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Post-Acceleration Guidebook



Global Cleantech
innovation programme



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Glossary

Accelerator

It is a structured capacity building programme designed to accelerate the growth of innovative cleantech startups and SMEs by strengthening their business models, enhancing their market and investment readiness, connecting them with mentors, investors and ecosystem partners to enable the commercialization and scaling of technologies.

Cleantech

A broad range of solutions (technologies, processes, services, business models, and their combinations) that lead to an increase in positive impact or a decrease in negative impact on climate change mitigation, transition to a low-emission economy, sustainable energy systems, and other dimensions of environmental sustainability. Climate technology, clean energy technology etc. are subsets of cleantech.

Cleantech Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

The network of entrepreneurs, startups, support organizations, investors, policymakers, research institutions, corporations and other stakeholders that work together to enable the creation, growth, and scaling of cleantech enterprises.

Cleantech Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (CIEE)

The network and interactions among innovation and entrepreneurship stakeholders and the social, economic and policy environment, and their combined influence on the development and commercialization of cleantech solutions.

Cleantech Innovation Ecosystem

The network of stakeholders, institutions, policies, financing mechanisms, and support services that enable the creation, development, commercialization and scaling of innovative clean technologies as solutions.

Country/National Child Project

In the context of GEF, country-specific GCIP implementation project designed in line with the GCIP Global Programme, to address the maturity, priorities, and needs of the national cleantech innovation ecosystem.

Ecosystem

The wide range of stakeholders, factors and influences as well as the interactions between these. Can range from a low-level, small context such as city or community, to the high-level macro-view of whole countries or regions.

Entrepreneurship

Willingness and ability to turn an innovation into a profitable business model through identifying or creating a market opportunity.

Finalists

Selected group of semi-finalists advancing to the final stage of the accelerator and judging process.

GCIP Alums/Alumni

Entrepreneurs and companies that have successfully completed a GCIP accelerator cycle and remain engaged through the programme's alumni network.

GCIP Coordination Child Project

Global coordination project responsible for maintaining the GCIP methodology, ensuring consistency, and supporting collaboration across all national child projects.

Gender Mainstreaming / GEEW (Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women)

Cross-cutting activities ensuring equitable recruitment, participation, opportunities, and benefits for women and men throughout the programme.

Generalist Mentor

Experienced entrepreneur, investor, or cleantech professional providing overall business coaching and strategic guidance to participating startup and MSME teams. Generalist mentors may not invest in a mentee company during the competition cycle.

Global Accelerator

Global competition for innovators from developing, emerging, and transition economies without a national GCIP project, held after the national accelerators conclude.

Implementing Agency

In the context of GEF donor, the organization responsible for providing overall programme oversight, technical guidance and quality assurance throughout the implementation of the GCIP project. The Implementing Agency supports the NPPE, ensures compliance with project objectives and standards, and facilitates knowledge sharing and coordination across participating countries.

Innovation

The development of new, adapted, or alternative solutions and/or improvements to existing processes or addressing challenges.

Innovation Challenges

Mechanism for identifying demand-driven solutions to industrial climate and sustainability challenges by matching innovators with private-sector-defined market needs.

Investment Readiness

The degree to which a startup, product or solution is prepared to attract and secure external investment. It reflects the maturity of the venture, including a validated business model, scalable solution, capable team, financial planning and a compelling value proposition for investors.

Manufacturing Readiness Level (MRL)

A standardized scale used to assess the maturity of manufacturing processes, technologies, and production capabilities for a specific technology, component, or system. The MRL framework evaluates the readiness of manufacturing from initial concept and process development through stable, full-rate production, supporting the transition from innovation to commercial-scale manufacturing.

National Academy

Core component of the GCIP Accelerator, designed to equip participating entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to strengthen their business models, validate their technologies and prepare for market growth and investment through expert-led workshops, mentoring and networking opportunities.

National Accelerator

Country-level platform and competition process that brings together national cleantech stakeholders and delivers the annual GCIP accelerator.

National Project Executing Entity (NPEE)

The institution/organization within the participating country that is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and execution of the national GCIP project. The PMU sits within the NPEE that manages the project implementation at the national level.

Post-Acceleration Support

Continued support for GCIP alumni focused on business growth, internationalization, partnership development, investment readiness, and access to finance.

Project Management Unit (PMU)

The operational unit responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of the GCIP project. It coordinates project operations, stakeholder engagement, procurement, communications, training, mentoring and event delivery, ensuring the effective execution of national GCIP activities.

Proof of Concept (PoC)

An early demonstration that verifies the technical feasibility and potential effectiveness of an innovation, providing evidence that the proposed solution can successfully address the intended challenge.

Semi-finalists

Applicants selected from the pool of entrants to participate in the GCIP accelerator programme and receive structured support. Typically 15-25 nationally and 10-15 globally.

South-South and Triangular Industrial Cooperation (SSTIC)

A UNIDO-led cooperation approach that promotes the exchange of knowledge, technologies, expertise and resources among developing countries to advance inclusive and sustainable industrial development. Through triangular cooperation, these partnerships are further supported by developed countries or multilateral organizations to enhance their impact and scale.

Specialist Mentor

Subject-matter expert providing technical advice in a specific area, such as finance, marketing, engineering, legal affairs, or intellectual property.

Technology Readiness Level (TRL)

A standardized scale used to assess the maturity of a technology, from early-stage research to full commercial deployment. The TRL framework ranges from TRL 1 (basic principles observed) to TRL 9 (actual system proven in an operational environment) and is widely used to evaluate technological progress and readiness for commercialization.

Winners / Runners-up

Top-ranked finalists selected by the judging panel based on the programme's evaluation criteria.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)** is a specialized agency of the United Nations with a unique mandate to promote, dynamize and accelerate industrial development. The guiding principle of UNIDO's activities is low-emission, climate-resilient development. This means promoting policies, technologies and practices so that countries can take climate action and create millions of new, decent jobs. UNIDO sees innovation as key to mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) form the backbone of the economy and generate a large share of economic value. Given the scale of climate mitigation and adaptation action needed, it is critical that MSMEs are supported to be part of the solutions, be they as entrepreneurs, in the context of small-scale industries and clusters or through their participation in regional and global value chains.

The **Global Cleantech Innovation Programme (GCIP)** of UNIDO, supported by the **Global Environment Facility** and the **Green Climate Fund**, envisions a world where innovative cleantech solutions drive climate mitigation, environmental protection, sustainable economic growth, and social inclusivity. GCIP mission is to empower MSMEs and start-ups in emerging markets and developing economies, enabling them to become engines of low-carbon industrial development and green job creation while contributing to a just energy transition.

GCIP fosters homegrown clean technology solutions to tackle climate and energy transition challenges, including greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction, improved energy and resource efficiency, and enhanced access to clean energy. GCIP provides entrepreneurs with essential tools to develop business models, commercialize technologies, and access investment opportunities, while also collaborating with national governments to strengthen local innovation ecosystems, enhance policy frameworks, and build institutional capacities. By supporting the development of self-sustained cleantech innovation ecosystems, GCIP ensures a continuous pipeline of solutions that drive just sustainability transitions.

1.1. IMPORTANCE OF GCIP POST-ACCELERATOR SUPPORT

GCIP provides direct assistance to early-stage startups and MSMEs to elaborate their business models, enhance their capacity and competitiveness and help them with market opportunities. GCIP's support is tailored to guide entrepreneurs through the critical phases of their growth journey:

- **PRE-ACCELERATOR:** Designed for innovators at the earliest stage of concept development, this phase helps participants **assess market needs, refine value propositions, and strengthen their business cases** through mentorship, training, and ecosystem engagement.
- **ACCELERATOR:** At this stage, startups focus on **prototyping, product-market-fit validation, and business model optimization**. Participants receive targeted coaching, technical and financial guidance, and access to industry and investor networks to ensure their solutions are commercially viable and investment ready.

- ❑ **POST-ACCELERATOR:** GCIP Post-Accelerator Support Activities offer a **range of flexible, tailored interventions** designed to provide **practical assistance to GCIP Accelerator alumni**. Initially, these activities focus on supporting alumni in product and market validation, helping them strengthen their business before advancing to the Advanced Accelerator.
- ❑ **ADVANCED ACCELERATOR:** In this phase, startups and MSMEs that have successfully validated their solutions move towards **market expansion, scaling, and investment readiness**. GCIP facilitates connections with international markets, corporate partners, and investors, helping enterprises scale up and integrate into global value chains.
- ❑ **POST-ADVANCED ACCELERATOR:** The GCIP Post-Advanced Accelerator provides highly tailored support for alumni who have already achieved significant growth in revenue, market traction, and investment. Recognizing the time constraints of CEOs and management teams, the programme offers **customized, efficient and accessible support both in-person and online to help companies scale rapidly**.

The growth path for almost every cleantech startup is not linear as they will face specific challenges and unexpected events will require further validation, pivoting and iteration. **Most ventures graduating from the GCIP Accelerator will not be immediately ready to progress to the Advanced Accelerator.** Many will still need to achieve Product-Market fit and build continuous revenue from a growing set of customers. For some GCIP-supported ventures this may take months, but for others it could take years depending on the specific market, the team, the stage of technology development and traction to date. As the transition from one stage of cleantech venture acceleration to another is not the same for every startup, additional flexible support is required to assist the diverse community of GCIP alumni companies as they develop their businesses at different speeds with very varied objectives.

GCIP Post-Accelerator Support Activities exist as a range of flexible interventions that can provide practical and tailored assistance to GCIP alumni companies. Initially, it takes the form of specific support activities intended to assist GCIP alumni companies as they pursue product and market validation before progressing to the Advanced Accelerator. It is very likely that many GCIP alumni companies will be ineligible for the Advanced Accelerator unless they gain further customer validation and market traction. Therefore, assistance offered to GCIP alumni companies through the Post-Accelerator Support Activities is vital to bridge this gap and to communicate the next steps that must be taken to de-risk the business.

In contrast, **GCIP Post-Advanced Accelerator Support Activities** are much more individually focused and recognize that graduates of the Advanced Accelerator will have already achieved significant milestones in terms of revenue growth, market traction, team headcount and investment raised. Advanced Accelerator alumni companies will focus on achieving fast growth, with time and efficiency becoming essential. Therefore, Post-Advanced Accelerator Activities should recognize the limited time that the CEO and management teams will have available and deliver support activities that are customized, condensed and accessible both in-person and online.

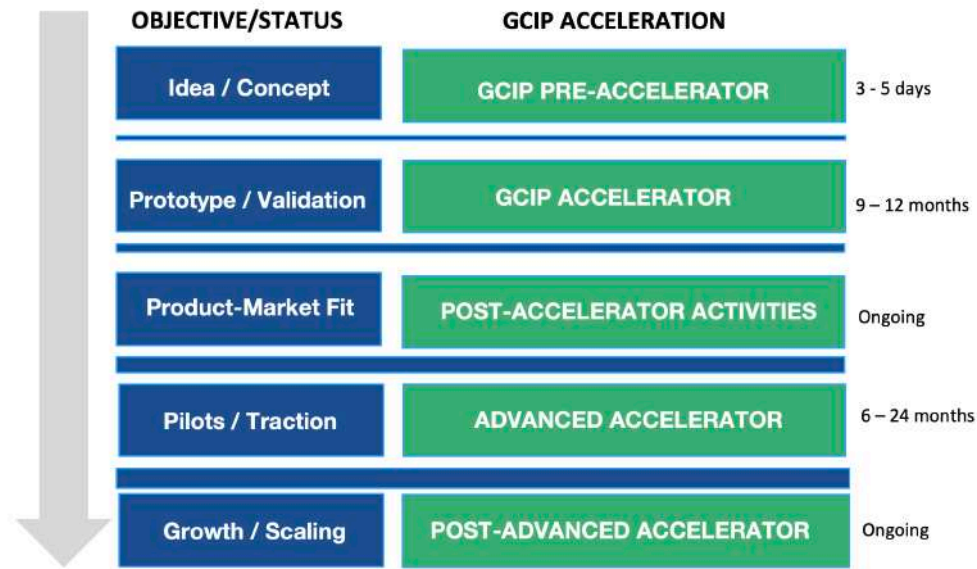


Figure 1. GCIP Accelerators and Post-Accelerator Support



Picture 1. GCIP National Academy 2024 in Türkiye. Photo credits: TÜBİTAK

2. GCIP POST-ACCELERATOR SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

2.1. INTRODUCTION

As GCIP entrepreneurs graduate from the GCIP Accelerator, **most of these ventures may not be ready to immediately progress to the Advanced Accelerator**. As the entry into the Advanced Accelerator is dependent on ventures having achieved product-market fit with initial but continuous revenue, it is most likely that some time will be required after the end of the GCIP Accelerator to meet this requirement. The specific time required will vary greatly due to the specific market sector, successful validation activities, customer traction and ease of pivoting. For example, *software ventures* are often able to pivot and find product-market fit much quicker in comparison with *hardware ventures* that face inherent challenges surrounding manufacturing and distribution at scale.

It is therefore vital to have a range of support activities and services that can assist entrepreneurs on their path through the Post-Accelerator phase after completing the GCIP Accelerator. Although not a formal accelerator programme, these activities would meaningfully contribute to the development of each GCIP-supported venture and the strengthening of the community. Importantly, Post-Accelerator support activities provide an excellent way for the GCIP Project Management Unit (PMU) staff to stay in contact with GCIP Accelerator graduates, understand their needs and identify ventures that may soon be ready for the Advanced Accelerator.

Recommended Post-Accelerator activities take the form of either focused support sessions (Peer Groups, Mentor Clinics, Expert Panels etc.) or thematic events (Investor Connect, Corporate Connect, Venture Showcase etc.). Resources and time required for each activity vary, allowing GCIP countries to select the activities that best fit their available resources, timelines and needs. For example, an expert panel requires a group of at least three or more experts in a specific domain such as finance or sustainability that are available to spend at least half a day with GCIP-supported ventures either in-person or virtually in a series of thirty-minute sessions. In contrast, a peer group requires a facilitator but demands less resources and commitments.

2.2. FREQUENCY OF POST-ACCELERATOR ACTIVITIES

Unlike the GCIP Accelerator where activities such as global webinars take place on a weekly basis, Post-Accelerator activities take place on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. If resources exist to hold some of the activities more frequently, that should be encouraged. However, each activity is intended to be self-contained and not necessarily part of a linear schedule to maximize flexibility and participation. Due to the diverse needs and growth trajectories of GCIP graduates, it is essential to maximize flexibility to provide support activities that are of direct benefit to as many enterprises as possible. Limiting support activities to a linear schedule with a specific onboarding date could preclude many GCIP graduates from working full-time on the venture, especially those that are struggling with fundraising, market penetration and transitioning.

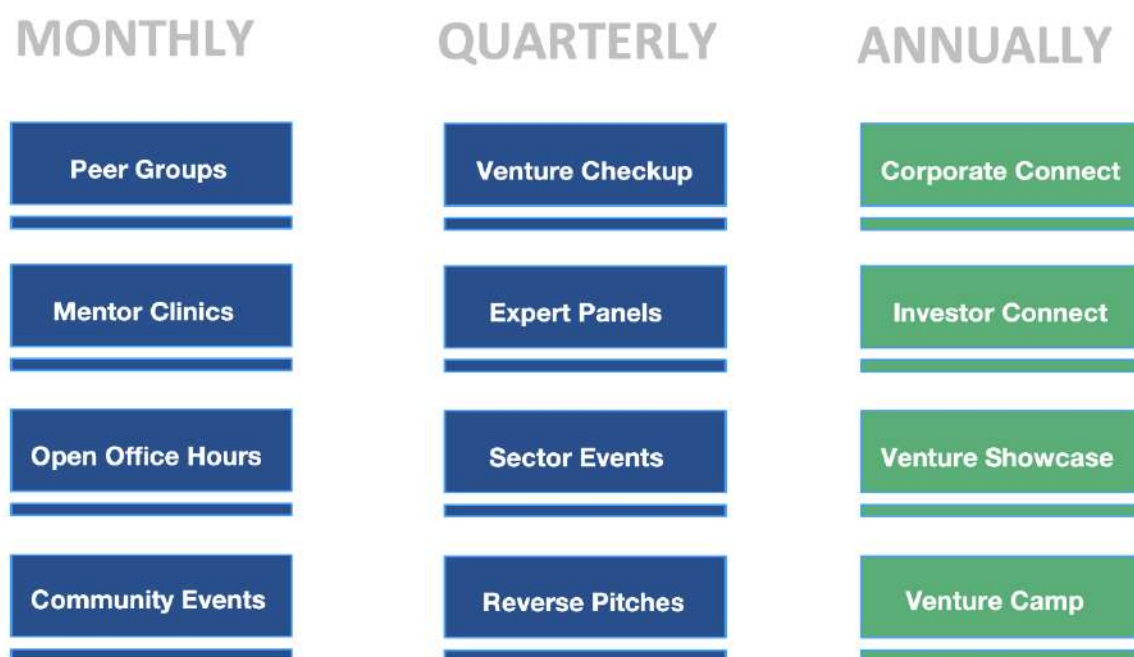


Figure 2. Summary of Post-Accelerator Activities by Frequency

2.3. DATA COLLECTION AND POST-ACCELERATOR ACTIVITIES

When delivering GCIP Post-Accelerator Activities, it is essential that participating GCIP ventures provide information about their progress, impact and needs. The outcome of each GCIP Accelerator cohort and Post-Accelerator activities cannot be tracked unless there is accurate information available for each GCIP-supported enterprise. **The provision of information should be the initial cost for entrepreneurs to participate in the Post-Accelerator events.** The information can be requested via a registration page for each activity to simplify the data collection process. Some activities such as the Venture Checkup or Expert Panels would require more extensive preparation time for relevant information to be collected for the activity to be tailored to the needs of the GCIP-supported enterprise.

2.4. TAILORING POST-ACCELERATOR ACTIVITIES FOR COUNTRY SPECIFIC CONTEXTS

The Post-Accelerator activities detailed in this document are intended to be applicable to all GCIP countries. However, each activity can be tailored to national contexts by adjusting the format (e.g. online rather than in-person participation), the number of participants (e.g. smaller peer groups or expert panels) and frequency (e.g. quarterly rather than monthly mentor clinics). Holding some of the Post-Accelerator activities online, e.g. Expert Panels, allows for the participation of international experts outside the country, who could assist with addressing any skills gaps in a local GCIP mentor or expert pool. Post-Accelerator activities could be further tailored by focusing on a specific industry sector or stage of development.

3. MONTHLY GCIP POST-ACCELERATOR ACTIVITIES

3.1. PEER GROUPS

Peer groups are peer-mentoring groups consisting of GCIP graduate companies at a similar stage of development and ideally in the same or complementary sectors. Each group is intended to be a self-organizing community of support run by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs. GCIP PMU staff should provide logistical support to enable the group to meet either online or in person. In addition, a GCIP PMU member or mentor may need to be an initial facilitator both in terms of curating the group and leading the initial discussions with a timed agenda and clear structure. However, **after the initial meetings, the group must define for itself the key areas it wishes to focus on, the frequency of the meetings and who will facilitate each session.** For example, a group could decide to meet monthly or bi-weekly and to focus at each meeting on key themes or the most pressing issues that impact members.

The group should be supported by inviting guest speakers to assist with the exploration of specific topics or issues (e.g. raising investment). GCIP mentors should be encouraged to make themselves available to become guest speakers for peer groups.

Additionally, peer groups should decide whether they are open to new members or wish to keep the membership fixed. **Typically, a group should have between 8 to 15 members in total with at least 6 members attending regularly.** In situations where attendance grows beyond 15 members, the group should decide for itself whether it needs to split into two smaller groups with a more defined focus or can continue to grow. If a peer group is unable to have at least six members attending regularly, they should decide whether to encourage new members to join.

Ultimately the success of a peer support group is due to the level of engagement and ownership of its members. GCIP PMUs should do everything reasonable to facilitate the creation and development of each peer group, but the success and longevity of each group is the responsibility of its members.

PEER GROUPS PLANNING CHECKLIST

ACTIVITY	CHECKLIST ITEM
1. REGULAR MEETINGS	☐ Schedule and organize regular meetings for GCIP peer group members to connect and share updates. ☐ Consider both in-person and virtual meetings to accommodate diverse preferences.
2. KNOWLEDGE SHARING SESSIONS	☐ Plan sessions where members can share insights, experiences, and lessons learned in the cleantech industry. ☐ Encourage members to present case studies or success stories from their ventures.

3. EXPERT SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOPS	☐ Invite experts in cleantech, sustainability, and entrepreneurship to conduct workshops or give talks. ☐ Cover topics relevant to the challenges and opportunities in the cleantech sector.
4. NETWORKING EVENTS	☐ Organize networking events to facilitate connections among members and encourage collaboration on potential projects. ☐ Provide opportunities for members to pitch their ventures and seek partnerships.
5. PROBLEM-SOLVING SESSIONS	☐ Set up sessions where entrepreneurs can bring challenges they are facing, and the group collaboratively brainstorm solutions. ☐ Foster a supportive environment for open and constructive discussions.
6. RESOURCE SHARING PLATFORM	☐ Establish a platform or system for members to share resources such as tools, databases, and research findings. ☐ Encourage collaboration on resource-intensive projects.
7. MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME	☐ Develop a mentorship programme within the GCIP peer group to pair experienced entrepreneurs with those seeking guidance. ☐ Facilitate mentor-mentee interactions and provide guidelines for effective mentoring.
8. COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS	☐ Facilitate the formation of small groups or teams to collaborate on cleantech projects. ☐ Encourage cross-disciplinary collaborations to leverage diverse skills within the community.
9. INDUSTRY UPDATES AND TRENDS	☐ Share regular updates on industry trends, policy changes, and market insights. ☐ Discuss the potential impact on cleantech ventures and strategize accordingly.
10. FEEDBACK SESSIONS	☐ Conduct regular feedback sessions to gather input on the effectiveness of the GCIP peer group and identify areas for improvement. ☐ Use feedback to adapt and tailor activities to better meet the needs of the community.
11. COMMUNITY OUTREACH	☐ Explore opportunities for the GCIP peer group to engage with the broader community through outreach events or educational initiatives. ☐ Showcase the positive impact of cleantech ventures on sustainability.

12. CELEBRATING MILESTONES	☐ Recognize and celebrate achievements, milestones, and successes within the community. ☐ Foster a positive and supportive atmosphere to motivate members.
13. ONLINE COLLABORATION TOOLS	☐ Provide access to online collaboration tools and platforms for continuous communication and document sharing. ☐ Ensure members can easily connect and collaborate outside of scheduled meetings.
14. EVALUATION AND EVOLUTION	☐ Regularly evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the GCIP peer group. ☐ Be open to evolving the structure and activities based on the changing needs of the community.

Incorporating these activities into your planning checklist allows to create a dynamic and supportive environment for the GCIP-supported cleantech entrepreneurs within the self-organizing community of the GCIP peer group.

3.2. MENTOR CLINICS

Mentor clinics are one-to-one meetings between entrepreneurs and GCIP specialist mentors or other business experts. Mentor clinics are very similar to the GCIP business clinics held in the GCIP Accelerator. However, unlike the GCIP Accelerator business clinics which are specifically linked to the GCIP Accelerator worksheets, the mentor clinics are broader in focus.

The focus of the mentor clinics should be defined by the identified needs of GCIP graduates. This will require a survey of their needs to be conducted, and the appropriate experts found to run relevant clinics which require recruitment beyond the pool of GCIP mentors. Unlike the GCIP Accelerator business clinics which are held simultaneously on a specific day and encompass a variety of topics and experts, **mentor clinics could be focused on a specific topic or theme.**

When entrepreneurs register for a mentor clinic, it is essential that they indicate the specific question, topic or issue they wish to discuss. A mentor clinic could be far broader and deeper on any specific topic. Therefore, to enable matching with the most suitable mentor and to help the assigned clinic prepare, some details must be provided on both the focus of the discussion and the GCIP-supported venture (e.g. an executive summary or other background information).

When planning the mentor clinics, it is important to expand the content and participation to incorporate a **gender lens**:

☐ **ENSURE GENDER-RESPONSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Before planning a mentor clinic, it is crucial to **assess the needs of GCIP graduates through a gender-sensitive perspective.** The survey for GCIP alumni companies should **collect sex-disaggregated data (i.e. input provided for women and for men)**, as well as other data such as age group, to identify specific challenges faced by **women entrepreneurs** and other underrepresented groups. This will ensure that mentor clinics address gender-specific

barriers in entrepreneurship, such as access to funding, networks, and market opportunities.

❑ EXPAND THE POOL OF GENDER-DIVERSE MENTORS AND EXPERTS

To foster **inclusive mentorship**, GCIP should proactively recruit **women mentors and gender-diverse experts** from various fields, including **law, finance, marketing, and technology**. Representation matters and having **role models and advisors of different genders** can help address unique challenges and create a more equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem.

❑ INTEGRATE GENDER-SENSITIVE MATCHING AND TOPIC SELECTION

When matching entrepreneurs with mentors, **gender-related business development challenges** should be considered. For instance, entrepreneurs may seek guidance on overcoming **gender biases in investment**, developing gender-inclusive business models, or implementing **diversity and inclusion strategies** within their ventures.

❑ GENDER-INCLUSIVE MENTOR CLINIC STRUCTURE

Mentor clinics should **ensure a safe and inclusive space** where all entrepreneurs and participants, especially women, feel encouraged to participate. Gender-related **topics such as inclusive leadership, navigating gender biases in investment, and women's access to finance** could be incorporated into mentor clinics. Consider **dedicated clinics or mentorship tracks** for women-led startups and gender-responsive innovations.

❑ ENCOURAGE GENDER EQUITY IN PARTICIPATION AND OUTCOMES

Promote **equal access to mentorship opportunities** by encouraging more women entrepreneurs to participate. Track participation data to ensure **gender balance** in mentor clinics. Provide gender-sensitive training to mentors so they can recognize and address gender-related challenges in business.

Suitable experts for a mentor clinic could include a broad range of experts such as lawyers, marketing consultants, accountants, bankers, designers, manufacturing experts, or investors.

Planning a one-day mentor clinic for GCIP-supported ventures involves coordinating various activities to provide valuable guidance and support. *The checklist below includes activities and suitable experts for a comprehensive mentor clinic.*

MENTOR CLINICS PLANNING CHECKLIST

ACTIVITY	CHECKLIST ITEM
1. WELCOME AND REGISTRATION	☐ Greet participants and facilitate the registration process. ☐ Provide event materials, including agendas and contact information.
2. INTRODUCTION SESSION	☐ Kick off the mentor clinic with an introduction session. ☐ Provide an overview of the day's activities and set expectations.

3. SPEED MENTORING¹ SESSIONS	☐ Organize speed mentoring sessions with experts from different fields. ☐ Include lawyers, marketing consultants, accountants, bankers, designers, manufacturing experts, and investors as mentors.
4. LEGAL CLINIC	☐ Set up a legal clinic with experienced lawyers. ☐ Address legal queries related to intellectual property, contracts, and compliance.
5. FINANCIAL CONSULTATION	☐ Arrange one-on-one sessions with accountants and financial experts. ☐ Offer guidance on financial planning, budgeting, fundraising strategies and investor due diligence (key documents needed).
6. MARKETING AND BRANDING CONSULTATION	☐ Schedule individual consultations with marketing consultants. ☐ Discuss branding strategies, market positioning, and effective marketing channels.
7. INVESTOR PITCH PRACTICE	☐ Conduct a workshop or practice sessions for entrepreneurs to refine their investor pitches. ☐ Include feedback from both mentors and peers.
8. DESIGN THINKING WORKSHOP	☐ Facilitate a design thinking workshop with designers. ☐ Assist entrepreneurs in refining product design, user experience, and overall design strategy.
9. MANUFACTURING AND PRODUCTION CONSULTATION	☐ Offer one-on-one sessions with manufacturing experts. ☐ Discuss manufacturing processes, quality control, and supply chain optimization.
10. ACCESS TO FINANCE WORKSHOP	☐ Host a workshop on accessing finance with participation from bankers and investors. ☐ Cover topics such as fundraising strategies, financial modeling, and investor expectations.
11. NETWORKING LUNCH	☐ Arrange a networking lunch to foster connections among entrepreneurs and mentors. ☐ Provide opportunities for informal discussions and relationship-building.
12. PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING SESSIONS	☐ Facilitate sessions where entrepreneurs share experiences and insights.

¹ A speed mentoring session is a fast-paced, structured event where mentees meet multiple mentors in a short period.

	☐ Encourage collaborative problem-solving and knowledge exchange.
13. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS	☐ Host roundtable discussions on specific cleantech topics. ☐ Allow for in-depth conversations among mentors and entrepreneurs.
14. MENTOR PANEL DISCUSSION	☐ Organize a panel discussion featuring mentors from various fields. ☐ Discuss industry trends, challenges, and opportunities.
15. FEEDBACK AND REFLECTION SESSION	☐ Conclude the mentor clinic with a feedback and reflection session. ☐ Gather insights into the impact of the clinic and areas for improvement.
16. CLOSING REMARKS	☐ Provide closing remarks and express gratitude to mentors and participants. ☐ Highlight the ongoing support available to entrepreneurs.
17. POST-EVENT RESOURCES	☐ Share relevant resources, such as presentation slides and additional mentorship materials. ☐ Provide information on how entrepreneurs can stay connected with mentors.

Incorporating these activities into your checklist helps create dynamic and interactive mentor clinics that address a broad range of needs for GCIP graduates and facilitate meaningful interactions with experts from diverse fields.

3.3. OPEN OFFICE HOURS

Open office hours have a similar aim to mentor clinics in that the desired result is one-to-one meetings with entrepreneurs. **The key difference is that the open office hours are more flexible and can also include the process of relationship building and network connectivity rather than just imparting advice and knowledge.** Unlike mentor clinics which require careful scheduling, open office hours simply require participating hosts to indicate the time slots they have available for 30-minute meetings during a specific day. Entrepreneurs either join on a drop-in basis, if there are available slots, or sign up online on a first-come, first-served basis using either an online form (e.g. Google forms) or a scheduling app (e.g. Calendly).

Typically, entrepreneurs are very enthusiastic about participating in open office hours that include relevant investors who are often keen to broaden their network and keep abreast of early-stage ventures. For example, in the United Kingdom many venture capital investors offer open office hours to broaden their network of technology startups.

Unlike a business clinic which is tailored to assist the participating entrepreneurs as much as possible, **open office hours are intended to be beneficial to both participants.** For example, in an open-office-hour meeting with a venture capital investor, the investor wishes to learn about the startup and the market opportunity. At the same time, the entrepreneur wishes to learn more about the VC fund, potential fit with their venture and gain useful advice and contacts.

Suitable open office hour hosts could include investors (both angel and venture capital), banks, lawyers, design agencies, marketing agencies, manufacturing experts, and intellectual property attorneys.

Planning open office hours for GCIP that are mutually beneficial for both participants, involves creating a structured yet flexible environment for learning and collaboration. *The checklist below lists activities to include when organizing open office hours with various hosts, such as venture capital investors, banks, lawyers, design agencies, marketing agencies, manufacturing experts, and intellectual property attorneys.*

OPEN OFFICE HOURS PLANNING CHECKLIST

1. HOST IDENTIFICATION AND CONFIRMATION	☐ Identify and confirm the participation of hosts, including venture capital investors, banks, lawyers, design agencies, marketing agencies, manufacturing experts, and intellectual property attorneys. ☐ Ensure hosts are willing to actively engage and provide valuable insights.
2. EVENT PROMOTION	☐ Promote the open office hours event through relevant channels. ☐ Use email newsletters, social media, and partner networks to reach GCIP alumni companies.
3. HOST BRIEFING	☐ Provide hosts with information about the GCIP alumni companies attending the event. ☐ Share guidelines on how hosts can make the sessions productive for both parties.
4. ENTREPRENEUR REGISTRATION	☐ Facilitate the registration process for GCIP alumni companies. ☐ Collect relevant information about their ventures and specific areas of interest.
5. STRUCTURED MEETING FORMAT	☐ Establish a structured meeting format, such as 15 to 20-minute one-on-one sessions between hosts and entrepreneurs. ☐ Provide a clear agenda for the meetings.
6. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION	☐ Begin the open office hours with a welcome and introduction session. ☐ Set expectations for both hosts and entrepreneurs on the goals of the meetings.
7. ROTATIONAL SESSIONS	☐ Organize rotational sessions where entrepreneurs move between different hosts. ☐ Allocate specific time slots for each meeting.
8. ENTREPRENEUR PITCH SESSIONS	☐ Allow entrepreneurs to present a brief pitch about their ventures to hosts.

	☐ Focus on key aspects such as market opportunities, business model, and challenges.
9. HOST PRESENTATIONS	☐ Enable hosts to share information about their expertise, services, and what they look for in potential collaborations or investments. ☐ Encourage hosts to provide insights into their industries.
10. INTERACTIVE Q&A	☐ Foster an interactive Q&A session during each meeting. ☐ Allow hosts and entrepreneurs to ask questions and seek clarification.
11. NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Designate time for informal networking between hosts and entrepreneurs. ☐ Provide a space for participants to connect and continue discussions.
12. FEEDBACK COLLECTION	☐ Collect feedback from both hosts and entrepreneurs after each meeting. ☐ Use feedback to assess the effectiveness of the open office hours format.
13. CLOSING REMARKS	☐ Conclude the open office hours with closing remarks. ☐ Express gratitude to hosts and entrepreneurs for their active participation.
14. POST-EVENT FOLLOW-UP	☐ Share contact information between hosts and entrepreneurs for potential follow-up discussions. ☐ Provide resources and information discussed during the open office hours.
15. POST-EVENT SURVEYS	☐ Send post-event surveys to gather insights on the overall experience and areas for improvement. ☐ Use feedback to enhance future open-office-hours events.

These activities can create a dynamic and mutually beneficial environment during open office hours, facilitating meaningful interactions between GCIP entrepreneurs and various hosts from different sectors.

3.4. COMMUNITY EVENTS

Community events are intended to support GCIP graduates in developing their businesses, networks, and a sense of community. The type of event can vary significantly according to the needs of the community, available resources and size of the group. For example, a large GCIP community in an area with many GCIP-supported ventures such as Cape Town, South Africa, could run a speaker series that focuses on topics of particular interest to participating entrepreneurs. Regardless of the topic, all community events should always include GCIP alumni representatives or mentors amongst a wider range of speakers.

Additionally, **every effort should be made to hold events that include partners and, wherever possible, current GCIP Accelerator cohort participants or potential participants.**

For example, for a few years, GCIP South Africa (GCIP-SA) held some Acceleration events in conjunction with the SA Innovation Summit (SAIS), which broadened the audience for events and connected the GCIP-SA entrepreneurs with other networks. In Morocco, the GCIP-Maroc final event was often held alongside the annual *Pollutec industry event*².

Community events can also take a variety of forms depending on the interests of the GCIP alumni community. The most common form of a technology community event is a regular speaker series centered around topical industry themes with three to five industry speakers and networking.

Alternatively, an event could be more interactive in the form of a workshop exploring a specific tool or framework in more detail, such as the Business Model Canvas or impact measurement. In highly developed entrepreneurial ecosystems, such as Silicon Valley, with an over-abundance of technology community events, some organizers have increasingly focused not on the content but on the quality of networking, conversation, and relationship building. For example, several technology groups in Silicon Valley now focus on events centered around carefully curated hikes outdoors with invited groups of technology investors or chief product officers. The intention is that whilst being outdoors rather than in an event space, the focus will be on quality of conversation and insights rather than presentation slides. **Ultimately, developing effective community events requires the organizer to understand the needs, availability and preferences of their target group which may require conventional or unconventional event formats.**

Planning a GCIP technology community event, whether a speaker series or an interactive workshop, involves careful organization to ensure engagement and value for participants. *The checklists below list the activities to consider for both types of events.*

COMMUNITY EVENTS PLANNING CHECKLIST

IF A SPEAKER SERIES EVENT

1. THEME SELECTION	☐ Choose a relevant and timely industry theme for the event. ☐ Align the theme with the interests and needs of the GCIP technology community.
2. SPEAKER INVITATION	☐ Identify and invite three to five industry speakers who are experts in the chosen theme. ☐ Confirm availability and provide guidelines for their presentations.
3. EVENT PROMOTION	☐ Develop promotional materials and strategies to increase event visibility. ☐ Use social media, email newsletters, and partner networks for promotion.
4. AGENDA PLANNING	☐ Create a detailed agenda with time slots for each speaker.

² **Pollutec** is a leading international trade show for environmental and sustainable solutions, held biennially in Lyon, France. It brings together industry experts, policymakers, and businesses to showcase innovations in waste management, water treatment, renewable energy, pollution control, and sustainable cities. Website link: <https://www.pollutec.com/en-gb.html>

	☐ Include breaks and a networking session for participants to interact.
5. SPEAKER BRIEFING	☐ Brief speakers on the event format, audience, and any specific expectations. ☐ Provide guidelines for creating engaging and informative presentations.
6. MODERATOR SELECTION (OPTIONAL)	☐ If applicable, select a moderator to facilitate discussions and Q&A sessions. ☐ Ensure the moderator is familiar with the event's theme.
7. INTERACTIVE Q&A	☐ Allow time for a Q&A session after each speaker's presentation. ☐ Encourage participants to submit questions through a designated platform.
8. PANEL DISCUSSION (OPTIONAL)	☐ Organize a panel discussion involving all speakers to encourage diverse perspectives. ☐ Include a moderator to facilitate the discussion.
9. NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Designate time for networking, either during breaks or at the end of the event. ☐ Provide a virtual or physical space for participants to connect.
10. FEEDBACK COLLECTION	☐ Collect feedback from participants about the event and speakers. ☐ Use feedback to improve future speaker series events.
11. POST-EVENT RESOURCES	☐ Share presentation slides, recordings, or additional resources with participants. ☐ Provide contact information for speakers for follow-up queries.

IF AN INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP EVENT

1. TOOL/ FRAMEWORK SELECTION	☐ Choose a specific tool or framework, such as the Business Model Canvas or impact measurement, for the workshop. ☐ Ensure it aligns with the needs and interests of the GCIP technology community.
2. FACILITATOR(S) IDENTIFICATION	☐ Identify and invite facilitator(s) with expertise in the chosen tool or framework. ☐ Confirm their availability and provide guidelines for the workshop.
3. EVENT PROMOTION	☐ Promote the workshop using various channels. ☐ Emphasize the hands-on and interactive nature of the session.

4. AGENDA PLANNING	☐ Develop a detailed agenda outlining the workshop flow. ☐ Include interactive sessions, group activities, and breaks.
5. MATERIALS PREPARATION	☐ Prepare materials required for the workshop, such as handouts or digital resources. ☐ Ensure participants have access to necessary tools or software.
6. INTERACTIVE SESSIONS	☐ Design interactive sessions where participants can apply the tool or framework. ☐ Encourage group discussions and collaborative problem-solving.
7. Q&A OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Allow time for questions and answers throughout the workshop. ☐ Address participant queries and concerns in real time.
8. NETWORKING BREAKS	☐ Schedule networking breaks to allow participants to connect with each other. ☐ Foster a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.
9. FEEDBACK COLLECTION	☐ Collect feedback on the effectiveness of the workshop. ☐ Use feedback to refine future workshops and topics.
10. POST-EVENT RESOURCES	☐ Share workshop materials, additional resources, or recommended readings. ☐ Provide contact information for facilitators for further inquiries.

These activities can help organize engaging and valuable GCIP technology community events, whether they are speaker series centered around industry themes or interactive workshops focusing on specific tools or frameworks.



Picture 2. GCIP National Forum and Awards 2024 in Kazakhstan. Photo credits: IGTIC

4. QUARTERLY GCIP POST-ACCELERATOR ACTIVITIES

4.1. VENTURE CHECKUP

The venture checkup is a non-intrusive diagnostic for GCIP graduate ventures to focus on identifying their biggest needs and to track their progress. The checkup would be carried out by GCIP mentors who have been trained in the process with the intended outcome being a list of critical areas to focus on and a recommendation of specific actions, contacts or mentors that would help to address the identified needs and gaps.

Many aspects of the venture checkup would be centered on the entrepreneurs mapping out their biggest challenges and reflecting whether they have met or missed their intended milestones. **With the permission of the participating entrepreneur, the venture checkup session is an excellent means to collect up-to-date information on the GCIP graduate venture.**

INTEGRATING GENDER MAINSTREAMING INTO THE VENTURE CHECKUP

1. ENSURE GENDER-SENSITIVE DIAGNOSTICS

- ☐ The venture checkup should include **gender-disaggregated data collection** to identify specific challenges faced by women entrepreneurs and underrepresented groups.
- ☐ The diagnostic process should assess **gender-related barriers**, such as access to funding, market opportunities, and networks.

2. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY IN MENTOR SELECTION

- ☐ Ensure that GCIP mentors conducting checkups **include women mentors** and gender-diverse experts.
- ☐ Train mentors to **recognize gender-specific challenges** and provide tailored support to women entrepreneurs.
- ☐ Encourage **women-led ventures** to participate actively in the venture checkup process.

3. GENDER-SENSITIVE PROGRESS MAPPING

- ☐ During the reflection process, entrepreneurs should be encouraged to assess how gender-related dynamics have affected their ability to **reach milestones** and **overcome business challenges**.
- ☐ The checkup should incorporate **gender-inclusive recommendations**, such as access to **women-focused funding opportunities**, networks, and industry events.

4. CREATING AN INCLUSIVE AND SAFE SPACE

- ☐ Ensure that the **venture checkup process is free from biases** and fosters a safe environment where women entrepreneurs can openly discuss their challenges.

- ☐ Where relevant, provide the option for **women entrepreneurs to engage with women mentors** to facilitate **more open dialogue** about gender-specific business challenges.

5. GENDER-EQUITABLE ACTION PLANNING

- ☐ Recommendations from the checkup should include **gender-sensitive resources, programs, and networking opportunities** that promote equitable growth for all ventures.
- ☐ Encourage connections with **women-led investor networks, accelerators, and business development programs** that support women entrepreneurs.

6. TRACKING GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT

- ☐ Venture checkups should track **progress metrics disaggregated by gender** to evaluate how GCIP graduates from different backgrounds are progressing.
- ☐ Use findings to **enhance GCIP acceleration and mentorship support** to ensure they remain gender-responsive and promote equitable outcomes.

By embedding gender mainstreaming in the venture checkup process, GCIP can better support women entrepreneurs, ensure equitable opportunities, and create an inclusive innovation ecosystem.

Planning a venture checkup for GCIP graduates involves creating a structured yet comprehensive diagnostic process. The goal is to identify the ventures' most critical needs, track progress, and provide actionable recommendations. *The checklists below outline activities to include when planning a GCIP graduate venture checkup.*

VENTURE CHECKUP PLANNING CHECKLIST

PRE-CHECKUP PREPARATION

1. DEFINE CHECKUP OBJECTIVES	☐ Clearly articulate the objectives of the venture checkup. ☐ Ensure alignment with the overall goals of supporting GCIP graduate companies.
2. IDENTIFY KEY AREAS OF FOCUS	☐ Determine the key areas or metrics that will be assessed during the checkup. ☐ Consider aspects such as business development, financial health, operational efficiency, and impact metrics.
3. SELECT GCIP MENTORS	☐ Identify experienced mentors with diverse expertise relevant to the ventures' needs. ☐ Ensure that mentors have a solid understanding of the GCIP programme and its goals.
4. COMMUNICATION WITH GCIP ALUMNI COMPANIES	☐ Communicate the purpose, format, and expected outcomes of the venture checkup to GCIP alumni companies. ☐ Request relevant information and documentation in advance.

ON CHECKUP DAY

5. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION	☐ Begin the checkup with a welcome and introduction session. ☐ Provide a brief overview of the checkup process and expectations.
6. INDIVIDUAL CHECKUP SESSIONS	☐ Schedule one-on-one sessions between GCIP alumni companies and assigned mentors. ☐ Allow sufficient time for in-depth discussions about the venture's status, challenges, and opportunities.
7. DATA AND DOCUMENT REVIEW	☐ Have mentors review relevant documents and data provided by the alumni companies. ☐ This may include financial statements, business plans, impact reports, and any other pertinent materials.
8. SWOT ANALYSIS	☐ Facilitate a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis for each venture. ☐ Discuss internal and external factors affecting the venture's performance.
9. NEEDS ASSESSMENT	☐ Conduct a needs assessment to identify critical areas requiring attention. ☐ Collaborate with alumni companies to pinpoint gaps and challenges.

OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10. FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION	☐ Facilitate a feedback session where mentors share their observations and initial impressions. ☐ Encourage open and constructive dialogue between mentors and alumni companies.
11. PRIORITIZING NEEDS	☐ Collaboratively prioritize the identified needs based on urgency and impact. ☐ Focus on a manageable number of key areas for action.
12. ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS	☐ Develop actionable recommendations for each identified need. ☐ Include specific steps, resources, contacts, or mentorship recommendations.
13. RESOURCE MATCHING	☐ Match alumni companies with relevant resources, contacts, or mentors based on their specific needs. ☐ Facilitate introductions and connections as needed.
14. DOCUMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP PLAN	☐ Document the outcomes, recommendations, and action plans.

	☐ Develop a follow-up plan outlining the next steps and timelines.
15. CLOSING AND APPRECIATION	☐ Conclude the venture checkup with closing remarks and expressions of gratitude. ☐ Emphasize the ongoing support available through the GCIP community.

POST-CHECKUP FOLLOW-UP

16. FOLLOW-UP COMMUNICATION	☐ Send a follow-up communication to alumni companies summarizing the outcomes and recommendations. ☐ Include any additional resources or contacts identified post-checkup.
17. MONITORING AND EVALUATION	☐ Establish a system for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the ventures' progress. The generic indicators below are recommended to be used, along with specific indicators based on the ventures' action plans. ☐ Schedule periodic follow-up check-ins or support sessions. RECOMMENDED INDICATORS TO MONITOR ANNUALLY: • OPERATIONAL STATUS: Whether the startup is still operational (actively engaged in its business activities and legally registered). • REVENUE: Total revenue generated for the year. • TEAM GROWTH (FTE): Total number of full-time employees (FTE) at the end of the year. • FUNDING SECURED: Total funding raised by the end of the year. • IMPACT METRICS: Total CO2 emissions reduced by the startup (tons/year). • GENDER MAINSTREAMING: • Total number of C-level executives. • Total number of women in C-level positions. • Is there a woman with an ownership role in the company?
18. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	☐ Collect feedback from both mentors and alumni companies about the checkup process. ☐ Use insights to continuously improve and refine future venture checkup initiatives.

Using this checklist, you can design a structured and impactful venture checkup process that provides valuable insights, actionable recommendations, and ongoing support for GCIP alumni ventures.

4.2. EXPERT PANELS

The expert panels are intended to be more than just a collection of mentors but an opportunity to bring together well-known experts in a specific industry domain to go deep in their exploration and discussion of a topic that is most pertinent to the participating GCIP graduate venture. The expert panel should be seen as a virtual advisory board focused on a very specific area. By focusing each expert panel on a specific industry domain or business issue rather than the entire business, the expert panel can provide impactful advice in a 30-minute session.

Below is an example list of potential topics for an expert panel and corresponding experts. **Each expert panel should have three to six experts who are available for at least two hours, preferably four or more hours, to provide feedback to entrepreneurs in a series of 30-minute sessions.** The intention is for GCIP alumni companies to participate in multiple expert panels to focus on different aspects of their business.

A key role for GCIP PMU staff in organizing expert panels is to ensure that the panels match the industry sectors, stage of development and needs of the entrepreneurs. This will typically require some diagnostic analysis such as a venture checkup to highlight the areas of greatest need. **Expert panels can either be specific to a particular time and day (i.e. event-based) or take place on an ongoing basis throughout a calendar year or the GCIP Accelerator cycle.**

Expert panels are increasingly used by many early-stage venture funds to provide valuable industry insights to both their portfolio companies and investment managers. Often the expert panels include founders of successful portfolio companies or senior staff in large corporations who might be a future acquirer of portfolio companies (e.g. senior product staff at Google, etc.). Expert panels often work most successfully when held in person, but many venture funds successfully utilize virtual expert panels where all input and discussion is virtual and synchronous.

EXPERT PANEL FOCUS	POTENTIAL EXPERT PARTICIPANTS
MANUFACTURING • PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT	Manufacturing Experts Product Design Experts Chief Product Officers from large companies
MARKETING • SALES	Marketing Experts Sales Directors Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) from large companies
LEGAL • INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY	Lawyers Intellectual Property Experts
FINANCE • FUNDRAISING	Accountants Bankers Investors Financial Consultants Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) from large companies
TEAM BUILDING • DEVELOPMENT	Serial Entrepreneurs Human Resource Executives

	Talent Mangers for Investment Funds
IMPACT MEASUREMENT	KPMG, Deloitte, EY (Sustainability Practices) Experts from universities and think tanks specializing in impact evaluation Impact-driven Investors

Planning expert panels that go beyond mentorship to bring together well-known experts in a specific cleantech industry domain requires careful coordination to ensure meaningful exploration and discussion. *The checklist below lists activities to include when planning such expert panels for the benefit of participating GCIP alumni companies.*

EXPERT PANELS PLANNING CHECKLIST

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

1. DEFINE PANEL OBJECTIVES	☐ Clearly define the objectives of the expert panel. ☐ Identify specific goals, such as knowledge sharing, in-depth exploration of industry trends, and actionable insights for entrepreneurs.
2. THEME SELECTION	☐ Choose a specific and relevant cleantech industry theme for the panel discussion. ☐ Ensure the theme aligns with the interests and needs of the participating GCIP alumni companies.
3. IDENTIFY EXPERT PANELISTS	☐ Identify well-known experts in the chosen cleantech industry domain. ☐ Ensure diversity in expertise and perspectives to provide a comprehensive exploration of the topic.
4. PANELIST BRIEFING	☐ Brief panelists about the event format, theme, and audience. ☐ Share guidelines for creating engaging and informative contributions during the panel discussion.
5. COMMUNICATION WITH ENTREPRENEURS	☐ Communicate the purpose, theme, and expectations of the expert panel to GCIP alumni companies. ☐ Encourage them to submit questions or topics they would like the panel to address.

EVENT EXECUTION

6. MODERATOR SELECTION	☐ Select a skilled moderator with expertise in the cleantech industry or relevant domain. ☐ Ensure the moderator can facilitate engaging and insightful discussions.
7. INTERACTIVE FORMAT	☐ Design an interactive panel format that includes Q&A sessions and audience participation.

	☐ Encourage panelists to share real-world examples and case studies.
8. STRUCTURED DISCUSSION	☐ Structure the discussion to cover key aspects of the chosen theme. ☐ Include segments for each panelist to present their perspectives and insights.
9. AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT	☐ Facilitate audience engagement through live polls, Q&A sessions, and interactive discussions. ☐ Encourage entrepreneurs to actively participate and pose questions.
10. REAL-WORLD APPLICATIONS	☐ Focus the discussion on practical applications and real-world scenarios. ☐ Illustrate how the insights provided by the panelists can be applied to the entrepreneurs' ventures.
11. NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Allocate time for networking opportunities before or after the panel discussion. ☐ Provide a virtual or physical space for participants to connect with panelists and fellow entrepreneurs.

POST-EVENT FOLLOW-UP

12. RESOURCE SHARING	☐ Share relevant resources, articles, and additional materials discussed during the expert panel. ☐ Provide a platform for participants to access these resources post-event.
13. RECORDING AND DOCUMENTATION	☐ Record the expert panel discussion for those who may have missed the live event. ☐ Document key takeaways, insights, and recommendations from the discussion.
14. POST-EVENT SURVEYS	☐ Collect feedback from both entrepreneurs and expert panelists. ☐ Use insights to evaluate the success of the event and identify areas for improvement.
15. FOLLOW-UP OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Provide information on how entrepreneurs can follow up with the expert panelists. ☐ Facilitate introductions, networking, or potential collaboration opportunities.
16. CONTINUOUS LEARNING	☐ Use the feedback and insights gained to continuously improve future expert panels. ☐ Consider hosting regular sessions to keep entrepreneurs informed about the latest industry trends.

With the help of this checklist, you can organize expert panels that offer a deep exploration of cleantech industry topics, provide valuable insights for GCIP alumni companies, and foster meaningful connections within the cleantech community.

4.3. SECTOR EVENTS

Sector events may share some attributes with a community event, but the key differentiation is the **focus on building connectivity within a specific industry sector both within the GCIP network and much more broadly**. Typically, this will always require participation of relevant industry partners such as a trade association or major corporation.

The sector events differ from the community events in that the priority is to connect the GCIP alumni companies with an industry sector and the key players. This could include leading corporations in the sector, high-growth startups, sector investors, market analysts, key influencers and relevant universities and research institutes. The outcome of any sector event should facilitate introductions to key industry players for the GCIP alumni companies and deep insights into the latest industry trends and opportunities. Network contacts and any key industry insights should be the basis of a written industry report that could be distributed to GCIP alumni companies unable to attend the event.

Planning sector events that focus on building connectivity within a specific industry sector involves strategic coordination and collaboration with relevant industry partners. *The checklist below provides an overview of activities to include when planning such sector events within the GCIP network.*

SECTOR EVENTS PLANNING CHECKLIST

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

1. DEFINE SECTOR EVENT OBJECTIVES	☐ Clearly define the objectives of the sector event. ☐ Identify specific goals such as fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and expanding the network within the targeted industry.
2. IDENTIFY KEY INDUSTRY PARTNERS	☐ Identify and reach out to key industry partners, such as trade associations or major corporations, to collaborate on the event. ☐ Ensure alignment of goals and mutual benefits for all stakeholders.
3. THEME AND TOPICS	☐ Choose a specific theme or topic relevant to the targeted industry sector. ☐ Ensure the content aligns with the interests and needs of both the GCIP alumni companies and the broader industry audience.
4. SPEAKER AND PANELIST SELECTION	☐ Identify and invite knowledgeable speakers and panelists from both the GCIP network and the industry at large.

	☐ Ensure diversity in expertise and perspectives to provide comprehensive insights.
5. COLLABORATIVE AGENDA PLANNING	☐ Collaborate with industry partners to plan the agenda for the sector event. ☐ Ensure a mix of keynotes, panel discussions, and interactive sessions.
6. PARTICIPANT OUTREACH	☐ Reach out to GCIP alumni companies, industry professionals, and other potential participants. ☐ Utilize various communication channels to promote the event.

EVENT EXECUTION

7. VENUE SELECTION (VIRTUAL OR PHYSICAL)	☐ Choose an appropriate venue for the event, considering whether it will be virtual or physical. ☐ Ensure the chosen platform or location can accommodate the expected number of participants.
8. INTERACTIVE SESSIONS	☐ Design interactive sessions to encourage engagement and networking. ☐ Include Q&A sessions, breakout discussions, and opportunities for participants to share their experiences.
9. INDUSTRY PARTNER SPOTLIGHTS	☐ Provide dedicated slots for industry partners to showcase their initiatives or services. ☐ Allow presentations, demos, or discussions that highlight their contributions to the sector.
10. NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Facilitate networking opportunities for participants to connect with each other and with industry partners. ☐ Incorporate virtual or physical networking sessions into the agenda.
11. EXHIBITION OR SHOWCASE AREA (OPTIONAL)	☐ If applicable, create an exhibition or showcase area where industry partners can display products, technologies, or services. ☐ Allow participants to explore and engage with these offerings.
12. COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOPS (OPTIONAL)	☐ Organize collaborative workshops that address specific challenges or opportunities within the sector. ☐ Encourage participation and brainstorming among attendees.

POST-EVENT FOLLOW-UP

13. RESOURCE SHARING	☐ Share relevant resources, presentations, and materials discussed during the sector event. ☐ Provide a platform for participants to access post-event resources.
14. CONTACT SHARING	☐ Facilitate the sharing of contact information between participants, GCIP alumni companies, and industry partners. ☐ Encourage ongoing collaboration beyond the event.
15. FEEDBACK COLLECTION	☐ Collect feedback from participants, industry partners, and GCIP alumni companies. ☐ Use insights to evaluate the success of the sector event and identify areas for improvement.
16. POST-EVENT SURVEYS	☐ Conduct post-event surveys to gather insights into participants' experiences. ☐ Use feedback to inform future sector events and tailor content to the audience's preferences.
17. FOLLOW-UP OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Provide information on how participants can follow up with industry partners and GCIP alumni companies. ☐ Facilitate introductions, networking, or potential collaboration opportunities.

With the help of this checklist, you can organize sector events that effectively build connectivity within a specific industry, create meaningful collaborations, and foster a dynamic network both within the GCIP community and beyond.

4.4. REVERSE PITCHES

A reverse pitch is an opportunity for an angel investor, VC fund, bank, grant maker, corporate investor or government support programme to pitch to the entrepreneurs in attendance either in person or online. A reverse pitch provides an opportunity to resolve any confusion regarding the focus of a specific investor, bank, grant maker or corporation.

Typically, entrepreneurs waste considerable amounts of time pitching the wrong investor or funding source either due to incomplete research on their part or opaqueness from the funder. **A reverse pitch is an opportunity for a funder to clearly state their focus and investment criteria reducing irrelevant solicitation from entrepreneurs whilst broadening their network.**

Reverse pitches from funders are more prevalent in developed entrepreneurial ecosystems with various investors and some healthy competition. **In emerging markets and developing economies, efforts should be made to include the entire spectrum of funding sources from grant funding to loans, angel and venture capital investment.** In addition, international funders should be sought who could pitch online, especially if they have a strong focus on impact and climate investments.

The overall objective of the reverse pitches is to reduce the ambiguity around investment criteria and eliminate as much as possible the siloed interaction between funders and entrepreneurs.

In the short term, success of reverse pitches should be gauged by the number of interactions between GCIP alumni companies and funders. In the longer term, any investment activity resulting from such interactions should be tracked.

Organizing a reverse pitch session where investors and support programmes pitch to GCIP alumni companies is an excellent way to connect these entrepreneurs with potential funding and support opportunities. *The checklist below provides an overview of activities to consider when planning a reverse pitch session.*

REVERSE PITCHES PLANNING CHECKLIST

1. IDENTIFY PARTICIPATING INVESTORS AND PROGRAMMES	☐ Reach out to angel investors, VC funds, banks, grant-makers, corporate investors, and government support programmes. ☐ Confirm their participation and gather relevant information for introductions.
2. DEFINE PITCH FORMAT	☐ Determine the format for each pitch (e.g., time limit, key information to cover). ☐ Ensure a standardized format for consistency and efficiency.
3. CREATE EVENT AGENDA	☐ Develop a detailed agenda outlining the sequence of pitches and any additional activities. ☐ Include time for Q&A, networking, and follow-up discussions.
4. PROMOTE THE EVENT	☐ Create promotional materials and distribute them through relevant channels. ☐ Leverage social media, email newsletters, and partner networks to maximize reach.
5. REGISTRATION PROCESS	☐ Set up a streamlined registration process for both investors/programmes and GCIP alumni companies. ☐ Collect essential information for networking purposes.
6. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION	☐ Provide a warm welcome to all attendees ☐ Deliver an introduction outlining the purpose and structure of the reverse pitch session.
7. INVESTOR/PROGRAMME PITCHES	☐ Allocate specific time slots for each investor or programme to deliver their pitch. ☐ Include key information such as investment focus, criteria, and application process.
8. Q&A SESSIONS	☐ Facilitate Q&A sessions after each pitch.

	☐ Allow entrepreneurs to ask questions and seek clarification.
9. PANEL DISCUSSION (OPTIONAL)	☐ Organize a panel discussion with all participating investors and programmes. ☐ Discuss broader industry trends, funding landscape, and opportunities for collaboration.
10. NETWORKING BREAKS	☐ Schedule networking breaks to allow entrepreneurs to connect with investors and programmes. ☐ Provide a virtual or physical space for informal discussions.
11. PITCH FEEDBACK SESSION	☐ Arrange a session where a panel or mentors provide feedback on entrepreneurs' pitches. ☐ Offer insights on how to make pitches more compelling to potential investors.
12. CLOSING REMARKS	☐ Conclude the reverse pitch session with closing remarks. ☐ Express gratitude to investors, programmes, and entrepreneurs for their participation.
13. FOLLOW-UP OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Provide information on how entrepreneurs can follow up with the investors and programmes. ☐ Share contact details and any specific next steps for engagement.
14. FEEDBACK COLLECTION	☐ Collect feedback from both investors/programmes and entrepreneurs. ☐ Use feedback to improve future events and enhance experience for participants.
15. POST-EVENT RESOURCES	☐ Share relevant resources, such as presentation slides, contact information, and additional funding/support materials. ☐ Create a post-event communication plan to keep the momentum going.

These activities can ensure a well-organized and impactful reverse pitch session that facilitates meaningful connections between GCIP alumni companies and potential investors or support programmes.

5. ANNUAL GCIP POST-ACCELERATOR ACTIVITIES

5.1. INVESTOR CONNECT

Investor Connect is an event for GCIP Accelerator teams and GCIP alumni companies that is focused on making connections to appropriate investors and sources of capital. Since the earliest cycles of GCIP, various Investor Connect events have been used to both educate entrepreneurs on the range of investors and to facilitate introductions to sources of capital that fit the stage of development, capital needs, and sector focus of the GCIP alumni company. Investor Connect systems typically take place as in-person events but with sufficient preparation can take place virtually.

When planning an Investor Connect session it is imperative to remember that the expectations amongst entrepreneurs and investors should be set correctly. **In many cases, GCIP ventures may be too early for many sources of equity investment and therefore the focus should be on developing relationships and contacts that can be maximized as the company reaches key milestones.**

Entrepreneurs should not expect to leave the Investor Connect event with an investment term sheet or cheque but with a series of contacts and insights that can be leveraged. Similarly, investors should not be under the misconception that all GCIP alumni companies they meet will be shipping products, generating revenue, and focused on scaling.

The matching between entrepreneurs and investors can be made more directly relevant by ensuring that the entrepreneurs in attendance match the sector interest, risk profile, and investment stage of the investors in attendance.

Typically, when an Investor Connect session comprises largely current GCIP Accelerator participants, this may mean ensuring that additional angel investors are attending. For a session with successful GCIP alumni companies (one to three years since graduation), connections to venture capital investors may be more appropriate.

INVESTOR CONNECT ACTIVITIES

An investor connect session can last from a few hours to an entire day. The difference in duration impacts the number of meetings (or rounds) that can be curated between participating entrepreneurs and investors. Regardless of the duration, an Investor Connect session typically comprises of the following three segments:

□ INTRODUCTIONS

The investors in attendance briefly introduce themselves (three-four minutes per investor) to outline their investment focus (e.g. technology sector, stage of development etc.), preferred deal size and recent activity (e.g. recent investments, portfolio companies etc.).

□ CURATED ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS

Following an explanation of the format and logistics, a series of short (seven to ten minutes) one-to-one meetings are held between participating investors and GCIP alumni companies.

Each meeting is curated by the GCIP Accelerator PMU with the entrepreneurs moving between investors at specific times. The investors sit or stand at individually numbered tables, whilst the entrepreneurs move between them according to their meeting schedule (referred to as the ‘dance card’). The entrepreneurs are reminded to spend no more than two-three minutes outlining their venture and focus instead on listening to the investors for feedback and potential contacts. Ideally each participating entrepreneur should have the opportunity through Investor Connect to meet at least five or six investors. An investor in attendance would typically expect to meet 8 or more entrepreneurs.

□ FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

Following the curated meetings between investors and entrepreneurs, it is important to allow time for informal follow-up meetings. When the initial short discussion sparked interest on both sides, it is helpful to be able to meet later the same day to discuss the entrepreneur’s pitch day or other information in more detail.

INVESTOR CONNECT PLANNING CHECKLIST

2-3 MONTHS IN ADVANCE
Identify a suitable location (if in person), date and time for the Investor Connect session. When considering locations, verify that the event space can accommodate a large number of individual tables (e.g. 20 or more) with sufficient room for easy flow between tables and networking.
□ Once a suitable location and date has been identified send a “save a date” email to potential attendees. □ Consider which GCIP companies will be invited to the Investor Connect session and conduct a thorough analysis of the investment needs of the group. □ Collect responses via email questionnaires and direct calls. □ Stratify the resulting responses based on the amount of investment required, the type of investment needed and related key milestones. □ Based on the collated responses from entrepreneurs, identify the type of investors that need to be invited to the Investor Connect session based on sector focus, stage of investment, risk profile and typical round size.
2 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

- ☐ Based on the identified funding needs and required investors, map out the local investors and capital sources within the network of the GCIP PMU, stakeholders, and partners.
- ☐ Remember to include not only equity investors but sources of debt capital and alternative funding sources, such as philanthropic capital and corporate investors.
- ☐ Create a list of investors to be invited to the Investor Connect event. PMU staff, partners, and stakeholders should now actively invite investors to attend.
- ☐ Simultaneously, invite entrepreneurs interested in attending to submit a 1-page executive summary and a brief overview of their current investment needs.

1 MONTH IN ADVANCE

- ☐ Gauge the level of interest and attendance confirmations from investors and other capital providers. Follow-up individually by email and telephone when required.
- ☐ Define the most suitable GCIP alumni companies to attend and confirm their attendance.
- ☐ Liaise with the confirmed entrepreneurs to create a short compelling introductory paragraph for each venture to be used in an overview document for the event.
- ☐ Also work with the selected entrepreneurs to revise any executive summaries that need improvement and prepare 4 to 5 slides that could be referred to during the Investor Connect 1:1 meetings.

1 WEEK IN ADVANCE

- ☐ Re-confirm the attendance of all entrepreneurs and that the executive summaries and short slide deck are up to date and appropriate.
- ☐ Confirm the attendance of as many investors as possible. Follow-up via email and telephone with investors and other capital providers that have yet to confirm.
- ☐ Begin matching investors that have confirmed with entrepreneurs. Follow-up with any investors where their investment preferences and focus are unknown or unclear.

3 DAYS IN ADVANCE

- ☐ Update the investor and entrepreneur matches based on the latest investors to confirm.

1 DAY IN ADVANCE

- ☐ Finalize the investor and entrepreneur matches based on the latest attendance confirmations and preference information.
- ☐ Send investors one-page executive summaries via email of the entrepreneurs they are scheduled to meet the following day.

5.2. CORPORATE CONNECT

Corporate Connect shares many of the same logistical processes as Investor Connect but the focus is on connecting entrepreneurs to major corporations rather than investors. The biggest challenge with Corporate Connect is accommodating the diverse needs and roles of corporations. For example, some corporations may have a corporate investment arm and would therefore consider investing in technology startups. Either in addition or alternatively, corporations may be seeking new suppliers from startups in specific sectors and geographies to fulfill supply chain diversification targets set by the national or regional governments or the corporation itself. Corporations may also be seeking startups for technology partnerships either to solve their own specific needs, the needs of clients or provide commentary solutions to support their product offerings internationally, especially in emerging markets. Some major corporations have a very developed technology scouting infrastructure with representatives in major markets, incubation programmes and acceleration networks (e.g. the Orange Fab network developed by global telecoms company Orange Group).

Thus, unlike Investor Connect, **preparing for a Corporate Connect requires a much greater analysis of the needs and priorities of the participants.** For example, a single major corporation such as Samsung, Coca-Cola or Repsol participating in a Corporate Connect session might invite multiple representatives from different areas of the company, reflecting the different goals of investment, partnerships, procurement, and incubation.

Another additional complexity for Corporate Connect is that it will require participating GCIP alumni companies to present their venture in a manner that is appropriate for the specific discussion with the corporate representation. For example, even if they are from the same corporation, an investment manager from the corporate VC fund will require different information in comparison to a corporate technology scout or a partnership manager. Therefore, for Corporate Connect events it is vital that **participating GCIP alumni companies fully understand the range of priorities and needs for each corporation in advance and are able to deliver a customized presentation for each discussion.** As a result, Corporate Connect sessions will need to be carefully curated to the needs of the participating corporations. This will typically require substantially more research and interaction with participants prior to the event than a typical Investor Connect Session.

Planning a Corporate Connect event with major corporations requires careful coordination to accommodate the corporations' diverse goals of investment, partnership, procurement, and incubation. *The checklist below provides an overview of activities to include when organizing such an event.*

CORPORATE CONNECT PLANNING CHECKLIST

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

1. DEFINE EVENT OBJECTIVES	☐ Clearly define the objectives of the Corporate Connect event. ☐ Identify the specific goals related to investment, partnership, procurement, and incubation.
2. CORPORATE PARTNER SELECTION	☐ Identify and reach out to corporations that align with the interests and industries of the GCIP alumni companies.

	☐ Ensure diversity in the types of corporations, covering technology, consumer goods, energy, etc.
3. IDENTIFY KEY REPRESENTATIVES	☐ Collaborate with the participating corporations to identify key representatives from different areas of the company. ☐ Include representatives from corporate development, innovation, procurement, and relevant business units.
4. PARTICIPANT OUTREACH	☐ Reach out to GCIP alumni companies and other potential participants to attend the event. ☐ Communicate the diverse opportunities for engagement with the participating corporations.

EVENT EXECUTION

5. AGENDA PLANNING	☐ Collaborate with the participating corporations to plan a diverse agenda. ☐ Allocate specific time slots for presentations, panel discussions, and interactive sessions.
6. DIVERSE PRESENTATION TOPICS	☐ Include presentations from corporate representatives covering investment opportunities, partnership programmes, procurement processes, and incubation initiatives. ☐ Ensure each representative provides insights into their respective areas of focus.
7. PANEL DISCUSSIONS	☐ Organize panel discussions featuring representatives from different areas of the participating corporations. ☐ Cover topics related to collaboration, innovation, and potential opportunities for GCIP alumni companies.
8. INTERACTIVE Q&A SESSIONS	☐ Allow ample time for interactive Q&A sessions after each presentation or panel discussion. ☐ Encourage entrepreneurs to ask questions and seek clarifications.
9. NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Facilitate networking sessions to allow GCIP alumni companies to connect with representatives from the participating corporations. ☐ Provide virtual or physical spaces for informal discussions.
10. CORPORATE SHOWCASE (OPTIONAL)	☐ Provide a showcase area where corporations can present their innovation initiatives, products, or services. ☐ Allow entrepreneurs to explore and engage with the showcased offerings.
11. MATCHMAKING SESSIONS	☐ Organize matchmaking sessions to facilitate one-on-one meetings between GCIP alumni companies and corporate representatives.

	☐ Match participants based on their goals and interests.
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POST-EVENT FOLLOW-UP

12. RESOURCE SHARING	☐ Share relevant resources, presentations, and materials discussed during the Corporate Connect event. ☐ Provide a platform for participants to access post-event resources.
13. CONTACT SHARING:	☐ Facilitate the sharing of contact information between GCIP alumni companies and corporate representatives. ☐ Encourage ongoing collaboration beyond the event.
14. FEEDBACK COLLECTION	☐ Collect feedback from participants, both entrepreneurs and corporate representatives. ☐ Use insights to evaluate the success of the event and identify areas for improvement.
15. POST-EVENT SURVEYS	☐ Conduct post-event surveys to gather insights into participants' experiences. ☐ Use feedback to inform future Corporate Connect events and tailor content to the audience's preferences.
16. FOLLOW-UP OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Provide information on how participants can follow up with corporate representatives. ☐ Facilitate introductions, networking, or potential collaboration opportunities.
17. POST-EVENT COMMUNICATION	☐ Send a follow-up communication to all participants with a summary of the event, key takeaways, and next steps. ☐ Encourage ongoing engagement and collaboration between GCIP alumni companies and corporate partners.

The aim is to organize a successful Corporate Connect event that caters to the diverse goals of GCIP graduate ventures and provides meaningful engagement opportunities with major corporations.

5.3. VENTURE SHOWCASE

The Venture Showcase can take many different forms depending on the number of startups participating, their stage of development, and the specific audience. Regardless of the size of the Venture Showcase, it typically consists of two key activities:

STARTUP PRESENTATIONS	STARTUP EXHIBITS
Startup presentations could either take the form of an investor-focused elevator pitch (two to three minutes) or a product-focused demonstration (three to five minutes).	Either through dedicated booths or smaller sub-sections, the intention is to provide participating GCIP startups with an opportunity to demonstrate their products and technology. This could

	include example products or illustrative models if the solution is too large to exhibit in full size. Previous iterations of GCIP startup exhibits have also included prototype electric vehicles of all sizes.
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Typically, a venture showcase takes place at the culmination of a GCIP annual Accelerator alongside the Awards Event. However, a venture showcase **could also take place at other times of the year in conjunction with a major industry conference or other bigger-scale thematic events to showcase GCIP alumni companies.** For example, GCIP Malaysia held a GCIP startup showcase as part of the annual IGEM conference, the largest Greentech and eco-products trade show in the country. The International Vienna Energy and Climate Forum of UNIDO 2023 had a dedicated space for exhibits to showcase innovative solutions, including the ones supported through GCIP. It is important to consider whether a GCIP venture showcase could be held in conjunction with industry partners at other times throughout the year beyond the culmination of the annual GCIP Accelerator.

VENTURE SHOWCASE PLANNING CHECKLIST

3-4 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

Identify a suitable venue, date and time for the Venture Showcase. When identifying locations, consider whether the showcase will include elevator pitches, product demonstrations and exhibits or just one/some of these components.

Pay particular attention to the needs of exhibiting companies as these will substantially increase the space and time requirements for the venue. Consider whether exhibitors will have a simple table or a specific booth with access to electricity and signage.

If elevator pitches and product demonstrations are required, consider whether this would require a dedicated stage as well as acoustics, sound transfer, and audience flow. For example, if elevator pitches are held in the same space as the exhibits, it may prove hard for both the pitching entrepreneurs and the exhibitors to be heard.

Verify that the event space can accommodate all the potential exhibits and can provide additional (ideally separate) event spaces for elevator pitches, product demonstrations and networking.

Importantly, think carefully whether the Venture Showcase could be located alongside or within an existing event. Previously, numerous GCIP countries have found that locating a GCIP showcase within a national or international conference is advantageous in terms of access to both event space and audience's size.

- ☐ Once a suitable location and date has been identified, **send a “save-the-date” email to potential attendees.**
- ☐ **Consider which GCIP companies will be invited to exhibit and pitch.** Will this be only the current cohort or alumni companies as well? Will selection be based on “first-come, first-served” or will there be specific criteria for selection?
- ☐ **Set a deadline for entrepreneurs to apply** to participate in the Venture Showcase.

- ☐ **Consider whether project partners and sponsors will also want to exhibit or present at the event.** Clarify their interest and calculate the resulting requirements on event space and the schedule.

2 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

- ☐ Based on the current exhibitors and presenters, **begin to map out the event plan and event schedule in detail.**
- ☐ **Check all logistics at the intended venue,** including audio visual support and catering.
- ☐ **Review applications from entrepreneurs to present and exhibit.** Select ventures that meet your criteria and provide available space.
- ☐ **Begin outreach activities for the event to investors, trade associations, incubators, universities, and major corporations.** Remember to engage partners in all outreach activities. If your Venture Showcase is co-located within or next to a major event such as a conference, investigate opportunities for cross-promotion.

1 MONTH IN ADVANCE

- ☐ **Re-confirm all exhibitors and pitching entrepreneurs.**
- ☐ Create a detailed **map of the Venture Showcase** indicating each exhibitor and the pitching stages.
- ☐ Develop **cross-promotion activities with event partners.**
- ☐ **Follow-up on invites to investors and major corporations** to drive attendance. Consider offering exhibit space or speaking opportunities to increase participation from investors and corporations.
- ☐ **Recruit volunteers to support event logistics** including the registration desk and exhibit setup and teardown.
- ☐ **Confirm who will act as the host or master of ceremonies** for the pitch event. Confirm and circulate the schedule of presenters.
- ☐ Confirm who will be the **photographer and videographer** for the event.
- ☐ Send all confirmed exhibitors a **detailed breakdown of their exhibit space,** precise location, and what is permitted / not permitted in the exhibit space.

1 WEEK IN ADVANCE

- ☐ **Re-confirm all presenters and exhibitors.**
- ☐ Drive additional attendee registrations through **partner promotions and social media outreach.**

3 DAYS IN ADVANCE

- ☐ Continue to **drive additional attendance through social media outreach.**

- ☐ Request all presenters **send their slide decks** (if applicable) at least a day in advance.

1 DAY IN ADVANCE

- ☐ Collect and review all presenter slide decks (if applicable) and load onto on-site laptop.
- ☐ Check attendee registrations and exhibitors and presenters that confirmed participation.
- ☐ Send reminder emails to presenters and exhibitors on time limits, locations, permitted items in the exhibition, etc.

5.4. VENTURE CAMP

A Venture Camp is a self-organized mini conference that is based on the concept that GCIP alumni companies are often very skilled industry experts with prior experience and substantial knowledge of their target industries. A Venture Camp invites GCIP alumni companies to propose key topics that they would like to discuss, the broader group then votes on which sessions they would like to join. The sessions with the most votes are held subject to available event space.

Sessions that are especially popular may continue throughout the day or split into more narrowly focused sessions. Sessions that prove less popular may still take place informally utilizing open space and the flexible schedule. **The aim of the Venture Camp is to support the most important dialogue that entrepreneurs wish to have on that specific day based on their own priorities and selection rather than any preconceived assumptions on the most appropriate topics or themes for sessions.**

The concept of a Venture Camp is based on the notion of BarCamp, a series of user-generated technology conferences that began as grassroots events open to the public, alternative to highly exclusive and expensive invite-only conferences in Silicon Valley. The first BarCamp was held in 2005 in Palo Alto with 200 attendees focused on web technology. The concept was quickly applied to a variety of industries and geographies far beyond web technology in Silicon Valley. To date BarCamp events have taken place in over 350 cities with the largest recorded BarCamp event taking place in January 2023 in Yangon, Myanmar, with over 6,400 attendees.

VENTURE CAMP STRUCTURE

During a Venture Camp, participants are encouraged to either initiate or facilitate a session on a topic they care about. This could be a specific question or issue (e.g. raising Series A investment), it could be sharing lessons learnt (e.g. securing first corporate customers) or prior experience in the venture ecosystem (e.g. effective marketing for underfunded startups). Unlike a typical conference, a Venture Camp, as with any BarCamp-focused event, will self-organize around the topics of most interest to the group, whilst still allowing other conversations and discussions to occur.

THE MOST ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL VENTURE CAMP INCLUDE:

- ☐ **At least 50 or more engaged participants** willing to lead or facilitate sessions.
- ☐ **Flexible event space** that enables multiple sessions to be held simultaneously (e.g. main event space plus five break-out rooms).
- ☐ **Diverse attendance** that extends beyond just entrepreneurs to **include mentors, industry experts, investors**, etc.
- ☐ Acceptance that **all opinions and perspectives should be heard**, not just the experts and entrepreneurs with the most experience.
- ☐ The event should be **collaborative and open to everyone**.

Sessions, notes and presentations should be shared online. Unlike a typical high-level industry conference with “off-the-record” executive discussions, all participants should be encouraged to share discussions and content online.

EXAMPLE VENTURE CAMP AGENDA

9:00-10:00	Introductions / Overview and Session Pitching / Selection The most popular sessions are allocated to each of the available 24 event slots			
10:00-10:30	<i>Break</i>			
10:30-11:30	Session 1A	Session 1B	Session 1C	Session 1D
11:30-12:30	Session 2A	Session 2B	Session 2C	Session 2D
12:30-13:30	<i>Networking Lunch</i>			
13:30-14:30	Session 3A	Session 3B	Session 3C	Session 3D
14:30-15:30	Session 4A	Session 4B	Session 4C	Session 4D
15:30-16:00	<i>Break</i>			
16:00-17:00	Session 5A	Session 5B	Session 5C	Session 5D
17:00-18:00	Session 6A	Session 6B	Session 6C	Session 6D
18:00-18:30	Reflections and Wrap-up			
18:30-20:30	Evening Reception / Networking			

VENTURE CAMP PLANNING CHECKLIST

2 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

- ☐ Find and confirm a **suitable location with sufficient space, breakout rooms, audio/visual support, and internet access**.
- ☐ Define a **target list of themes or topics with GCIP mentors, alumni and current entrepreneurs**.
- ☐ Establish an **advisory group** of five to ten GCIP mentors, alumni and current entrepreneurs to provide input on themes, potential speakers and outreach.
- ☐ **Identify potential keynote speakers** who could anchor specific tracks or themes during Venture Camp (e.g. the most successful GCIP alumnus or cleantech investor in your country).
- ☐ **Contact two to four potential keynote speakers that could provide a short (10 minute) invigorating speech** on one or more of the key themes for your Venture

Camp. Perfect opportunities for keynote speakers include the start of the day, the start of lunch or the start of the evening reception.

- ❑ **Compile costs for key activities** such as audio/visual support, catering and travel expenses. Seek sponsorship for any costs that are not funded through your GCIP activity budget.

1 MONTH IN ADVANCE

- ❑ Identify **suitable videographers and photographers** to document all the sessions during Venture Camp.
- ❑ **Recruit volunteers to assist with logistics during Venture Camp** including organizing sessions, directing participants, onsite registration, cleanup, and writing summaries of each session. Typically, one or two volunteers are needed for each session. *To attract volunteers, consider recruiting from universities, entrepreneurship programs, or local startup communities, where students and aspiring entrepreneurs may be eager to gain experience and network. In return for their support, volunteers could receive benefits such as free access to event sessions, a certificate of participation, networking opportunities, meals, or other incentives that enhance their experience.*
- ❑ **Create a website for the Venture Camp** (or a dedicated webpage within an existing website) **allowing registration for the event** and for registered users to both suggest session ideas and vote on ideas in advance of the event.
- ❑ **Contact event partners** such as incubators, venture competitions, universities, and entrepreneur groups to publicize the event.
- ❑ **Reach out again to the GCIP community in your country** and ask them to both register for the event and promote it to their network.
- ❑ **Confirm the keynote speakers** (if applicable) **and any catering providers** or other suppliers.

1 WEEK IN ADVANCE

- ❑ **Check the number of registered attendees for your Venture Camp.**
Does the current number and type of registrants match your targets? Confer with your event advisory group to discuss ways to increase outreach and attendance.
- ❑ **Review the confirmed keynote speakers and suggest topics.**
Are there any gaps? Work with the event advisory board to collate additional ideas for sessions.
- ❑ **Confirm the timing and availability of volunteers and catering.**

1 DAY IN ADVANCE

- ❑ **Review the online suggestions and votes for specific topics.**
If some topics seem well thought out and have led to significant support and interest from registered attendees (votes), consider curating some of the initial morning sessions in advance with the most popular topics. Confirm that the session leader will attend.
- ❑ **Review attendance** and check that current registrations match your event targets and the capacity limits for the venue and catering.

POST-EVENT

- ❑ Following your Venture Camp, it is important to **reach out to all attendees to both thank them for attending and to request that discussions initiated during the day continue**. Discussions can be facilitated through online forums or a dedicated discussion group on LinkedIn or another social platform.
- ❑ When reaching out to attendees it is also **vital to thank sponsors, partners, and advisors for their support**.
- ❑ It is also essential to **include links to content from the event** which may include session summaries and recordings. Some of the Venture Camp sessions may be less suitable for a concise video summary due to the informal nature of the session with multiple speakers. However, keynote speakers normally make an excellent subject for short videos that can be easily circulated after the event.



Picture 3. Connecting for Development – Innovating for Impact, joint event between TCS/ECA/JET and GLO/RFO/EUR, June 2024. Photo credits: UNIDO

6. POST-ADVANCED ACCELERATOR ACTIVITIES

Although many of the activities described in the previous sections might offer some relevance to later-stage entrepreneurs that have graduated from the GCIP Advanced Accelerator, it is important to focus on what support can be the most beneficial given the additional capacity and unique needs of such ventures. **Graduates from the GCIP Advanced Accelerator would typically be founder CEOs or CEOs that have recently joined the company to lead its development to the next level.** Unlike GCIP entrepreneurs at an early stage of development, graduates of the Advanced Accelerator will have significant revenue, a growing range of customers, a sizeable team head count and, most likely, investors. Consequently, **when leading a company focused on fast growth, time and efficiency are the most critical factors.** Therefore, **any post-Advanced Accelerator activities must recognize the limited time that such CEOs will have available.**

6.1. CEO GROUP

The CEO Group shares some initial similarity with the Peer Group activity in that it is a **curated support group**. The difference is that the **CEO group is specifically for CEOs of later-stage startups that have graduated from the GCIP Advanced Accelerator**. Unlike the self-driven group focus of the Peer Group, the CEO Group consists of facilitated group sessions and one-to-one peer advice as needed. The facilitated sessions are specifically focused on the development and support of the participating CEOs rather than the ventures more broadly.

Startups focused on a path of high growth place a great deal of responsibilities and demands on their CEOs, and many find that their skill in addition to their mental and emotional endurance is pushed to the limit. Many founder CEOs are unable to adjust to the increasing demands of the role in a high-growth venture. **CEO Groups are intended as a support mechanism for CEOs at a very crucial time in the development of their venture.** Typically, each group would consist of facilitated monthly online meetings, as needed direct one-to-one peer support and an annual in-person retreat.

Increasingly, leading startup investors in Europe and the United States have instigated peer support programmes for the CEOs of their portfolios companies which includes mental well-being in addition to networking and skill development. Many investors also bring the CEOs of all their portfolio companies together for an annual retreat that often includes Limited Partners (LPs) and strategic relationships.

Planning a CEO Group for CEOs of later-stage startups that have graduated from the GCIP Advanced Accelerator involves designing a curated and supportive environment focused on the professional development and mutual support of the participating CEOs. *The checklist below provides an overview of activities to include in the planning of the CEO Group.*

CEO GROUP PLANNING CHECKLIST

PRE-GROUP PLANNING

1. DEFINE CEO GROUP OBJECTIVES	☐ Clearly define the objectives of the CEO Group, emphasizing CEO development and support. ☐ Identify specific goals such as leadership growth, problem-solving, and peer-to-peer learning.
2. PARTICIPANT SELECTION	☐ Curate a group of CEOs from later-stage startups that have graduated from the GCIP Advanced Accelerator. ☐ Consider diversity in industries, experiences, and challenges.
3. FACILITATOR SELECTION	☐ Identify experienced facilitators who can guide the group discussions and support CEO development. ☐ Ensure facilitators have a background in executive coaching or mentoring.
4. COMMUNICATION WITH CEOS	☐ Communicate the purpose, format, and expectations of the CEO Group from the participating CEOs. ☐ Emphasize the confidential and supportive nature of the group.

GROUP STRUCTURE

5. FACILITATED GROUP SESSIONS	☐ Plan regular facilitated group sessions where CEOs can discuss challenges, share experiences, and receive guidance. ☐ Focus sessions on topics such as leadership skills, decision-making, and strategic planning.
6. ONE-TO-ONE PEER ADVICE	☐ Provide opportunities for CEOs to connect one-on-one for personalized peer advice as needed. ☐ Encourage a culture of open communication and collaboration among CEOs.
7. STRUCTURED AGENDA	☐ Develop a structured agenda for each group session, including time for open discussions, peer advice, and focused learning. ☐ Rotate topics to cover various aspects of CEO development.
8. GUEST SPEAKERS (OPTIONAL)	☐ Consider inviting guest speakers, such as experienced CEOs or industry experts, to share insights and expertise with the group. ☐ Ensure sessions remain interactive and relevant to the CEOs' needs.

EVENT EXECUTION

9. CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDELINES	☐ Establish clear confidentiality guidelines to create a safe space for CEOs to openly discuss challenges. ☐ Emphasize the importance of trust within the group.
10. ICEBREAKER ACTIVITIES	☐ Incorporate icebreaker activities at the beginning of sessions to foster camaraderie among CEOs. ☐ Encourage an open and collaborative atmosphere.
11. CASE STUDY DISCUSSIONS	☐ Facilitate case study discussions where CEOs can analyze real-world challenges faced by their peers. ☐ Encourage problem-solving and collaborative decision-making.
12. GOAL SETTING	☐ Allocate time for CEOs to set personal and professional goals during group sessions. ☐ Encourage accountability and progress tracking.

POST-GROUP FOLLOW-UP

13. RESOURCE SHARING	☐ Share relevant resources, articles, and tools discussed during group sessions. ☐ Provide a platform for CEOs to access additional materials post-session.
14. FEEDBACK COLLECTION	☐ Collect feedback from participating CEOs about their experiences and the impact of the CEO Group on their development. ☐ Use insights to continuously improve the structure and content of the group.
15. POST-GROUP SURVEYS	☐ Conduct post-group surveys to gather insights into participants' experiences and suggestions for future sessions. ☐ Use feedback to inform future CEO Group planning.
16. PEER NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Facilitate networking opportunities among CEOs beyond the group sessions. ☐ Encourage ongoing collaboration and support among the CEO community.
17. CONTINUOUS LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	☐ Provide ongoing learning opportunities, such as webinars or workshops, that align with the needs and interests of CEOs. ☐ Foster a culture of continuous professional development.

With the guidance of this checklist, you can create a successful CEO Group that offers a curated and supportive environment for CEOs of later-stage startups. The focus on CEO development and peer support will contribute to the growth and success of the participating executives and their ventures.





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