



Noteworthy experiences in digitalisation by employers' and business membership organisations (EBMOs) in Latin America

Nota Técnica: Ecuador

Digital Challenge

This Technical Note forms part of a collection of noteworthy experiences in digitalisation by employers' and business membership organisations (EBMOs) in Latin America, identified during research carried out by the ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) for the production of the 2022 Regional Report "Where do Business Organisations Stand on the Road to Digitalisation? A look at Latin America". The aim of these noteworthy experiences is to inspire other EBMOs in their transition towards digitalisation. We would like to thank the ILO's South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) programme for its support in drafting this document, which will serve as a basis for an exchange of knowledge among EBMOs around the world.

► What is South-South and Triangular Cooperation?

South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) can be defined as collaboration between two or more developing countries, which frequently have the support of traditional partners, guided by the principles of solidarity and unconditionality, the aim of which is to put into practice inclusive and distributive development models governed by demand. SSTC complements North-South cooperation with joint action to encourage development opportunities. As can be seen from the Sustainable Development Programme 2030, SSTC has become an

important means of international cooperation for development and an essential item in the United Nations toolbox.

► Summary

Cámara de Industrias de Guayaquil (Guayaquil chamber of industries - CIG) has a long history, with a notable ability to bring different actors together to collaborate on projects that are relevant both to the city and the country at large. One of these projects was the Digital Challenge, launched together with the Alianza para el Emprendimiento e Innovación (alliance for entrepreneurship and innovation - AEI).



► What services does it offer?

Digital Challenge has the following objectives:

1. To encourage entrepreneurship and innovation in Ecuador;
2. To accelerate and recognise the development of digital start-ups connected to Ecuadoran industry;
3. To promote and strengthen open innovation strategies in corporations, which bring together talents and innovative solutions, and
4. To solve the problems/needs of the different categories of Industria 4.0. Participating start-ups will take part in "Pitch Day", a form of competition/event where they will be evaluated by a panel of distinguished business personalities. The three finalists will receive support at different levels, consisting of mentor sessions, training, and promotion/advertising for their businesses, from CIG and its allies and joint creators of the project (AEI, Banco del Pacifico).

► How to join?

The initiative is nationwide, so any entrepreneur can take part. Anyone interested is free to apply, but the start-up must be a digital business that is "at least in the prototype stage, with a certain level of testing in the market and a team of competent professionals who are committed to the project". Start-ups must also adhere to and apply the digital categories of the challenge. In the second of these events, in January 2021, the categories were: a) new technologies, b) automation and robotics, c) agribusiness, and d) production processes. These businesses are then evaluated by a technical com-

mittee, which will choose ten projects to take part in Pitch Day.

► Why these projects?

Digital Challenge aims to create a space where digital innovation, entrepreneurship, competitiveness, and new businesses are encouraged. The initiative also motivates an acceleration of digital entrepreneurship with Industria 4.0 in mind.

► How was it developed?

The initiative was organised by CIG and the Alliance for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (AEI). The project is managed by a business incubator called Innobis, which also provided technical support in the creation and development of the project. The project also has a number of allies in government (the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation), universities, businesses and finance companies, acting as sponsors.

► What impact has it had?

The second edition, which ended in May 2021, attracted 172 applicants with 80 projects analysed. The three winners received mentoring, training, and promotion/advertising help for their businesses. The first-placed business received seed capital of USD 2,000 provided by Banco del Pacifico.