OIST Innovation Entrepreneurship Training Program
Stage 2: Focus – Startup bootcamp in Okinawa

Dates: 15th – 26th January 2024
Time: 09:00-17:00 JST
Location: OIST Campus

1 Background

The 12 teams selected will be invited to join the second stage: a two-week on-site bootcamp in January 2024, hosted on the campus of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology in Okinawa, Japan. The 12 teams (up to 2 members/team) will receive financial support for travel and hotel costs to attend the bootcamp in person. In these two weeks, we will guide you through the five most important aspects of creating and running a startup: tech & product, customers & markets, funding & finance, team & culture, and IP & legal. This allows you to decide where you will focus your efforts in the coming months and build your product. We finish with a pitch competition and select the 4 teams that will make it to the third stage. All sessions will be conducted in English.

2 In-person Startup Bootcamp

Module 1: Market & Where to Play
This module focuses on the market. The framework we use for this is called Where to Play. The first step is a brainstorming session in groups on potential markets, starting from the capabilities of the technology. From there, the fellows analyze what are the most promising options for them. At the end of the day, they will make a market slide.

Module 2: Jobs to be Done & Customer Value Proposition
On the first day, we focus on the Jobs to be Done framework. It's a very powerful way to look at your potential customers. Instead of focusing on what to sell, the founders learn how to focus on their pain, or 'struggling moments' as it is described in JtbD. From there, it is a logical step to determine what value the solutions create for the customer. Based on the first potential customer participants see, they create a slide with the customer value proposition.

Module 3: Funding & Building a Team
Module three discusses funding for startups, and especially how that works for deep tech. Secondly, we look at how to start building a team and a methodological approach to hiring people. The afternoon is reserved for one-on-one coaching sessions.

Module 4: Sales & Customer Discovery

Module four is focused on sales, or more broadly, on interacting with (potential) customers. We use the framework of 'Crossing the Chasm: Marketing and Selling High-Tech Products to Mainstream Customers', the classic book by Geoffrey Moore. The key to crossing the chasm is effective customer discovery, which we will discuss in the second part of the module. Additionally, we add a short discussion on how to formulate hypotheses and design experiments as part of the customer discovery.

Module 5: Prioritization and Planning

The fifth module of the bootcamp is about prioritization and turning that into an actionable milestone planning for the next six months. It starts with the 'impact - Uncertainty Matrix', a very powerful tool for prioritization. Each team will draft a slide with the impact – uncertainty matrix. Based on the matrix, participants make a draft milestone planning for the next three to six months.

Module 6: Pitch Training

The last teaching module is a pitch training split over three days. It is combined with time for the teams to work on their pitch, get feedback from peers, and get feedback from the trainers and coaches. We will work on four elements of the pitch:

a. Preparation and practice

How people enter the stage and whether they allow themselves to have a little fun while in the center of attention really matter. It's not something that comes naturally to everyone, but it can be cultivated through preparation and practice.

b. Storytelling

We give the teams a format they can use for their pitch in the competition. In that deck are all the elements needed in terms of content for the audience to decide what the startup does and what its potential is. The next step in the pitch is to create an inspiring narrative by making it a personal story.

b. Speech, voice & breathing

Next, is the way people use their voice and their breath. We will use simple techniques for people to experience how their voice sounds if they have a lower breathing point and experience how it can calm them down, even while being the center of attention. On top of that, we look at accents and how people can practice and train their speech to be better understood in English, still the language of international business.

d. Stage skills

Lastly, we look at stage skills. How do you verify that everything works the way it should on stage? How do you (or don't you) move on stage? Where do you look at? And the all-important question of where you put your hands while you are giving a pitch.

e. Test runs

In the last part of the pitch training, participants put everything together, and we will have test runs with 'trial' juries so they can experience the pitch event setting one time before the big day.

This will be a very fun and hands-on training, with lots of time for people to practice and improve their pitch decks and the way they deliver their pitch.

3 Pitch Competition

During the last day of the Okinawa bootcamp, we will organize a pitch competition. The teams will use the pitch template they have developed throughout the bootcamp and present their startup ideas. The pitch will be followed by Q&A with the jury. The jury will determine the winning teams, which will join the Stage 3 - OIST Innovation Accelerator program at OIST to work on their startup. The decision will be communicated to the teams within 10 days after the competition.