

For immediate release



United States Department of State

Catapulting Central American Entrepreneurs with Manufacturing Enterprises into US Markets

US State Department, America's Small Business Development Center, and Other Partners Name Finalists for 2017 Cohort of the La Idea Incubator Program

Funded and initiated by the United States Department of State, the La Idea Incubator Program is a powerful initiative focused on strengthening entrepreneurship and job creation across Central America. The program is a collaboration between America's Small Business Development Center, International Business Innovation Association, CENPROMYPE, University Texas San Antonio. The La Idea Incubator Program especially encourages trade and commerce between Central America and the United States.

The program provides entrepreneurs from Central American countries access to advanced incubation services in the United States, resulting in investment opportunities, customer interactions, mentorship from subject matter experts, and additional guidance for successful business launches. The La Idea Incubator Program, which selects its participants through a highly competitive vetting process, provides a 5 day "boot camp" for entrepreneurs from Central America to explore and/or develop a strategy for entry into the US business market. At the conclusion of the 5 days in the US, participants will receive up to six months of additional coaching and mentoring support virtually, as they return to their home nations to continue building their businesses.

The program encompasses three separate, industry themed cohorts: manufacturing, services, and food & farm. The first participants (10) will be a part of the manufacturing cohort, which starts November 13th, 2017 and will be hosted at InBIA member and Soft Landing designee, Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute. This cohort will dive into pivotal manufacturing topics such as the use of advanced manufacturing platforms,

lean and six sigma tools, supply chain management/problem coaching, and more, all while learning from a variety of experts within the Atlanta-region.

The US State Department and partners are proud to announce the 2017 La Idea Incubator Program Manufacturing Cohort Finalists:

- Denim Project SA de CV, Founder: Luis Roberto Ticas Valdivieso, Location: El Salvador
The Denim Project SA de CV offers the first product of its kind in the world: a line of decorated, custom jeans made out of recycled plastic bottles
- The Print Capital, Founder: Walter José Ferrufino Alvarez, Location: El Salvador
The Print Capital offers a variety of fabrics for customized screen printed t-shirts. The company utilizes state of the art screen printing presses, which allow up to 5,000 screen prints per day at their facility.
www.theprintcapital.com
- Tu'Kan Manufacturers Ltd., Stakeholder: Ravi Nandwani, Location: Belize
Tu'Kan is one of the leading producers of plastic containers and tableware in the continent of Central America.
- Makalo Swimwear, Co-Founder: Valeria Maroto González, Location: Costa Rica
Makalo is a sustainable brand from the textiles the company uses to their manufacturing process – all to create beautiful swimwear, resort wear and accessories.
<http://makaloswimwear.com/>
- Curvas Plus Size Boutique, Owner: Blanca González Benavides, Location: Nicaragua
Curvas offers a product portfolio that has a wide variety in clothing sizes XL up to 6XL for women and men.
<https://curvasplussizeboutique.online.com.ni/>
- Artisan's Handbag, Founder: Ruben Dario Falconett Herrera, Location: Panama
Artisan's Handbag designs and manufactures elegant leather fashion goods including wallets, handbags, bracelets and necklaces.
<http://www.artisanhandbag.com/>
- Medical Herbal S.A., General Manager: Maria Jesús San Silvestre Chacón, Location: Costa Rica
Medical Herbal is a large producer in Costa Rica of vitamins and supplements for nutrition.
<http://www.medicalherbalcr.com/>
- Romboide, Founder: Fernando Antonio Esau Orozco, Location: Guatemala

Romboide is a growing brand of street fashion wear for young men age 18 – 25 years old.

<https://www.instagram.com/romboidewear/>

- AVARSA, Founder: Augusto Vargas Salas, Location: Costa Rica
AVARSA/ZGS Plastic Solutions is a plastic mold injection production house capable of supplying turn-key services for large batch manufacturing of plastic components in a wide variety of applications/markets.
<http://zgs-plastics.com/solutions>
- Raquel Arana: Bags That Tell a Story, Founder: Raquel Arana, Location: El Salvador
Raquel Arana's products are unique handbags available in over 40 distinctive prints.
<https://www.facebook.com/aranaraque/>

Should any of the above companies be unable to attend the mandatory bootcamp of the La Idea Incubator Program, the following companies/entrepreneurs have been selected as alternates (in the following order):

- Sublime S.A. de C.V., Founder: Karla Celina Hernandez Saavedra, Location: El Salvador
Sublime designs and manufactures fun, colorful home good products that make unique gifts.
<https://sondosdesignsv.wixsite.com/sondosdesignsv>
- Productos Escalante, Owner: Antonio Escalante Herrera, Location: Costa Rica
Productos Escalante is the premiere harness manufacturer for supplying the zipline tourist experiences throughout Central America.
www.escalantecr.com
- Disenos Carlota Robles, Stakeholder: Carlota Yasminy Robles Gramajo, Location: Guatemala
Carlota Robles produces a large array of handbags and other accessories for men and women.
www.carlotarobles.com

About the La Idea Incubator Program/Small Business Network of the Americas

For more information on this initiative, please visit: <https://inbia.org/la-idea-incubator-program/>

About InBIA

International Business Innovation Association is a global nonprofit organization that has welcomed and supported entrepreneurial organizations for over 30 years. Serving a diverse group of entrepreneurship centers, program managers, directors and policymakers, we help guide, mentor and develop sustainable entrepreneur support programs in every industry and demographic around the globe. Our goal is to enrich the entire ecosystem by providing industry resources, education, events and global programming to help our members better serve the needs of their unique communities and regions. For more information on InBIA, please visit www.inbia.org