

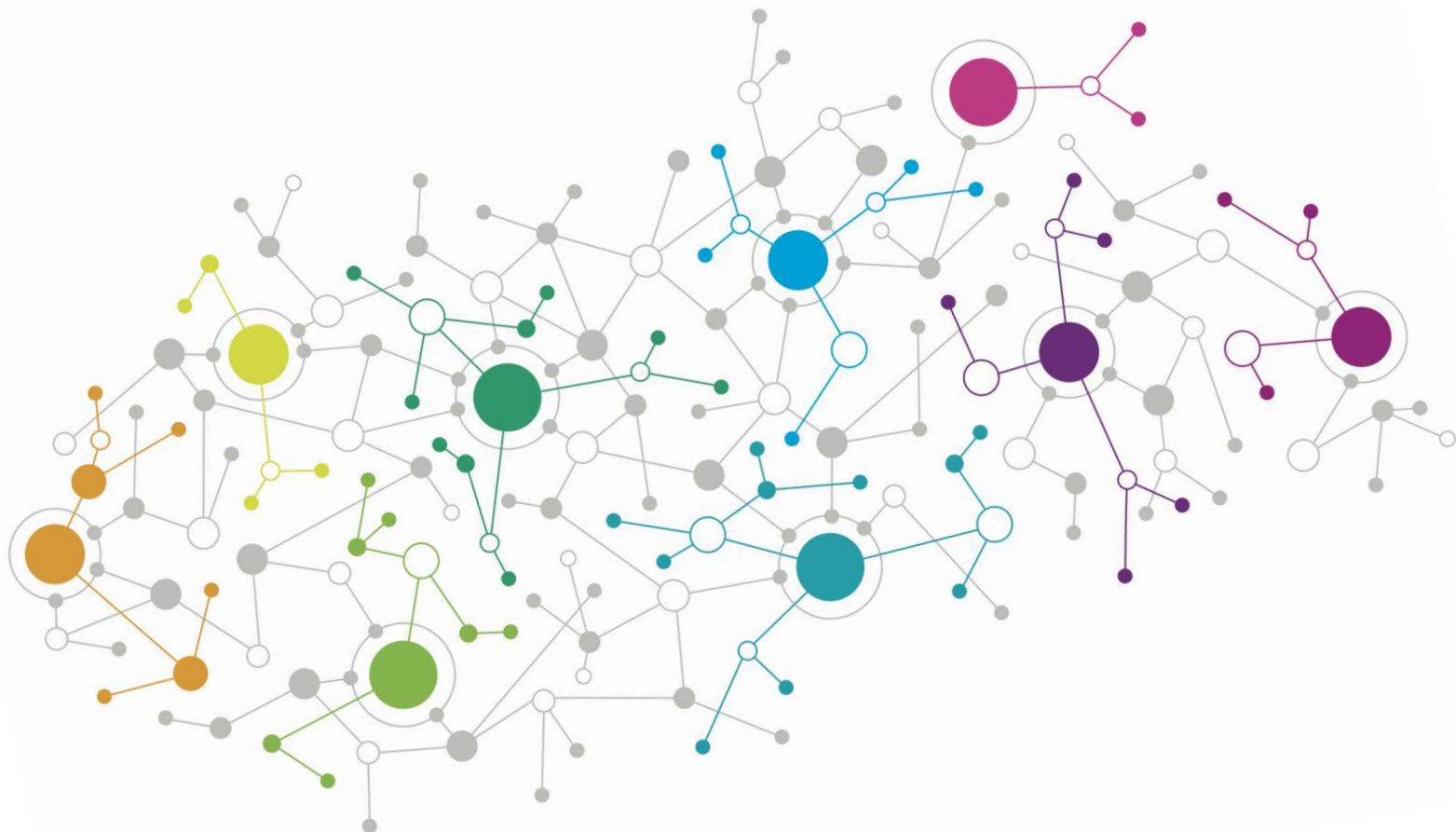


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# ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM IN THE GAMBIA

*A network analysis of institutions supporting entrepreneurship*



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Entrepreneurship support institutions are facing challenges in the way they provide assistance to entrepreneurs. Many are not able to meet the growing expectations and needs of entrepreneurs in the country. Navigating through an ecosystem of unconnected organizations can be complex and discouraging. In the long run, it is likely to take multiple institutions to achieve start-up success: from idea to growth to internationalization. Building skills, entrepreneurial behaviour, funding and networks is essential to start-up success and cannot be provided by one institution alone.

Entrepreneurial ecosystems emerge as the result of a multitude of entities and actors interacting in highly complex and idiosyncratic ways. Implementing and accelerating entrepreneurship ecosystems is central to unleashing the potential of young entrepreneurs.

Ecosystems can be studied through a variety of approaches. This report uses ITC's methodology to capture the characteristics and connections of the institutions active in the entrepreneurship ecosystem in The Gambia. The objective of this report is to provide an accurate description of The Gambia's entrepreneurship ecosystem of institutions, identify gaps, overlaps and provide recommendations.

This is achieved through a comprehensive analysis, which starts with an initial mapping of the overall ecosystem and aims to gauge the types of support provided by institutions to entrepreneurs at different stages of the business lifecycle. Secondly, delving deeper, a network analysis is conducted to observe the types of linkages or collaborations that occur between various organizations in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. This network analysis does not only show the connections between actors but can also identify which institutions are highly connected. Finally, complementing the institutional perspective, entrepreneurs or the "users" of the ecosystem are asked to share their insights.

### Current ecosystem

With a density figure of 0.495 out of 1 – with 1 representing the maximum number of connections within a network achieved – The Gambian ecosystem is at an early stage of maturity. With an emerging set of actors in the network and the increasing realization of the potential of entrepreneurship development for the country's economic growth, The Gambia needs to ensure the ecosystem is strong enough to accommodate the upcoming challenges.

A small country size, a young and creative population and an increasing awareness of entrepreneurship are key advantages for The Gambian ecosystem. However, the rapid and unstructured growth of institutions in response to the entrepreneurship boom in the country has led to some overlaps as well as unfilled gaps.

The report has identified key gaps in the network of institutions providing support to entrepreneurs. The first is a poor presence of incubators and accelerator programmes. Despite having several institutions supporting entrepreneurs in various ways, only two nascent programmes, offer an incubator programme that takes entrepreneurs from idea to viable product. Further, no accelerator programme is available to take start-ups from viable product to growth. This is limiting the resources that entrepreneurs have to develop their ideas and scale up their businesses. Linked to this, support to access international markets is limited and generic, and needs to be better coordinated within the network. In addition, there are poor connections to investors to facilitate access to finance.

Compared to more advanced ecosystems, the presence of IT-focused institutions is very limited. Pitching competitions and events are not yet playing a key role in connecting institutions and fostering collaboration among ecosystem actors.

Support in rural regions is an area of concern for most of the actors in the network and more collaboration will be needed in the future to ensure no region is left behind. Gender oriented programs are emerging and providing specific support and networks to female entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, such institutions are young and do not yet offer a comprehensive set of services. In addition, the rest of the actors in the network will need to work on targeting female entrepreneurs to ensure gender representation among their clients.

Overlaps are most notable in training programmes and generic entrepreneurship support. While it is positive that most institutions in the country are including entrepreneurship in their curricula, roles in the ecosystem have not been clarified. Therefore, most of the support offered is only able to “set the scene” for entrepreneurs to start their journey but it is not sufficiently comprehensive to guide them throughout the whole process.

Since the majority of the institutions within the network are young, it is the more mature institutions that are leading the connections. In some cases, new initiatives start operating in silos, fearing competition, particularly in terms of access to donor funding and lacking information on current services already available.

Another sign of the ecosystem’s immaturity is also the low number of connections between support institutions and academia. Universities and management schools are key to supporting entrepreneurship and to complementing or initiating incubator programmes.

### Next steps for the ecosystem

For The Gambia’s ecosystem to move to the next stage, institutions will need to clarify their respective roles to facilitate the navigation of entrepreneurs within the ecosystem, and also to promote the creation of institutions that can cover the identified gaps.

Incubators, accelerators, tech hubs and IT focused institutions are missing, or have a low presence in the ecosystem. In addition, two key services – business scale up and linkages to international markets – will need to be further structured and tailored to entrepreneurs’ needs.

Inclusion will also need to be in the ecosystem’s agenda for growth. Reaching other regions outside the Banjul area will help the ecosystem grow and expand its maturity. In addition, bringing female entrepreneurs on board will be key to ensure a rich pool of entrepreneurs with creative ideas in various domains.

Finally, the ecosystem actors will need to embed results measurement in their operations to verify the direction and quality of the services provided. This will allow actors to refine and improve services but also to showcase Gambian success internationally.

### Limitations of the analysis

The analysis provided in this report reflects the findings of desk research and interviews. Some institutions, currently present in the ecosystem might not be represented in this analysis given the characteristics of their mandate (not including entrepreneurship support) or the sporadic character of their interactions in the network. In addition, this report has focused only on Gambian support institutions. Therefore, support initiatives from ITC, other international development agencies and NGOs have not been captured. The interview questions were based on ITC’s Network Analysis methodology designed specifically to understand the interactions of support institutions. Therefore, questions were less focused on the particular situation of start-ups or entrepreneurs. The information gathered on the entrepreneur’s perspective represents, via a focus group approach, a small subset of the ecosystem’s entrepreneurs and therefore further analysis might be needed to provide a statistically significant assessment of the entrepreneur’s journey. This report is a snapshot of the situation in 2019 and therefore might not be representative of past or future interactions.

## INTRODUCTION

There is a positive feedback loop among innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development. New and growing businesses represent the primary sources of job creation and innovative activity in an economy, two factors that generally result in improved standards of living for all.

However, it is important to understand that the potential impact of entrepreneurship and innovation depends on their level of accessibility. For entrepreneurs to bring new ideas to life, they need access to education and a level playing field on which to compete. In this regard, the role of support institutions is to create conditions that allow more entrepreneurs to start businesses by building skills, generating access to finance as well as to international markets and networks, so that businesses can grow. Economic growth suffers when entrepreneurial activity is unevenly spread across socio-economical, demographic, and/or geographic dimensions. Under the right conditions, entrepreneurs have an incredible power: they help regional areas prosper economically, and they serve society through engineering innovative solutions to problems and challenges.

The Gambia has experienced economic growth in the recent years. However, several challenges remain: Unemployment, rural development and youth migration are on the top of The Gambia's agenda for prosperity.

Micro, small and medium size enterprises (MSMEs) in The Gambia contribute approximately to 20% of the GDP and 70% of the sector is composed of self-employed people. Yet, youth unemployment has increased to 41% during 2019.

Business support institutions are catalysts for job creation and economic growth when performing in a conducive ecosystem of support institutions. Institutions are collectively accountable for exponentially increasing job and economic opportunities for youth.

Given the predominance of young population in The Gambia, with almost 60% of the population under the age of 25, start-ups can play an important role in the economy, as a driver of economic growth, employment, diversification and transformation.

The Gambia has increasingly recognized the relevance of entrepreneurship for the country's growth, to foster economic opportunities and support young people. However, its ecosystem of support institutions is still at an early stage of maturity. There is a need for clarity on the connection between innovation, entrepreneurship, SMEs and start-ups in the ecosystem. Moreover, further development of support institutions is needed to guide start-ups in all its development phases.

Based on Start-up commons ecosystem categories, The Gambia is currently placed at the first stage of maturity, called (A): Awakening & Manifesto. According to this stage, The Gambia has increasingly embraced start-up culture, development and understanding. In addition, an initial mindset towards creating a start-up ecosystem is starting to form. There is interest in global megatrends and changes taking place in innovation, entrepreneurship and start-up developments. It is therefore, a critical moment for The Gambia to assess its current position, activities and focus areas compared to international practices and within local context.

The Gambia needs to transition to the next stage, "Mapped & Vision", in which institutions – as actors in the ecosystem - seek strategies, policies, new support functions and services in order to grow business creation via entrepreneurship and innovative SMEs. This will mean fully developing and embracing on entrepreneurial culture, start-up development and start-up ecosystem knowledge among local key stakeholders for common understanding and alignment. Further, building a shared vision and roadmap for the Gambian ecosystem will be essential.

To support The Gambia's progress towards this next stage, this report provides an analysis of the Gambian entrepreneurship ecosystem with a specific focus on the interaction among ecosystem actors and gaps in services in supporting entrepreneurs. This analysis is presented in three perspectives:

**Perspective 1:** Service mapping and gap analysis. Key findings regarding the services offered in the ecosystem based on the interviews conducted with relevant institutions.

**Perspective 2:** Network analysis. Assessment of how the institutions within the entrepreneurship ecosystem in The Gambia interact using network analysis techniques.

**Perspective 3:** User experience analysis. Insights from entrepreneurs in terms of navigating the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Based on the network analysis and interviews.

Finally, the report provides key recommendations for the improvement of the ecosystem.

Throughout the report, specific sections have been highlighted to provide more detailed insights into the mapping from a gender perspective. Women-owned firms are still in the minority in The Gambia, and the hurdles faced by women who have embraced entrepreneurship are challenging and often very different than those experienced by their male counterparts. This report highlights specific findings on how the Gambian ecosystem is working together to support female entrepreneurs.

# 1. ECOSYSTEM MAPPING

## Defining entrepreneurship support ecosystems

In the context of this report, an entrepreneurship support ecosystem is a collaborative arrangement through which institutions that support entrepreneurs combine their resources, capabilities, and products to offer a coherent, entrepreneur-oriented solution.

When they work, ecosystems allow institutions to create value that no single one of them could have created alone. Well-managed ecosystems improve the management of critical interdependencies to increase benefits or reduce costs.

## The Gambia's entrepreneurship support ecosystem

The number of institutions supporting entrepreneurs in The Gambia is growing. Entrepreneurship is seen as a key area for the country's development and it has entered the agenda of many business support organizations. Institutions and Gambian entrepreneurs are reacting to the need to support youth through entrepreneurship and to create an enabling environment in The Gambia for start-ups to thrive. Other African countries such as Nigeria, Senegal or Ghana are moving fast on entrepreneurship support and The Gambia is starting to pick up the pace to match this progress.

The small size of the country fosters some natural collaborations that would otherwise not take place. Collaboration is not seen as a priority, especially when competing for funds, but in some cases, it happens as a result of geographical proximity and recurring presence in events or forums.

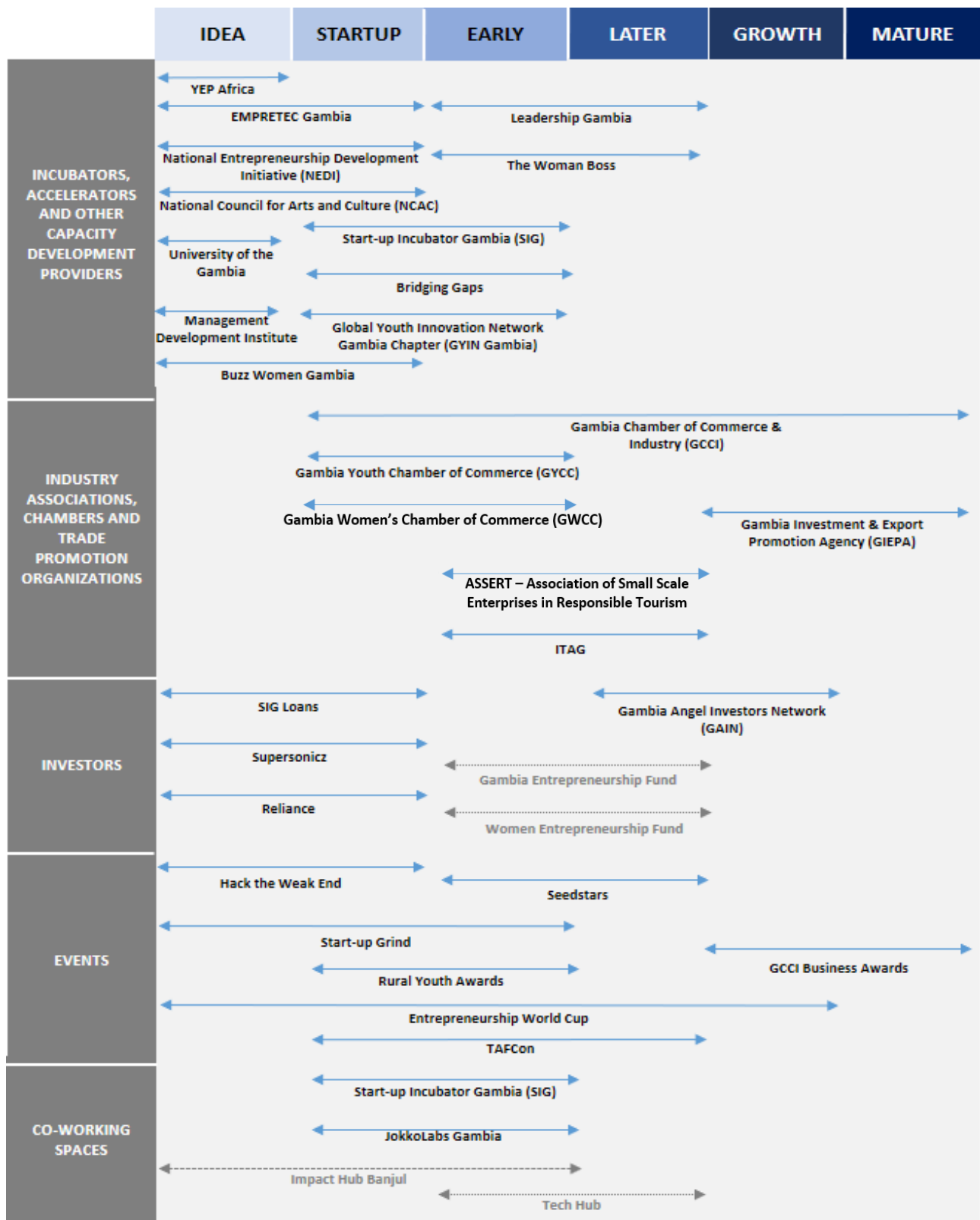
At the time of this report, the entrepreneurship ecosystem in The Gambia focuses in supporting entrepreneurs who are at the idea to early stage. Training on entrepreneurship and skills development is widely offered. However, the offering is not structured enough and presents some inefficiencies due to lack of coordination.

Both the public and private sector, with support of donor agencies, drive the initiatives. With a clear focus on youth, gender considerations are slowly gaining presence in programmes and initiatives. However, gender is not yet mainstreamed, with most programme participants being male.

Figure 1 below provides an overview of the range of institutions active in the Gambian entrepreneurship support ecosystem at various stages of the lifecycle of a business. See Technical Annex for a list of definitions of entrepreneurship support institutions.



Figure 1: Ecosystem actors by category and business stage



Note: This figure has been developed based on desk research and therefore may entail omissions in the coverage of the active institutions. Institutions marked in grey have not been formally established at the time of the report.

## IDENTIFIED GAPS

### Presence of incubators and accelerator programmes

#### Incubators

Though many institutions contained in the ecosystem might to self-categorise as incubators, the mapping exercise only identified two incubators among them. There appears to be some misconception regarding the role of incubators and accelerators. This is preventing the emergence of more institutions of this kind and is also limiting the connecting capabilities of pre-existing incubators. Their specific role compared to other institutions is not widely accepted or understood.

As per InfoDev's definition, business incubation is a process aimed at supporting the development and scaling of growth-oriented, early-stage enterprises. The process provides entrepreneurs with an enabling environment at the start-up stage of enterprise development.

This environment should help reduce the cost of launching the enterprise, increase the confidence and capacity of the entrepreneur, and link the entrepreneur to the resources required to start and scale a competitive enterprise. Entrepreneurs accepted into the business incubator stay until an agreed upon milestone is reached, often measured in terms of sales revenue or profitability.

Business incubation is one of many tools aimed at fostering innovative enterprise creation and growth. Other complementary intermediaries exist, such as business development services and entrepreneurship centres.

The following table provides clarity on key differences between an incubator and other support services:

	Development Service Providers and Entrepreneurship Centres	Business Incubators
Target Enterprises	Any entrepreneur / Start-up	Early-stage enterprises with high growth potential
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ad hoc, demand-driven assistance</li> <li>- Focused on a particular issue for which the entrepreneur asks for assistance</li> <li>- Usually broad business support, including training and advisory services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasis on co-location and the "cluster" effect between enterprises</li> <li>- Ongoing supply and demand driven assistance until an agreed upon level of performance has been reached</li> <li>- Integrated mix of intensive strategic and operational support focused on the enterprise in its entirety</li> </ul>

Taking into account such differences, The Gambia is lacking incubator programmes that select and accompany entrepreneurs in their idea to minimum viable product journey. In addition, such programmes are able to create specific success cases and graduates from such programmes are most needed in The Gambia.

#### Accelerators

At the moment of the report, no accelerator has been identified. The presence of these institutions is particularly critical to ensure the evolution of the ecosystem.

Accelerators take start-ups to the growth level and expose a small selection of entrepreneurs to funding and international development opportunities.



### Support to access international markets

Given the lack of accelerator programmes, there is a gap between the training offered and access to international markets. Entrepreneurs get support at the very early stage but there is no or little ongoing support offered. This diminishes the possibilities of entrepreneurs to continue growing and expanding their business.

Support in accessing international markets is offered predominantly by GCCI and GIEPA. However, they offer these services to a broad range of businesses (from entrepreneurs to larger enterprises), therefore, they are not specifically targeted to entrepreneurs' needs and are not aligned with any previous support provided (e.g. product development). Most support is ad-hoc and not part of a tailored enterprise growth plan.

### Connections to investor networks

Several initiatives are emerging at the time of this report. However, poor connections to funding opportunities and investors remain a weakness in the ecosystem. In line with what has been identified above, funding is a critical step to push start-ups to growth stage.

Whether seeking early stage investment capital, or additional resources for growth, investors can help entrepreneurs find the resources they need to grow their enterprise and create jobs in The Gambia.

Investor Networks use assessment tools to measure a project's entrepreneurial risk, venture, and business plan "readiness." These type of assessments not only support entrepreneurs to get funding but also help them test their idea, innovate and guide entrepreneurs on their path to growing successful businesses.

Investors might work with companies at different stages of their development raising equity and/or debt funding. As businesses grow, entrepreneurs will require a range of funding solutions, from early stage equity investment through to working capital to drive growth.

International and local investors are indeed interested in investing in Gambian businesses, but lack information about opportunities and/or confidence in local institutions to screen potential deals. At the moment, investments take place in an informal manner, mostly based on personal relationships.

### IT presence

Start-ups often come hand in hand with new technologies. Therefore, entrepreneurship ecosystems must include IT focused institutions to provide specialized support and connect start-ups with IT experts for scalability.

Despite the presence of ITAG, The Gambia's ecosystem still remains focused on traditional sectors (agriculture, tourism and apparel). As part of the maturity process of the ecosystem, institutions must guide entrepreneurs to incorporate technologies into their ideas. This, in turn, generates new ideas, such as new Agri-Tech solutions.

### Pitching competitions and events

According to the interviewed sample of institutions and entrepreneurs, pitching competitions and events (such as Demo Days) are not fully established as part of the ecosystem. Events and competitions are recent in The Gambia and in some cases, its outreach is not large enough.

Events are key enablers of Demo Days, centred on cultivating solid investment opportunities for start-ups and bringing in active investors aligned with specific sectors.

## Best practices for Events and competitions

### Diversify the Judging Panel

Start-ups will likely pitch to diverse groups throughout their journey. That's why it is important to convene judges representing a variety of segments: funders seeking a well-aligned investment opportunity, potential business partners looking for a start-up to help them solve a problem, possible customers of the product or service, technical leads who can question and support the science. The multi-audience pitch model teaches teams to strategically explain their company's value proposition to a mix of critical players they will encounter throughout their start-up process.

### Allocate Prizes Wisely

Cash prizes are valuable for start-ups. However, it is good practice to align awards with key start-up milestones, creating criteria for how the money and resources will be deployed - for example, paying rent for laboratory tests. Designing awards to offer multiple facets of support is beneficial for both the innovators and the award provider.

### Provide Value for Everyone Involved

It is important to build in pre-competition networking events for key players involved with the event – and in the ecosystem. This allows the group to engage with different people who may not always have the opportunity to connect. This is positive for attendees who feel like they receive a value-add for their time commitment to the competition. In addition, pitch competitions can be used as a learning opportunity. For example, when inviting entrepreneurs who secured funding to share their “behind the scenes” experience.

### Follow up

Many start-ups may leave a pitch competition thinking “Now what?”. That question has more urgency among teams who did not win a prize. Organizers can help teams to develop a post pitch competition action plan. This includes coaching start-ups to put requests in their pitch that go beyond money and provide regular progress reports to be shared with the ecosystem. Success stories spark interest from a potential business partners or investors, even if the team does not make it to the podium.

## Support in rural regions

Institutions do not have a formal presence in rural regions, some operate through satellite offices or local consultants. The Figure below shows how the ecosystem is mostly focused in the Greater Banjul Area (15 institutions), with some representation of these institutions in the regions:



### Gender oriented programs

Some specific initiatives have emerged due to the lack of a clear gender focus from more mature institutions. Women focused institutions are: Gambia Women's Chamber, Bridging Gaps and Woman Boss. Increasingly, long-established institutions are setting inclusiveness standards to encourage women's participation in their activities. However, this is not a priority for the majority of institutions mapped.

Women-focused initiatives are mostly restricted to mentorship and leadership training; there is a lack of specific training offer.

There is no current fully reliable database of women entrepreneurs and therefore it is difficult to estimate figures on growth and development of women owned business.

In addition, the lack of entrepreneur role models in The Gambia is particularly critical in regards to women entrepreneurs who struggle most to find mentoring opportunities and success cases to use as a reference.

### IDENTIFIED OVERLAPS

#### Training programmes

According to the interviewed sample of institutions and entrepreneurs, there are duplications in training supply. The particular focus on training in the ecosystem and the lack of specialization of its actors has led to inefficiencies in regards to the training offer. The main issues can be summarized as follows:

- 1- Entrepreneurs get trained on the same topic by several institutions. This is, due to the lack of data sharing between the institutions. There is no common database to know which entrepreneurs have been trained under which institution or domain. If institutions were to put structured incubator programmes in place, there would be lower rotation of entrepreneurs would be less likely to seek support from multiple institutions.
- 2- Training quality and curricula are not standardized. Therefore, training quality varies within the same subject. Role clarity of institutions in the ecosystem and further specialization of institutions in certain domains would contribute to increased training quality.

#### Idea and early stage support

Given the Gambian context, it is common practice to prioritize idea and early stage support interventions. The pipeline of start-ups is still low when compared to its potential and therefore, efforts to recruit entrepreneurs and build business skills are critical at this stage.

However, this growth needs to be balanced with a gradual increase in programmes to support start-up growth. Institutions interviewed invest most of their efforts in early stage support, leaving advanced entrepreneurs unsupported.

#### Collaboration challenges

Institutions are highly dependent on external funding to finance their operations and activities. While some institutions charge entrepreneurs a fee for their services and/or membership, this revenue stream is limited. Institutions that rely on donor funding for survival find it difficult to collaborate and exchange information with other institutions because they perceive the market as a competition for the same funds. In addition, institution's service portfolio design is often based on donor's priorities and needs rather than market research. This leads to low differentiation between institutions, aggravating the collaboration challenges.

## 2. NETWORK ANALYSIS

The analysis in this section aims to understand the group of interconnected actors supporting entrepreneurs in The Gambia. The analysis focuses on the nodes (individual institutions) and the edges (relationships or interactions) that connect them. The network analysis presented is part of ITC's methodology.

### ITC's Network Analysis methodology

ITC's Network Analysis methodology aims to capture interactions, trends and patterns in collaborations among institutions. The results presented in this section are based on three pillars of analysis:



#### Desk research

Preliminary research to understand the landscape of institutions in the country and their offerings. Research on specific studies and reports in the field of entrepreneurship support and start-ups development in the country. Research to validate findings.



#### Entrepreneurship support institutions

Personal interviews to understand the role of the institution in the ecosystem, its contributions, perspectives and specific collaborations within the network.



#### Entrepreneurs

Personal interviews to validate the institution's offering and to understand the entrepreneur's journey in the ecosystem.

In order to represent and visually capture the interactions and linkages among the interviewed institutions, this section of the report provides qualitative and quantitative insights supported by a network analysis software.

The following section provides answers to two key questions:

1. **What are the main connections in the network?** The analysis explores how the landscape of institutions interact with each other, which are the most connected institutions, with who are they connecting and why are they connecting. The aim of this analysis is to understand what stimulates collaboration or what might be preventing it and therefore, what can be done to continue strengthening the ecosystem.
2. **What are the different types of connections?** To respond to this question, ITC's network analysis focuses on three key factors of collaboration: information, funding and service delivery. In the case of information exchanges, the analysis looks into aspects such as database of entrepreneurs, events information or market intelligence. Regarding financial exchanges, the analysis focuses on the exchanges of funds between institutions. This would be the case of institutions providing financial support for events to other institutions or logistics support. Finally, service delivery collaboration involves support for trainings, such as training material and training staff and collaboration for the organization of events and competitions.

## The ecosystem map

The information below summarizes key features of the network:

### INSTITUTIONS CONNECTING IN THE NETWORK

- 4 Entrepreneurship Center  
Size by Degree Centrality
- 3 Chamber  
Size by Degree Centrality
- 2 Incubator/Accelerator  
Size by Degree Centrality
- 2 Industry association  
Size by Degree Centrality
- 2 Academia  
Size by Degree Centrality
- 1 Trade Promotion Organization  
Size by Degree Centrality
- 1 Government body  
Size by Degree Centrality

Entrepreneurship centres are the most predominant institution type in The Gambia. These are institutions actively targeting young entrepreneurs reaching them through standard trainings and programmes that cannot be categorized as incubators or accelerators.

As mentioned on the service mapping section, incubators are scarce in the ecosystem. Only two institutions categorize as such and even so their size and reach is small.

Chambers have recently increased in number given the spin-off initiatives of youth and women chapters.

On the left side are the institutions part of the network.

### CONNECTIONS IN THE NETWORK

- 84 Information Sharing
- 23 Service Delivery
- 7 Funding

Connections on information sharing are most common among actors. Though it indicates some intention to collaborate, stronger connections such as for the purpose of service delivery or funding are less predominant. It is common for institutions in the network to feel threatened to collaborate with others and lose funding opportunities.

Three different types of connections were studied. They are represented with colour codes and numbers as shown on the left.

## NETWORK DENSITY

The Gambia could be considered as having a small ecosystem. However, small ecosystems when strongly connected can be highly efficient. A few main nodes, taking on the central role of activating and connecting the rest of the players, can create a successful entrepreneurial network.

In the case of The Gambia, the ecosystem is still developing and therefore it requires both an increase in offer and role clarity. The density of the Gambian network is 0.495.

The network density describes the portion of the potential connections in the network that are actual connections. A “potential connection” is a connection that could potentially exist between two “nodes” – regardless of whether or not it actually exists. The value ranges from 0 to 1, with the lower limit corresponding to networks with no relationships and the upper limit representing networks with all possible relationships. The closer the value is to 1, the more dense is the network and the more cohesive the nodes in the network.

A high level of density allows entrepreneurs to connect to knowledge and resources through other actors, making those flows more efficient and helping to nurture new start-ups. However, it is important that the network has a minimum range of different institutions who can support entrepreneurs in different ways, for example through the supportive role of Incubators, Accelerators, Angel Networks and Tech Hubs. Once these institutions have a good presence in the ecosystem, the key to a successful network will rely on strengthening them to provide a more targeted and coherent portfolio of services.

## INSTITUTION CENTRALITY

Institution nodes are ranked according to their betweenness centrality. This centrality measures how many times a node (institution) acts as a gateway in the network. The higher the betweenness centrality of an institution, the more paths run through that entity to connect two other actors. When an institution has a

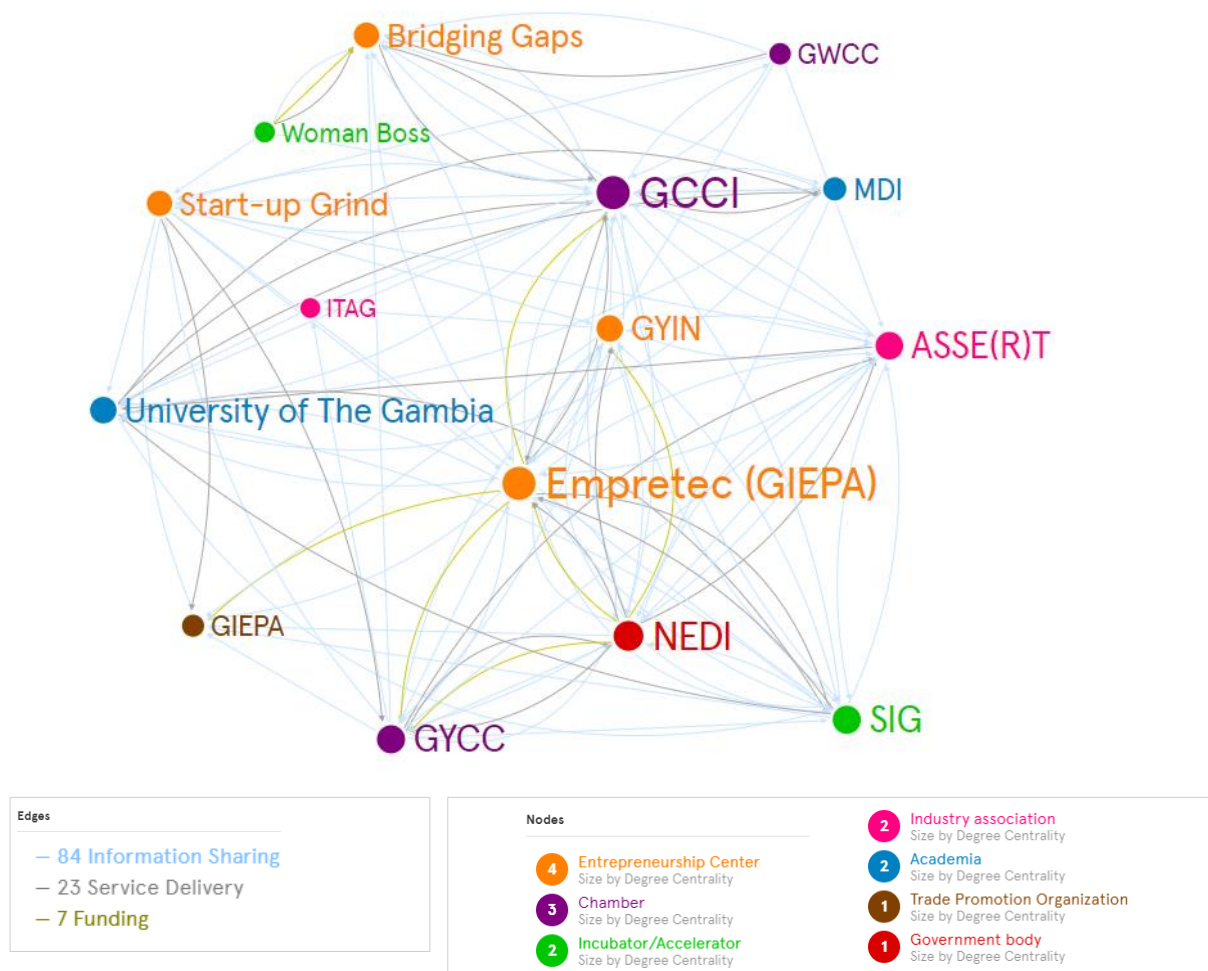


high betweenness centrality, and therefore a bigger node size in the map, it means that a node is a key bridge or facilitator between different actors.

Overall, it measures how often an institution appears on shortest paths between nodes in the network. Institutions with high betweenness may have considerable influence within the network by virtue of their control over information passed between others. They are also the ones whose removal from the network will most disrupt communications between other institutions because they lie on the largest number of paths taken by messages.

Figure 2 shows the overall network of institutions supporting entrepreneurs in The Gambia. The size of the nodes (institutions) correspond to their betweenness centrality score (the higher the node, the higher the betweenness centrality).

Figure 2: Mapping Gambian entrepreneurship support ecosystem



GCCI, Empretec, Bridging Gaps, GYIN and NEDI are the top five institutions when looking at their bridging capabilities.

In this case, it is not a measure indicating the number of connections that these institutions have but their capacity to include those institutions that are less well-connected or new to the network. For example, this is the case of Bridging Gaps. Being a very small institution, it is well-connected with other institutions supporting projects exclusively targeted to women.

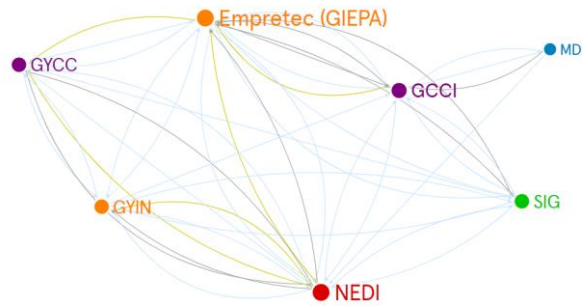
Following the general map, this report analyses related information regarding aspects of regional reach and gender focus. Figure 3 shows the institutions that are actively reaching other regions outside Banjul. None



of the institutions have specific regional offices, but operate through networks of satellite institutions, community groups or local consultants.

The Greater Banjul Area is the main hub for institutions. However, during the interviews, most institutions mentioned regional reach as an area to increase collaboration and as a key potential catalyser to promote entrepreneurship in The Gambia.

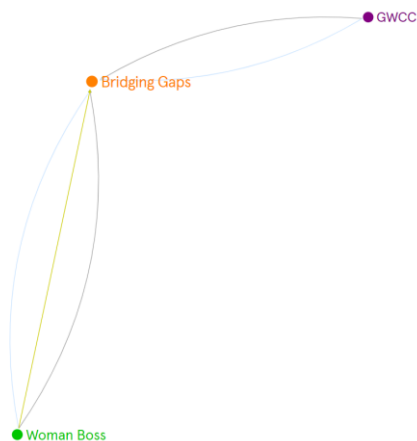
Figure 3: Entrepreneurship support ecosystem with Regional Reach



Regional Reach Network

In addition, there is a small, but expanding network of institutions focused on promoting women owned businesses and encouraging female entrepreneurs into growing their ventures. Gender focused institutions are connected to each other and are increasingly connecting to other institutions in the network. However, there is a need for more clarity regarding role distribution in order to define further areas for collaboration.

Figure 4: Entrepreneurship support ecosystem with Gender Focus



Female Entrepreneurs Support Network

Deeper analysis of Figure 2 indicates that creating additional connections could significantly increase the overall density and centrality scores. Possibilities for growth in the network can be as follows:

### 1. Growth by increasing density of the network

Augmenting the number of connections in the network by creating new linkages with existing institutions currently poorly connected. For example, more institutions could connect to:

ITAG
Woman Boss
Start-up Grind
GWCC

### 2. Growth by increasing centrality

Institutions can adopt new roles as “bridge” actors by connecting specific groups. Even when not having a high number of connections, an institution can act as a bridge when reaching out to key unconnected actors. This might be the case for regional institutions connecting to specific groups in rural areas. For example, institutions could become bridge actors when connecting to:

Incubators, Accelerators, Tech Hubs and Co-working Spaces – I.e.: SIG, Woman Boss, Jokkolabs	These actors are not yet broadly present in the network; connecting with newly created institutions would increase the bridging power of institutions already present in the network.
International Linkages	Connecting to provide services or sharing regular information with institutions that are currently providing B2B linkages or relevant information on how to scale up products has potential to increase centrality.

## 1. What are the main connections in the network?

### Mature institutions are leading connections in the network

Institutions that have been present in the network for a longer period (i.e.: GCCI and GIEPA) are generally better connected and involved in several activities. There are several reasons that might explain this behaviour. First, these institutions have consistently attracted donor support (for example, Empretec is a UN founded programme) and therefore have received consistent support for sustainability and growth. In addition, long-term present institutions have been expanding their areas of intervention (from international linkages to entrepreneurship support). With the emergence of more focused institutions, collaborations should increase to delegate support to specialized institutions (such as incubators and accelerators).

### Emerging new initiatives start in silo

New institutions are emerging as a response to specific needs. However, they are not immediately connected to other institutions and they tend to start operating in silos. This strategy is not contributing to the growth

of the network. Strong ecosystems leverage on the services already offered in the network and build their own portfolio around it.

This lack of collaboration is partly due to the information gaps on *who is doing what* in the ecosystem, but also the lack of trust in other organizations to deliver good quality services. More collaboration on services design and services provision could help to address such inefficiencies.

### Connections with academia

The Gambia is still working towards recruiting entrepreneurs. Therefore, partnerships with academia to raise awareness among students are crucial. In this regard, several areas for collaboration are still unexplored.

Both the University of The Gambia and the Management Development Institute are connected in the network as partners for service delivery. However, their role is more focused on enabling awareness campaigns and supporting entrepreneurship talks rather than leading specific initiatives coming from academia and leveraging on academia networks and their research and innovation capabilities.

### Events as institutional connectors

Even though events are happening in The Gambia, they are not seen as key connectors for entrepreneurship support. For example, Seedstars was independently organized last year for the first time in the Gambia.

A critical part of a sustainable start-up environment is to have activities and events that engage the entire entrepreneurial community. These events - like Seedstars and Demo Days - brings entrepreneurs and everyone in the entrepreneurship community together to discuss and initiate action around entrepreneurship.

Events are able to connect start-ups with the resources they need to excel. They create synergies with the hosts and participants and encourage a sense of community.

Attracting people to these events not only increases collaboration but also allows entrepreneurs to learn from each other and personally experience the local ecosystem. They can get a better taste of the energy and activities within the start-up community and can get exposure to success cases.

Experiencing activities with those who are making new things happen can foster innovation. In addition, it can provide visibility to a specific region or community hosting the event.

### IT institutions not well connected

Technology entrepreneurship refers to processes by which entrepreneurs use resources, and technical systems through collaborative exploration and experimentation to pursue opportunities.

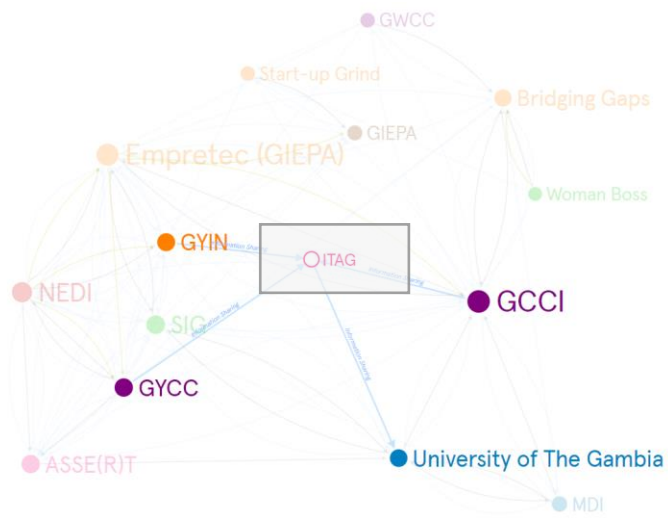
Currently, ITAG is the only institution in the network that is fully focused on the IT sector. In addition, there are few linkages to this institution. In more technology driven ecosystems, IT institutions have a central role in the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation support.

Including more IT focused support institutions in the network can support entrepreneurs to establish and manage sustainable new ventures related to new technologies. This can build specific tech-entrepreneurial skills and tech-product development skills.

Entrepreneurs need to be able to leverage opportunities that rely on scientific and technical knowledge to create and capture value.

Technology entrepreneurship education, particularly in group settings, increases the entrepreneurship behaviour. In a world where growth and competitiveness comes from agility, creativity and innovation, technology is a key enabler of success.

Figure 5: Entrepreneurship support ecosystem with IT Focus



Connections with ITAG

## 2. What are the different types of connections?

The following analysis looks at the characteristics of the linkages (edges) connecting each institution (node). This report has looked at three key interactions between institutions:

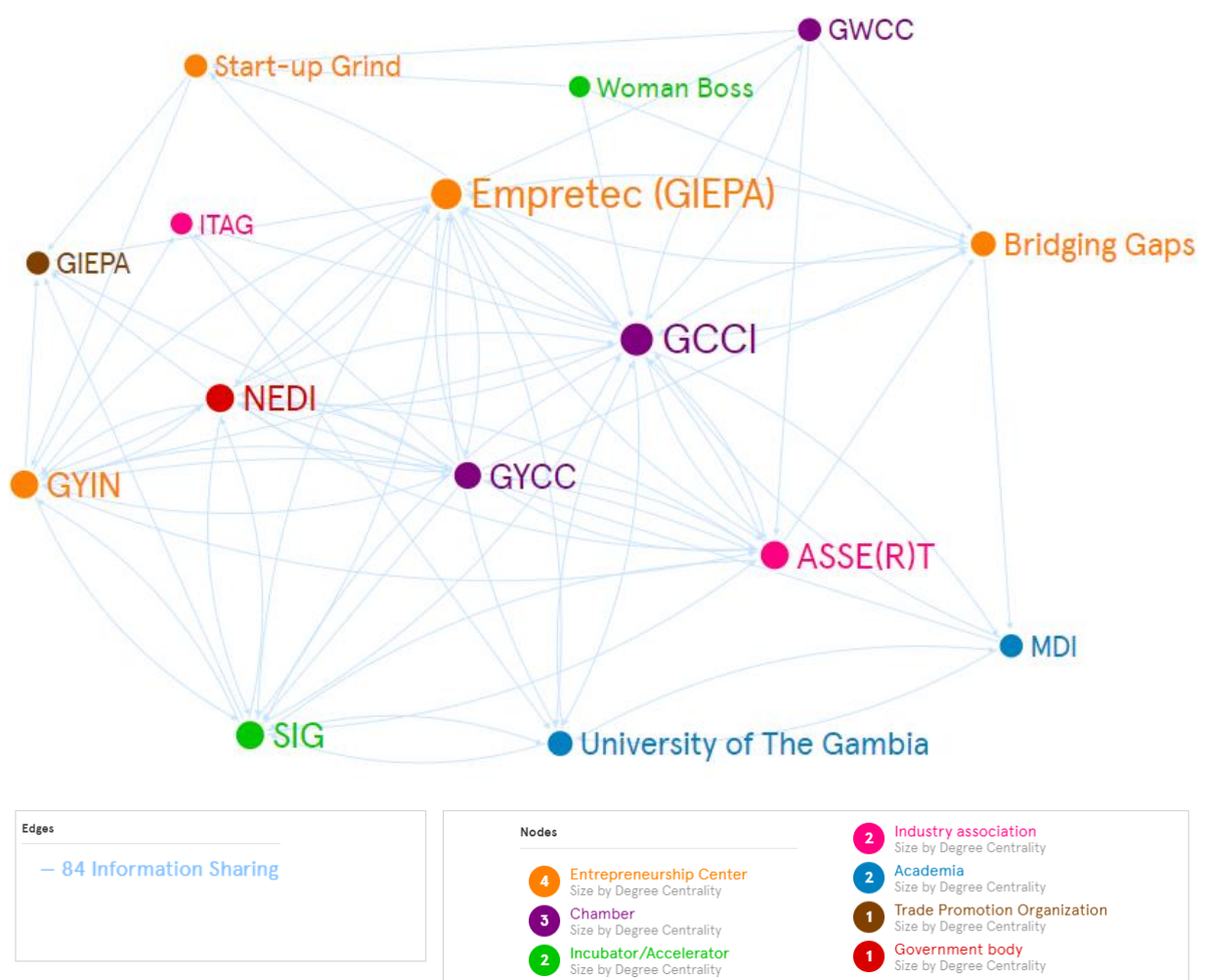
1. **Information exchanges:** exchanges such as database of entrepreneurs, referrals, events participation or market intelligence.
2. **Financial collaboration:** exchanges of funds happening between institutions (not funds given to entrepreneurs). This is the case for institutions offering financial support for events to other institutions or logistics support.
3. **Service delivery collaboration:** support for trainings, such as training material, training staff and events coordination.

### Information exchanges

Information exchanges happen informally and not on a regular basis. Despite the small size of the ecosystem, few institutions are consistently sharing information. There is no connecting platform (formal or informal) or forum for discussion with all actors.

The lack of collaborations in organizing events or for the purpose of managing initiatives also reduce information flows.

Figure 6: Information connections in the ecosystem

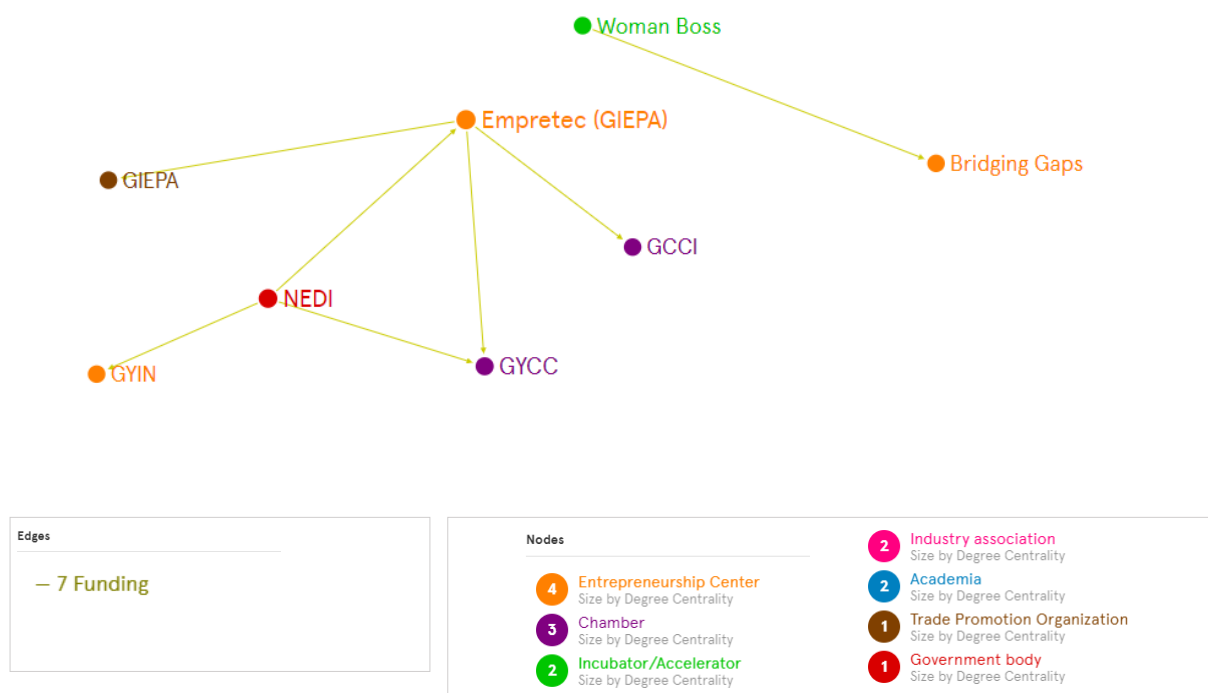


### Financial collaboration

Institutions heavily rely on donor funds. Therefore, there are only very few exchanges of funds happening. Most of the exchanges relate to events sponsoring or logistics support. In some cases, there is also support for consultant contracts.

This is not abnormal case given the maturity of the ecosystem. However, The Gambia should seek to move from a donor funded scheme to a more self-sustainable structure.

Figure 7: Funding connections in the ecosystem

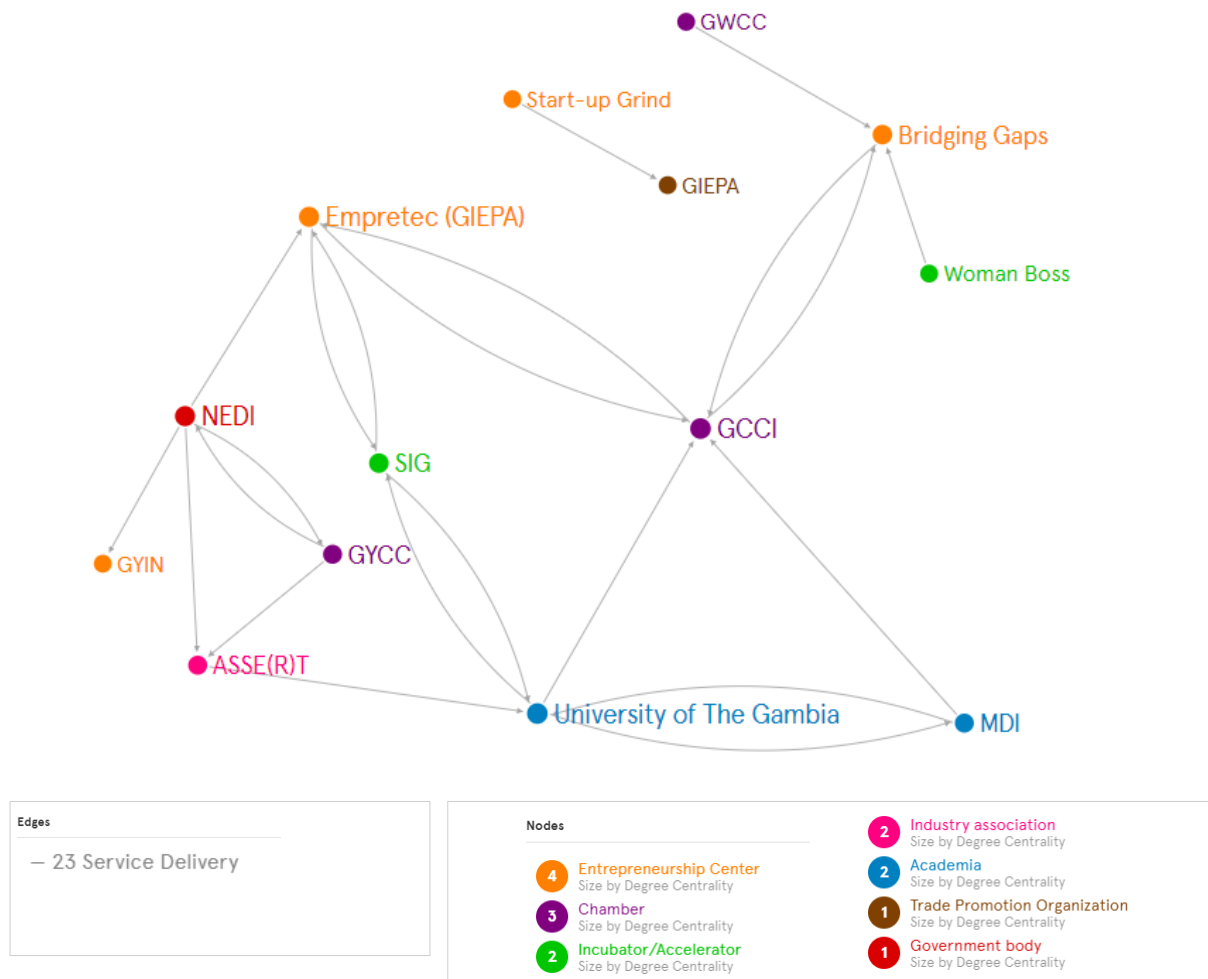


### Service delivery collaboration

Some institutions in the network collaborate in delivering training, mentorship programmes and moderating panels. However, this is not yet an interconnected network. Most institutions collaborate through a one-on-one relationship, not connecting with more than three institutions.

This is due to the duplications in service offer but also due to the lack of knowledge regarding the offering of other institutions.

Figure 8: Service delivery connections in the ecosystem



The Gambia ecosystem is at the right momentum to improve and strengthen collaborations to ensure its sustainable growth. Role clarity, information sharing and trust are key elements to promote in order to move to the next level of development.

Access the interactive Network map [here](#). Or scanning the following code:



### 3. USER EXPERIENCE ANALYSIS

Analysing the entrepreneurship ecosystem of a country requires not only the insights of its institutional actors but also that of the entrepreneurs or “users”. Interviews were conducted with a selected group of young entrepreneurs to complement the above network analysis. The selected sample is composed of 75% of women and 25% of men. This section provides an overview of the user experience in terms of support received, by which institutions, and what is next in their entrepreneurial journey.

Based on the insights gathered from the entrepreneur interviews, the following key trends can be outlined regarding the user experience in the Gambian entrepreneurship ecosystem.

#### **Knowledge of actors in the ecosystem is still limited**

While all entrepreneurs reported having heard of all the institutions being analysed in this assessment, they were not aware of the specific services most of them offer. In general, it is difficult to access information, and entrepreneurs would approach institutions based on recommendations from family and friends, without previous knowledge of their specific offer. This relates to the lack of diversification and specialization found in the ecosystem, which makes it difficult for entrepreneurs to distinguish among the services provided by different institutions.

#### **Building knowledge through trainings, advisory services and peer learning**

According to the entrepreneurs, building their skills and knowledge to pursue the entrepreneurship path was facilitated through training programmes organized by GCCI, GIEPA, SIG and ASSERT. In addition, entrepreneurs valued ad hoc advisory services offered by those institutions. For women, the Bridging Gaps mentoring programme was also recognized as important in building skills and confidence for their entrepreneurship journey. Entrepreneurs highlighted the importance of digital communities and social media created under the umbrella of different institutions for sharing information. Whatsapp groups are the most frequent platform for communication, and they are perceived as one of the key services offered by institutions to its members. Through the groups, institutions share new opportunities and members benefit from quick advisory services and peer learning.

#### **Accessing finance through new types of support mechanisms**

Young entrepreneurs indicated that given the difficulty in meeting the collateral requirements and high interest rates charged by traditional financial service providers, they had to rely on alternative methods to access finance. It is to be expected that in nascent entrepreneurship support ecosystems such as the one in The Gambia, the primary source of funding for most entrepreneurs are still personal savings and funds from family and friends.

However, some of the entrepreneurs highlighted the funding support available through the YEP Mini-Grant and Mini-Loan schemes, which offer more favourable terms. In addition, entrepreneurs have also indicated the existence of cash prizes from pitching competitions like Seedstars.

#### **Market access support remains a limited offer**

According to the entrepreneurs, GCCI's Trade Fair and ASSERT's Gambia Good Market offer important venues for market access, especially for early stage entrepreneurs that don't have their own shops. However, beyond these two initiatives, entrepreneurs indicated that they find it difficult to connect to buyers and access relevant market information.

For most entrepreneurs interviewed, expanding beyond national borders is not in their immediate plans given the small size of their businesses. When they want to devise a strategy for internationalisation, Entrepreneurs have indicated GCCI and GIEPA as the institutions they would seek support from. It is important to note that



this choice is not based on substantive knowledge of services those institutions could offer, but rather based on their networks (GCCl) and mandate (GIEPA).

Women entrepreneurs have not reported any gender-specific barrier in accessing services provided in the ecosystem. Despite institutions being supportive of women-owned business, entrepreneurs noted a limited offer of specialized services being offered to them. Except for institutions that are exclusively dedicated to women (Bridging Gaps Advisory, Woman Boss, GWCC), there are no services being specifically adapted and/or targeted to this group.

As part of the user experience analysis, entrepreneurs were asked to identify the key institutions in the Gambian entrepreneurship ecosystem. The opportunities for access to local markets offered by GCCl and ASSERT through their trade fairs were valued by the entrepreneurs, while for international markets GCCl and GIEPA stood out. The events and networking opportunities offered by GCCl and GYCC contributed to the recognition of these institutions as key in the ecosystem. In terms of entrepreneurship training delivery, GCCl, GIEPA and SIG were recognized as the most efficient and trustworthy institutions. Finally, GCCl, GYCC and GYIN were recognized for their reach beyond GBA.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the service mapping, identified gaps and overlaps, network analysis and user experience analysis, this section summarizes the key high-level recommendations to support the growth and success of the Gambian entrepreneurship ecosystem.

These recommendations aim to support the ecosystem in achieving:



### Strong & Connected Support Institutions

Institutions currently active in the ecosystem could improve their performance in the following areas:

<p>Providing support or linkages to access international markets and scale up business</p>	<p>As part of their training programme, institutions should include support to access international markets. For example: connecting start-ups to international mentors, providing information on international requirements and supporting entrepreneurs to adapt their products and business plan for international markets.</p> <p>Not all institutions need to provide this type of support. Therefore, it is critical that institutions have a clear strategy on what they define as their domain area and on which institution in the ecosystem would be most adequate for this type of support.</p>
<p>Reaching Regions</p>	<p>There needs to be a better inclusion of entrepreneurs in the regions. Institutions can operate collaborating with satellite offices or through assigned focal points. Online reach strategies are also recommended given the high mobile penetration in the country. In some countries, online incubator programmes have proved to be highly effective.</p>
<p>Increase involvement of Academia</p>	<p>Despite having a reduced offer of academic institutions, there are unexplored opportunities for development, for example in creating specific platforms to foster alliances with the private sector or generating links between different University departments. Academia could help establish communication among different departments (for example, on how to add entrepreneurship modules to different programmes, such as Law). Leveraging the University's partnerships with other Universities to connect students and entrepreneurs with each other is another possible avenue.</p> <p>Moreover, academia can increase the collaboration by establishing strategic research projects to support start-ups and to build advanced curricula, start-up internships for students, and company visits.</p>

<p>Make programmes more gender inclusive</p>	<p>Women in The Gambia are still facing specific constraints to become entrepreneurs. The lack of role models as well as male-dominated societal perceptions discourage females to consider entrepreneurship as a career path. Despite having specific initiatives targeted to women, most institutions do not have targets to include female entrepreneurs in their programmes.</p> <p>Fostering female entrepreneurship has the potential to increase the level of diversity with regard to products, processes and target markets, among others. Empirical studies also suggest that women entrepreneurs focus more on social goals.</p> <p>Some initiatives to promote inclusiveness can be: to encourage and promote the creation of personal networks, to analyse and understand specific needs of women entrepreneurs, adapt existing services and set specific targets to reach more women owned businesses.</p>
<p>Identify Unique Value Proposition (UVP)</p>	<p>Institutions in the ecosystem need to find their niche area and focus. At the moment of the assessment, institutions are trying to act in several domains and this is leading to duplications and inefficiencies (see Section1 of this report).</p> <p>Working on a Unique Value Proposition for each institution would provide clarity on the role of each institution in the ecosystem. In addition, it can support the identification of partners inside the ecosystem but also to reach international support.</p>
<p>Measure results for continuous improvement</p>	<p>When institutions measure the results achieved under each support category they can easily define their UVP, responding to “what are we good at?” and “where do we succeed the most?”.</p> <p>Measuring results also provides relevant information achievement of inclusiveness targets and regional development targets.</p> <p>In addition, it provides data on the efficiency of the organization and can also be a source for success stories.</p>

*Quick win:* Sharing success stories of Gambian entrepreneurs succeeding internationally can be an immediate quick win to increase institutional visibility and to encourage more young men and women into the entrepreneurship journey.

### Network Growth

To ensure the network reaches its maximum potential, The Gambia needs to welcome new institutions in the ecosystem including:

<p>Incubators and Accelerator programmes</p>	<p>To ensure there is a hand-holding type of support available for entrepreneurs with strong and viable ideas ready to scale.</p>
<p>Tech Hubs / IT focused institutions</p>	<p>To promote innovation and technology related start-up ideas. Promoting the use and application of technology to business ideas is key to ensure the scalability of Gambian start-ups.</p>

Investment Networks	To link entrepreneurs to alternative funding sources and provide access to expert feedback from investors to improve start-up ideas.

*Quick win:* Further promotion of events and competitions. Engage more institutions in the organization and development of events and competitions. Make events a key aspect for collaboration with other institutions in the network to build trust and support mutual interests.

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## ANNEX I: INSTITUTIONS MAPPED

### Incubators

#### ***Start-up Incubator Gambia (SIG)***

SIG started in 2015 as a project funded by the US Embassy in Banjul and the Gambian-American Chamber of Commerce, which has since been phasing out funding. The incubator offers training programmes, including 6-month incubation programmes and 1-week entrepreneurship boot camps. As part of the incubation process, SIG provides seed funding and business development advice. In addition, the incubator comprises a co-working space with cubicles, computers, internet access, printing and a training room; and it is the organiser of the Gambian Youth Entrepreneurship Summit, a conference to advocate for the needs of entrepreneurs and start-ups. While SIG has run boot camps across the country, most of its clients are based in the Greater Banjul Area. The incubator is run by its Executive Director, together with the Programme Coordinator (in charge of organising trainings and incubation programmes) and the Business Support Coordinator (providing follow-up advisory to clients), as well as one administrative staff.

<https://www.startupincubator.gm/>

#### ***The Woman Boss***

As an initiative within Innovate Gambia, The Woman Boss is a center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, where women curate, collaborate, innovate, and grow. It provides women entrepreneurs with an inspiring community and an experiential process that catalyzes innovative thinking and enables them to successfully scale their businesses. The Woman Boss aims to provide an ecosystem of support for women that will foster intellectual capital and allow entrepreneurs to leverage different learning platforms. They provide leadership series for both corporate women and young girls to ensure that women have the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to be successful in their venture and careers.

<https://www.thewomanboss.com/>

### Co-working space

#### ***Jokkolabs Gambia***

Jokkolabs is a professional shared workspace with a community atmosphere. It is an open space, which welcomes entrepreneurs seeking to develop a network, meet new contributors, discuss practices and develop professional projects. It is designed to meet the needs of micro-businesses, self-employed workers, homeworkers, entrepreneurs, start-ups, digital economy workers, writers, designers and other new media or digital art professionals whose work do not fit in a classic office model.

<https://www.jokkolabs.net/banjul>

### Entrepreneurship Centre

#### ***The Global Youth Innovation Network Gambia Chapter (GYIN Gambia)***

GYIN Gambia is the Gambia chapter under GYIN, which is a global initiative. It is youth-led and entirely run and managed by young people. GYIN Gambia's key programmes include the Entrepreneurship, Leadership, and Information Technology (ELIT) Summer Camp, the Rural Youth Awards (RYA) and the GYIN Gambia mentoring programme. GYIN Gambia has a strong membership in rural areas of the country.

<https://gyingambia.gm/>

#### ***Bridging Gaps***

Bridging Gaps is a company providing support to businesses, particularly women-owned. It offers training and mentorship programmes and provides business development advice. Bridging Gaps organizes the Women's Leadership Forum, an annual event targeting women from diverse backgrounds to learn, inspire,

network, share insights and discuss how they can be better leaders. The company also periodically publishes a magazine on leading women.

<http://bridginggapsadvisory.com/>

### ***Buzz Women Gambia***

Buzz Women is a female leadership programme which encourages and assists women develop their entrepreneurial skills and self-empowerment. Buzz Women was founded in India in 2012 and is operational in Gambia since 2018. The organisation delivers training in financial management, entrepreneurship skills and leadership skills to low income women.

<http://buzzwomen.org/gambia/>

### ***Empretec Gambia***

Empretec is a global integrated capacity-building programme of UNCTAD built around an entrepreneurship training methodology focusing on entrepreneurship mind-set for aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs. In addition, to the training programme itself, Empretec Gambia offers business development support to selected entrepreneurs who graduated from the training. Empretec has run trainings in English and three local languages (Wolof, Mandinka and Fula) across the country, as well as in its training room in Bakau. The Empretec programme in The Gambia is anchored at GIEPA and started in September 2014. It is run by GIEPA staff together and certified Empretec trainers and BDS advisors.

<http://www.empretecgambia.gm/>

### ***Start-up Grind Banjul***

Start-up Grind Banjul is the Gambia chapter under Start-up Grind, which is a global community for entrepreneurs powered by Google for Startups. It organizes events featuring successful local founders, innovators, educators and investors who share lessons learned on the road to building great companies.

<https://www.startupgrind.com/banjul/>

### ***YEP Africa***

The YEP foundation was registered in 2008 under Dutch law and is responsible for the development of youth empowerment learning centres in Sub-Saharan countries and an investment fund in The Netherlands for mini businesses in Africa. YEP Africa runs Empowerment Learning Centres from where it organises empowerment and entrepreneurship training programs, awareness sessions around the backway and a service club for young entrepreneurs.

<https://www.yepafrica.org/>

### **Government body**

#### ***The National Centre for Arts and Cultures (NCAC)***

The National Centre for Arts and Culture (NCAC) is a semi- autonomous institution established by an Act of Parliament in December 1989 to preserve, promote and develop Gambian arts and culture. NCAC's key functions include advising the Minister on matters of policy relating to Arts and Culture; promoting and developing Gambian arts and culture; implementing, monitoring, and co-ordinating artistic and cultural programmes in The Gambia; promoting artistic and cultural co-operation at regional and international levels; and encouraging, at the local level, the emergence of groups and institutions interested in the promotion of arts and culture.

<https://www.ncac.gm/>

#### ***The National Enterprise Development Initiative (NEDI)***

NEDI was established in 2004 under the Office of the Vice President and institutionalised in 2013 through the National Enterprise Development Initiative Act 2013. It now operates under the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) with the aim to promote entrepreneurship, especially among women and youth, and to

support MSMEs including in the informal sector. NEDI offers training programmes, mostly introductory programmes on entrepreneurship skills and on how to develop a business plan, as well as loans and advisory for women and youth entrepreneurs, and the NEDI Business Hub, a space in the NEDI office with computers and a printer for entrepreneurs to use. NEDI is run by its General Manager and two core staff focusing on programmes and finance.

<https://moys.gov.gm/nedi>

### **Industry Associations, Chambers, and Trade Promotion Organisations**

#### ***The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI)***

GCCI is the main chamber of commerce in The Gambia. Founded in 1967, GCCI is a non-profit organisation that aims to facilitate business development, promote trade, and advance the interests of Gambia business nationally and internationally. It offers business development and trade-related advisory to companies with trade and investment interests in The Gambia. GCCI has over 700 members to whom it provides business information and networking opportunities. In addition, GCCI is the organiser of Trade Fair Gambia International (TFGI) – the country’s main trade fair. So far, GCCI membership has been considered most relevant for more mature businesses, given its membership fees. Recently, GCCI partnered with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in a training of trainers on the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) methodology, aiming to develop a new offering for early-stage entrepreneurs including launch of a start-up Association. GCCI, together with GIEPA is one of the most established business support organisations in the country and is host to a number of business councils between The Gambia and other countries GCCI’s leadership team consist of its CEO, its Director for Business Development and Projects, its Manager for Corporate Services and its Manager for Business Development and Projects.

<https://www.gcci.gm/>

#### ***The Gambia Youth Chamber of Commerce (GYCC)***

In October 2016, GYCC was established with support from NEDI. GYCC aims to act as the ‘voice of youth entrepreneurs’ and to facilitate an enabling environment for youth-led businesses, which they consider more traditional business support organisations to not effectively support. It provides networking opportunities for young entrepreneurs, including through several very active WhatsApp groups, and advocates for youth representation in decision-making on business matters and in market opportunities. GYCC has organised several Regional Youth Exhibitions – small trade fairs for young entrepreneurs in rural areas – and in 2018 organised its first national trade fair, the Youth Agribusiness and Tourism Expo (YATE). Since its inception, GYCC has significantly increased its membership, including in rural parts of the country. A Board and a management team, the latter being headed by its CEO, run the organisation.

<https://www.gycc.gm/>

#### ***The Gambia Women’s Chamber of Commerce (GWCC)***

GWCC was created in 2019 with the aim to provide opportunities and visibility for women in business; and to mentor and promote women-owned businesses, and provide networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs. GWCC has a board and its leadership consists of the President and CEO.

<https://mailchi.mp/e67286c8e4fa/gwcc>

#### ***The Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA)***

GIEPA is a national agency established by an Act of Parliament in July 2010 with the aim to promote and facilitate private sector investments in The Gambia. Its mandate includes the promotion and development of MSMEs and to drive job creation in the country. GIEPA aims to be investors’ first point of contact, providing investor–facilitation services and information on the procedures for setting up businesses and creating business networks. Other key functions include export promotion, developing and regulating The Gambia’s only business park, and formulating investment promotion, export and enterprise development strategies. Together with GCCI, GIEPA is one of the most established business support organisations in the country. It is headed by its Board of Directors and its CEO. Through its Enterprise Support team, GIEPA also serves as the anchor and implementing agency of Empretec Gambia.



[www.giepa.gm](http://www.giepa.gm)

### ***The Association of Small-Scale Enterprises in (Responsible) Tourism (ASSE(R)T)***

ASSET was established in 2000 in order to bring together, advocate for, and promote a large number of small enterprises in the tourism sector of The Gambia. Since then, ASSET has attracted more than eighty members and has become an important stakeholder in the country's tourism sector. In 2018, it added the word 'responsible' to its name and advocates for more responsible tourism practices in the country to minimise adverse impacts of tourism and maximise benefits for local people and their communities. The association runs The Gambia's Good Market, a monthly market showcasing the products of young entrepreneurs.

<http://www.asset-gambia.com/>

### ***ITAG***

Established in 2004, ITAG is an association of professionals within the ICT ecosystem of The Gambia seeking to promote the growth, development and use of ICT in the country. The organization is operated through its Executive Committee, and Advisory committee in consultation with its membership base. The organization's membership cuts across a wide spectrum of professionals covering all aspects of ICT. ITAG's activities pursuant to its objectives include advocacy, training and networking. The Ministry of Information Communication and Infrastructure has recognized ITAG as the sole ICT professional organization in The Gambia.

<http://www.itag.gm/>

### **Academia**

#### ***University of the Gambia***

The university was established by an Act of the National Assembly of The Gambia in 1999 with the mission to be the powerhouse for the transformation of The Gambia through the creation, application, and transfer of knowledge. It receives guidance from a Governing Council, which is composed of a Chairperson and selected members to support the activities of the University. It offers a programme in Business and public administration.

<https://www.utg.edu.gm/>

#### ***Management Development Institute***

The Management Development Institute (MDI) was established in 1982 by an Act of Parliament and is a third-level educational institute in The Gambia. It specialises in management training, consultancy and research to train and equip officials in the public and private sectors and in non-governmental (NGOs) with the necessary skills and attitudes to realize the numerous national development aspirations and blueprints. MDI has seven departments: Banking and Finance, Business Studies, Diplomacy & Negotiations, Financial Management and Accounting, Gender and Development Studies, Information and Communication Technology, and Management and Policy Analysis.

<https://www.mdi.edu.gm/>

### **Investors**

#### ***Supersonicz "The Micro-Finance"***

Supersonicz "The Micro-finance" is a micro-finance institution licensed by the Central Bank of The Gambia to provide micro-finance services, including deposit mobilization and the granting of credits to the general public, especially those without access to financial services. Supersonicz's focus is to promote financial inclusion and stimulate sustainable economic development amongst the economically active poor. Supersonicz "The Microfinance" is part of Supersonicz Group, which was established in 2009 as an authorized and licensed money transfer business in United Kingdom. The institution operates in The Gambia since 2013.

<http://supersonicz.gm/>

### **Reliance**

Reliance Financial Services Company Limited (Reliance) is a non-bank financial institution, founded in 2006 by three Gambian professionals. The institution is licensed and regulated by the Central Bank. Reliance's main objective is to provide financial services products and services to the average Gambian especially those at the bottom of the economic pyramid. The institutions offers deposit and credit loan products to micro, small and medium businesses as well as private individuals.

<http://www.rfs.gm/>

### **Events and Pitching competitions**

#### **TAFCon**

TAFCON is a conference and networking event hosted annually in The Gambia as part of TAF Africa Global's Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy. The first edition was launched in December 2015. This has continued to date, focusing on issues of opportunity, policy shaping and decision making. It discusses Developmental Challenges, Business and Politics. Today, it covers almost all topics, from Investments, National Youth Development and Disabilities. It is against this backdrop that this networking event is being organized, to support The Gambia in its endeavors and help communities in The Gambia and beyond.

<https://www.tafcon.org/default>

#### **Entrepreneurship World Cup**

Entrepreneurship World Cup is a pitch competition organized by the Misk Global Forum, which is a flagship platform of the Misk Foundation, a non-profit philanthropic foundation, established to discover, develop, and empower the youth to become active participants in the knowledge economy. The Entrepreneurship World Cup gathers entrepreneurs from over 100 countries at the idea-stage, early-stage, growth-stage and beyond. The competition offers education and virtual training opportunities to the startups to sharpen their skills in various areas.

<https://entrepreneurshipworldcup.com/>

#### **Seedstars Gambia**

Seedstars World is a Switzerland based start-up competition that takes place in emerging markets. It gives the startups a training, identifies and selects the best seed-stage start-up from each country and awards the winners with an opportunity to compete in a regional event in order to qualify for the Seedstars Global Summit that annually takes place in Switzerland.

<https://www.seedstarsworld.com/event/seedstars-banjul-2019>

### **New schemes**

Several projects and institutions in The Gambia are working on potential new funds for entrepreneurs, including GCCI and GIEPA, who, for some time, have been speaking about creating a Gambia Entrepreneurship Fund and/or a fund for women entrepreneurs.

#### **The Gambia Angel Investors Network (GAIN)**

A scoping of equity-based funding opportunities conducted by YEP found that international and local investors are interested in investing in Gambian businesses, but lack information about opportunities and/or confidence in local institutions to screen potential deals. YEP, in partnership with GIEPA and with the support of the African Business Angels Network, is in the process of setting up the first Angels Network of The Gambia. The initiative aims at supporting high-growth enterprises that are too big for the Mini-Grants or Mini-Loans schemes.

Some of the partners under Tekki Fii will be offering access to finance as well.

## ANNEX II: TECHNICAL ANNEX

### Defining the institutions within the entrepreneurship ecosystem

#### Incubators

- Primarily focuses on helping early stage start-ups become viable and scalable
- Provides an array of support services and infrastructure through a systematic process
- Quality controlled intake of start-ups with regular time bound exits
- Program duration generally between 1 year and 3 years

#### Accelerators

- Can support early and growth stage start-ups
- Often invests financially in the start-ups
- Fixed-term, cohort-based program that catalyses start-up growth through intensive mentoring, networking, and educational services
- Quality controlled, often highly competitive, intake of start-ups with regular time bound exits
- Program duration generally between 1 week and 6 months

#### Young entrepreneur associations

- Volunteer-driven non-profit organizations promoting youth entrepreneurship
- Provides networking and peer-to-peer exchange opportunities
- Lobbying and providing recommendations to policymakers on issues related to youth entrepreneurship

#### Youth chambers of commerce

- Membership organization for young entrepreneurs to have a voice and address specific concerns of youth-owned enterprises
- Often provides business development services to young entrepreneurs

#### Co-working spaces

- A business services provision model that involves individuals working independently or collaboratively in shared office space

#### Venture capitalists

- A venture capitalist is an investor who either provides capital to start-up ventures or supports small companies that wish to expand but do not have access to equities markets.

#### Angel investors

- Angel investors are also called informal investors, angel funders, private investors, seed investors or business angels. These are affluent individuals who inject capital for start-ups in exchange for ownership equity or convertible debt.

#### Events and business competition organizers

- Pitching competition, bootcamps, business plan competitions, hackathons, B2B events, fairs and exhibitions are all different types of events and competitions for young entrepreneurs to ideate and scale up. Example events/competitions include Startup Weekend and Seedstars.

## Defining the stages of entrepreneurship

### Idea Stage

The business idea requires testing and research is conducted to determine whether it is worth pursuing.

### Start-up Stage

The business entity is established legally and the focus lies on developing the products/services, adjusting the business model and understanding the customer's expectations.

### Early Stage

The business is generating revenue and adding new customers, with a focus on reaching breakeven cash flow and further fine-tuning the business model.

### Later

The business has demonstrated viability, with a well-known product/service and strong market presence.

### Growth

The business is thriving and established in the industry and focuses on expansion, particularly into new markets.

### Mature

The business is on top of its industry, often with two choices, either push for further expansion or exit the business.

## ITC Network Analysis Methodology

### Questions to Institutions

#### Ecosystem roles and linkages

1. What sort of business do you offer services to?
2. Do you have a specific focus on young entrepreneurs, aged 18-35 years old?
3. What's the average age of the entrepreneurs your organization support?
4. Which business lifecycle stage does your organization target (e.g. incubation support, business acceleration support, export support)?
5. How many businesses are you working with?
6. What services do you offer?
7. What sectors do you cover?
8. What geographic regions inside your country do you work with?
9. Where are your office locations?
10. Do you have a focus on international markets? Who do you partner with for delivery?
11. What is your current budget and staff numbers?
12. Who provides your funding? Do entrepreneurs/clients need to pay a fee for their services?
13. Who do you have to ask for permission to change your strategy?
14. Who is your biggest competitor?
15. Of the following organisations, who do you have formal connections with?
16. Of the following organisations, who do you give (funding) to?
17. Of the following organisations, who do you give (information) to?
18. Of the following organisations, who are your (service delivery partners) and in what areas?

19. Considering this list, is there any other organisations that you give funding, information or coordinate for service delivery that is not on this list?
20. Considering the network as a whole, do you sense any overall trends in the way it operates? (should be free text but if prompting necessary: eg more or less silos with groups of institutions becoming more or less apparent, more or less concentration of power in a single institution etc)

#### Ecosystem Actors

21. From your perspective, which are the most relevant actors in the local entrepreneurial ecosystem in terms of influencing entrepreneurial success in a significant way? What do they do?
22. Do you think there are important players or services missing in the entrepreneurial ecosystem?
23. In your experience, which are the main barriers to effective interaction between actors in the local entrepreneurship ecosystem?
24. How would you rate the local entrepreneurial ecosystem's international connectedness?

#### Policy and regulatory environment

25. How would you assess the general regulatory environment for entrepreneurs (government effectiveness, etc.)? What would you like to change?
26. Does your government have a policy in place/ government plan/strategy to support young entrepreneurs? How did your institution participate/contribute to that?

### Questions to Entrepreneurs

Out of the following institutions (entrepreneurship support organizations in the sample):

1. Which ones have you heard of?
2. Which ones do you contact weekly / several times per year / annually?
3. What is the nature of the connection? What do you receive from them? What do you give in return?
4. Which 3 have the most impact on the success of your business? Why?
5. Which 5 would you consider the most trustworthy and efficient? Why?

Of even more value is an informal discussion about the ways in which the network supports and constrains business. To get the conversation started you could pose a business challenge, and ask the network user:

- who they would approach for help
- how they would interact with the support network to resolve the problem.

Examples of possible business challenges are:

1. You have a new business idea and want to test its viability. What are the steps involved in moving from idea stage to start-up stage? How do you test the viability of your business idea? How and from whom do you attract initial funding to turn your idea into reality?
2. You are beginning to receive enquiries from potential customers from around the world and you would like to internationalize your business activities. What would be your internationalization strategy? Who can support you in following this strategy?
3. You would like to build your knowledge about latest technologies relevant to your business sector. How do you ensure that your business is keeping up with current trends and technologies? Where do you get this information and access training opportunities?

