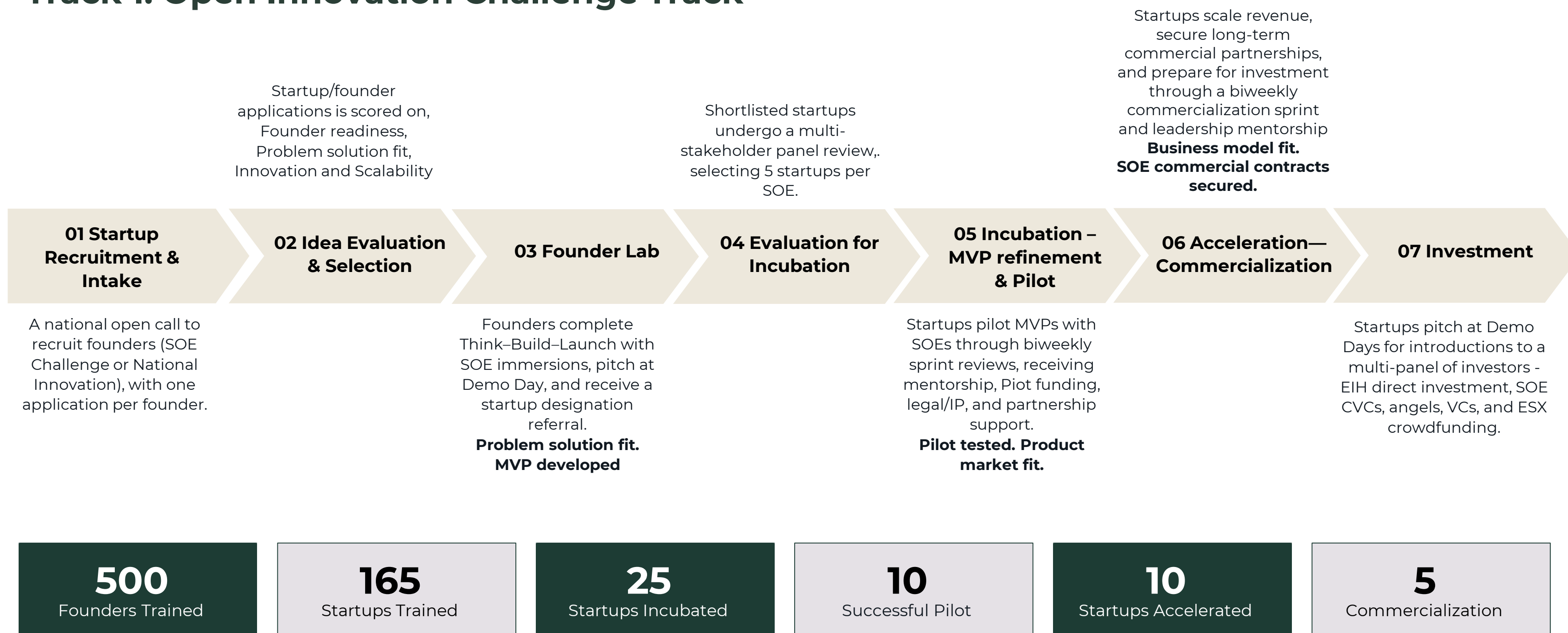
Optimizing current operations and digitally transforming existing products and services to deliver efficiency gains, cost savings, stable cash flow, and new revenue streams across production, supply chain, quality, and maintenance.

2. Exploration

Pilot-testing and scaling emerging frontier industries and markets to create new business models, unlock new markets, export growth, build long-term competitive advantage, shape future markets, and drive export.

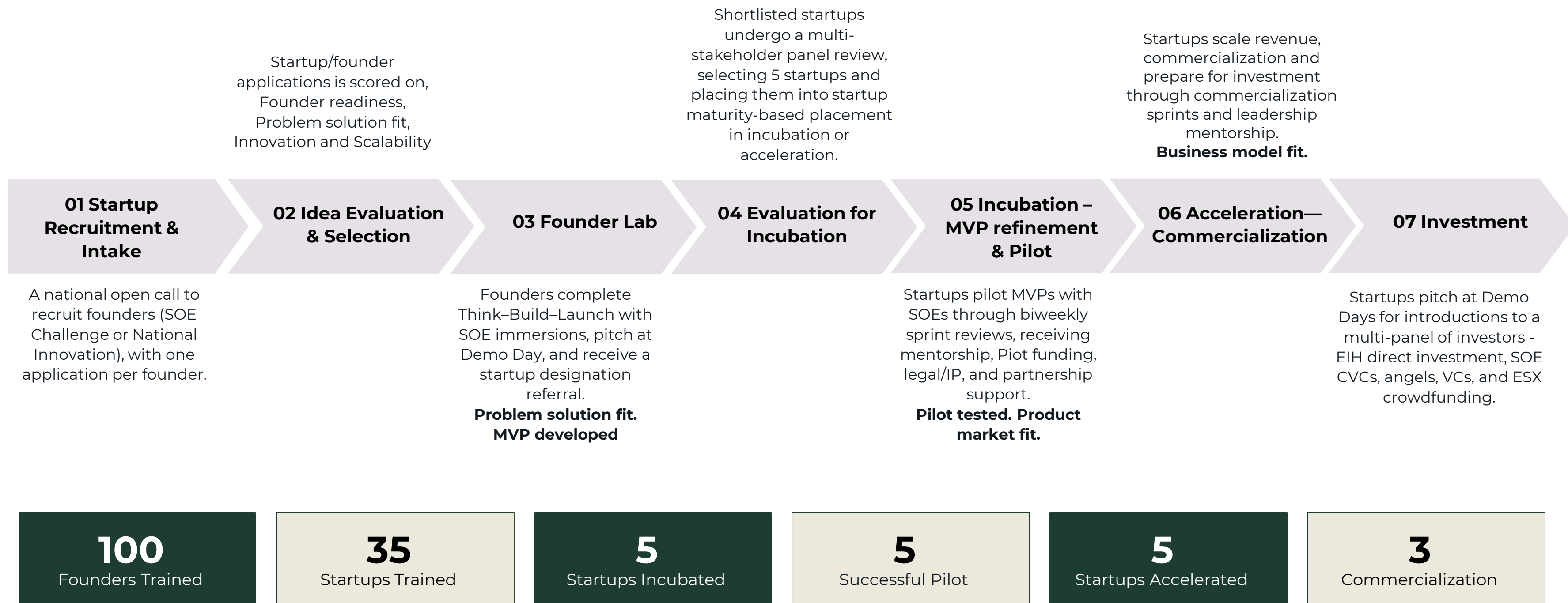
Program Tracks Process Details

Track 1: Open Innovation Challenge Track



Program Tracks Process Details

Track 2: National Innovation Program



03

The SOE Startup Journey

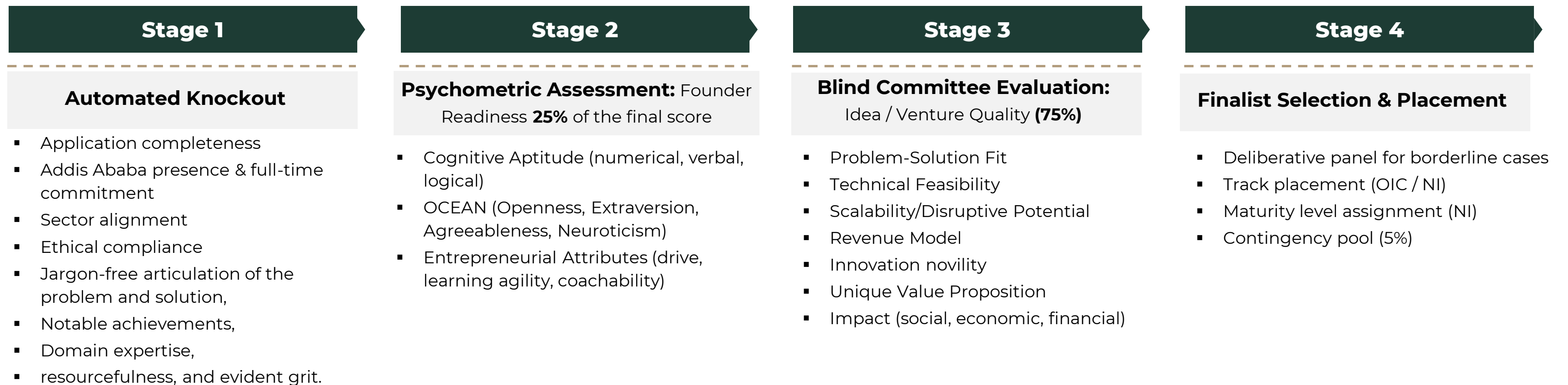
- Support Structures
- Engagement Modes
- Investment Options

Founder Profile and Selection Framework

01. Profile Snapshot

- **Open to individuals and teams** – from idea to early revenue
- **Tech-savvy backgrounds encouraged** – including graduate students, professionals, and domain experts
- **Meets Startup Proclamation criteria** – tech-based and registered <5 years.
- **Pursues innovation-led, scalable ventures** – in hard tech (hardware, energy, infrastructure) or soft tech (software, AI, fintech)

02 Selection Framework



SOE Selection Framework

Strategic Clarity & Core Business Mandate

- Disciplined focus on its core mandate
- A clear transformation plan and activity with a dedicated innovation budget

Champion & Leadership Availability

- The CEO actively champions commitment to innovation and startup partnerships.
- Empowered leadership with proper governance for pilots and commercialization.
- Streamlined procurement cycles enabling fast decision-making.

Organizational Capability & Strategic Assets

- Valuable assets available to startups: data, infrastructure, customer access.
- Strong in-house technical capacity to co-design and guide pilot solutions.

Startup & Open Innovation Experience

- Track record of engaging startups through pilots, challenge briefs, or innovation procurement.
- Experience with open calls, hackathons, pilots, and contracts with non-traditional vendors.

SOE Intake Plan

- **First Cohort (Cohort 1)** – 5–7 SOEs selected based on the framework above.
- **Phased Expansion** – Participating SOEs grow over a two-year rollout.

Innovation Readiness Support (EIH-Provided)

- Strengthen internal innovation capacity
- Build startup partnership governance structures
- Develop startup-friendly innovation procurement processes

Incentives to Drive Engagement

- **Operational** – Co-design and assist SOE open innovation initiatives advisory on challenge definition, startup sourcing, and pilot MVPs.
- **Financial** – EIH Cost-sharing for pilots and early engagements.
- **Recognition & Capacity** –
 - **“Innovation Champion”** awards at National Open Innovation Summit with press coverage
 - **Success story showcases** – featured in EIH communications and annual reports
 - **Sponsor innovation staff** – build internal expertise through training and exchange programs.

Support Program Details



 Founder Lab	 Incubation	 Acceleration	 Post-Acceleration	 JSE Alumni
4 weeks	3-6 months	3 months	6-12 months	Ongoing
Pipeline: ~600 founders	Pipeline: ~30 ventures	Pipeline: ~15 ventures	Pipeline: 8-10 ventures	All JSE Alumni
AIM Validate the opportunity, build MVP and design a pilot plan.	AIM Pilot the MVP- first commercial validation with SOE.	AIM Convert pilots or traction into commercialization or scale-enabling deals.	AIM Support scaling, minimize execution risks, and assist in securing investment	AIM Sustain the community with support, and recycle success into ecosystem leadership
KEY SUPPORT ▪ THINK (Week 1): SOE immersion, problem framing, customer discovery, Lean Canvas ▪ BUILD (Weeks 2-3): Prototyping, BMC, financial modeling, competitor analysis ▪ LAUNCH (Week 4): Pitch deck, 3-min video pitch, Demo Day prep ▪ Cross-Cutting: Group mentorship, 1:1 mentorship, expert speakers, peer circles.	KEY SUPPORT ▪ Sprint 1: Customer & Solution Validation ▪ Sprint 2: Value Proposition Design (market-creating innovations) & Testing ▪ Sprint 3: Product-Market Fit & Iteration ▪ Sprint 4: Business Model Generation & Financial Foundations ▪ Sprint 5: MVP Iteration & Technical Planning ▪ Sprint 6: Go-to-Market Strategy, Early Sales & Investor Prep	KEY SUPPORT ▪ Sprint 1: Growth Hacking & Customer Acquisition ▪ Sprint 2: Sales & Revenue Operations ▪ Sprint 3: Team & Organizational Scaling ▪ Sprint 4: Impact & Scalable Business Models ▪ Sprint 5: Fundraising & Deal Preparation ▪ Sprint 6: Legal Structures	KEY SUPPORT ▪ Monthly reviews of startups' KPIs. ▪ Market expansion strategy ▪ Follow-on fundraising support ▪ Expert-in-Residence office hours (16 hrs pooled: Legal, Finance, Strategy, Tech)	KEY SUPPORT ▪ Masterclasses & deep dives. ▪ Fireside chats & meetups. ▪ Mentor connection. ▪ Alumni portal for resources. ▪ Business clinic hours and the annual Alumni Summit.
EXIT GATE Validated Lean Canvas, Functional MVP, GTM Strategy, signed pilot plan and agreement, Track recommendation, and Designation	EXIT GATE Refined MVP & Deal room (Open innovation: Pilot evaluation report and commercialization Plan) and (National: early traction/revenue)	EXIT GATE Commercialization contract and Refined Deal Room.	EXIT GATE Investor Pitch.	EXIT GATE N/A

Phase 1: Rapid Market Validation & Cohort Filtration

Scale & Duration

30 Days

600 Founders

5 Corporate Streams

30 Top Selected

Curriculum Progression

Week 1

Problem Framing & Field Research ("Lockout Days").

Week 2

State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) Immersion & Value Proposition.

Week 3

Core MVP Build & Traction Strategy.

Week 4

Enterprise Pitching & Financials.

- **Quality Assurance (The VIRAL Gate):** Academic grading is replaced by objective milestones. To graduate, founders must submit a functional MVP, a 10-slide deck, and a signed Pilot Feasibility Study endorsed by their target SOE.
- **Bottom Line:** We take 600 ideation-stage founders and force them into rapid market execution, filtering out untested assumptions to uncover the 25 most enterprise-ready ventures.

Phase 2: Corporate Integration & Product-Market Fit

Scale & Duration

14 Weeks (2-Week Bridge + 12-Week Execution)

30 Ventures

6 Bi-weekly Sprints

Curriculum Progression: Incubation & Venture Client Pilot (12-Week Execution)

Sprint 1

Customer & Solution
Validation

Sprint 2

Value Proposition Design &
Testing (including ROI
Modeling)

Sprint 3

Product-Market Fit &
Technical Iteration (V2.0
Deployment)

Sprint 4

Business Model Generation,
Enterprise Pricing, and
Financial Foundations.

Sprint 5

MVP Iteration, Cloud & Tech
Hardening, and Technical
Planning.

Sprint 6

Go-to-Market Strategy,
Early Sales, Investor Prep,
and Final Defense.

- **Governance & Metrics:** Progress is driven by real-world Objectives and Key Results (OKRs), weekly Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EIR) check-ins, and Bi-Weekly Steering Committee evaluations.
- **Bottom Line:** Startups are deeply embedded into corporate infrastructure to build alongside their target customers, resulting in quantifiable ROI, a hardened V2.0 product, and an official Letter of Intent (LOI).

Phase 3: Rapid Scaling & Institutional Investment Readiness

Scale & Duration

12 Weeks

6 Sprints

Culminating in **National Demo Day**

Curriculum Progression: Acceleration Program (12-Week Execution)

Sprint 1

Growth Hacking & Customer Acquisition.

Sprint 2

Sales & Revenue Operations (RevOps).

Sprint 3

Team & Organizational Scaling.

Sprint 4

Impact & Scalable Business Models

Sprint 5

Fundraising & Deal Preparation.

Sprint 6

Legal Structures & Business Compliance.

- **Coaching Model:** The pedagogical focus shifts from technical development to Executive Business Coaching, preparing founders for the complexities of institutional due diligence.
- **Bottom Line:** The ultimate goal is commercial independence—transitioning localized pilots into multi-year Master Service Agreements (MSAs) while simultaneously structuring to close Seed or Series A funding.

Partnership & Investment Models

01. SOE-Startup Venture Clienting Model

Co-Development/Co-Branding:

- Joint product development + shared IP + joint marketing.

Co-Development/White Labeling:

- Joint product development + shared IP + joint marketing.

Commercial Contracts:

- Long-term supplier or service agreements adapted to be startup-friendly (faster, smaller contracts)

Customer Access Agreements:

- Providing startups with structured access to the SOE's customer base for testing, feedback, or sales.

Distribution Partnerships:

- Leveraging SOE sales channels, catalogs, or platforms to distribute the startup's product, often with revenue-sharing.

Strategic Alliance:

- Long-term partnership with resource sharing.

02. IP & Technology Collaboration Models

Licensing Agreement:

- A formal agreement allowing the use of IP (patents, software, know-how) under defined terms can be inbound (SOE licenses from a startup) or outbound.

Technology Sharing:

- Mutual exchange of technologies, APIs, datasets, or expertise without a full IP transfer

03. Investment Pathways

Corporate VC (CVC):

- Strategic investment with SOE partnership.

Direct Investment:

- EIH/ SOEs/private investors direct equity investment.

Co-Investment:

- Syndicated rounds with VC/PE partners.

Grant:

- National Startup Grant - Startup Proclamation.

ESX Crowdfunding:

- Raising capital from the public through the ESX investment Crowdfunding platform.

04

Program KPIs

- Program KPIs – 2-year

Program KPIs – 2-year

Startups

Output

2400

Founders activated

120

Startups Incubated

60

Startups Accelerated

Outcome

60

Solutions Piloted

32

Solutions Commercialized

\$40k

Avg. Pilot funding

Impact

\$2M+

Follow-on Investment Catalyzed

\$3M

Revenue Generation

1,000

Direct and indirect Jobs Created

05

The Road Ahead

- Program Timeline
- Risk Mitigation Strategies
- Next Steps

Program Timeline

Project Phases	JSE Timeline									
	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10
Phase 1: SOE Selection & Program Prep										
Phase 2: Recruitment & Founder Lab										
Phase 2: Pilot Contract Signing										
Phase 3: Incubation (MVP + Pilot)										
Phase 3: Acceleration (Commercialisation)										
Phase 4: National Open Innovation Summit										
Phase 4: Post-acceleration Support & Investment										

Risk Mitigation Strategies

Risk

Mitigation Strategies

Low SOE engagement



Leadership Championship and EIH guidance

Operational leads within each SOE coordinate pilot programs, reducing integration friction and ensuring clear communication.

Low Startup Quality



Structured Assessment

Psychometric + venture quality dual-scoring at intake and Progressive advancement gates with minimum score thresholds

Founder Drop-Off/Attrition



Cohort Monitoring and Incentivizing

Regular tracking of cohort health and incentivizing the startups, and aligning with their needs, not necessarily tracking and monitoring

SOE Procurement Delays



Procurement Sandbox

Fast-track procurement pathways for pilots, reducing bureaucratic delays. Enables rapid testing within SOE environments.

Next Steps

01

Program validation

Validate program approach with key stakeholders

02

SOE Nomination and Induction

Identify 5/7 SOEs to participate in the first cohort

03

Challenge Brief

Define 1-2 Challenge or Opportunity Briefs per SOE

04

Program Launch

JSE issues national Founder Lab open call — targeting 600 founders across both tracks



THANK YOU!

Let's Build Ethiopia's Innovation Future!