

UPGRADE INNOLAB

Unlocking Climate and Green Capital for Entrepreneurs

Building impact-driven, profitable, and scalable homegrown Filipino business ventures.

circulab@upgradeinnolab.com

About Me

Entrepreneur, Incubation Program Designer & Community Builder



- President of Upgrade Innolab Incorporated;
- Program Leader of Circulab Accelerator Program
- Lead at UP System Acceleration Program (UP Diliman)
- Moderator of Davao Investors Network
- Board of Trustee at IDEAS Davao
- Convener of the 2026 Davao Startup Week

Who We Are?

We are Upgrade Innolab, a **business incubator and accelerator** that supports early-stage homegrown Filipino founders to launch and accelerate their businesses.
We are focused on providing startups with **mentorship, business development support, technical assistance, market access, and funding**.

100+Startups Incubated

70M Funding Access Facilitated

3,500+Job Opportunities Created

Our business incubation and acceleration programs have been supported and funded by our partners:

Who we are?



*We provide i**ncubation & Acceleration programs** support to startup companies & MSMEs*



*We help **government and industry build**, **train** and **skill up** their business incubation team*



*We c**onnect founders to possible funding opportunities** through our network of angel and VC investors*



*We **help private companies** improve in strategic planning, marketing, leadership, productivity, policy development & ESG.*

Our Program Partners

Capacity Building

Sustina

EXPERTISE FRANCE
GROUPE AFD

GGGI

Value Chain Sprint Lab

UPGRADE
INNOLAB

Technical Support

Market Access

Funded by
the European Union

dti
PHILIPPINES

Grants & Investment

Quest
VENTURES

GOBI PARTNERS

Access to CE Network

Global
Gateway

ACEBA

THE EMPIRICAL BUSINESS CASE

Why Green Finance Matters for PH MSMEs



99.5%

of PH establishments are MSMEs (DTI, 2023)



63%

of local employment (DTI, 2023), so the green transition is key to national resilience

7.6%

GDP at risk by 2030

Climate damages threaten up to 7.6% of PH GDP by 2030 without adaptation action.

World Bank Group (2022)

USD 168.4B

Capital gap

National climate finance target required to meet **Nationally Determined Contribution** goals through 2030.

UN Climate Change / CCC (2021)

BSP 1085

Banking mandate

BSP Circular 1085 requires banks to embed sustainability and climate risk in governance and risk management.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (2020)

Sector Opportunities Backed by Data

36.9%
Power industry emissions

Rooftop solar cuts grid dependency and operating costs by 25–40%.
NICCDIES GHG Inventory (2020)

19.5%
Agriculture share of GHG

Solar cold storage cuts up to 40% of post-harvest spoilage.
Philippine Climate Change Commission (2021)

USD 890M
Annual plastic loss

EPR Law compliance solutions recover lost plastic value.
World Bank Plastics Roadmap (2024)



Philippine Green Financing Ecosystem

State Lenders & Taxonomies

Landbank: Sustainable Finance Framework (2023)
DBP: SEED Program for eco-industrial projects
BSP SFTG: National sustainable finance taxonomy

Commercial Green Credit

BPI: Sustainable Development Finance
BDO: Sustainable Energy Finance (SEF)
Terms: Concessional rates & technical validation

Impact Funds & Venture

ADB Ventures & Climate: early-stage equity
Focus: scalable clean technologies
Structure: equity and technical assistance

Multilateral Facilities

GCF / Adaptation Fund: $40M direct access via DOF
UNIDO & USAID: clean tech grants
Use: non-dilutive funding for feasibility tests

SUBTOPIC 3: READINESS CRITERIA

The 3 Pillars of Investment Readiness

01

Business Readiness

Validated market demand, SEC/DTI compliance, and resilient supply chain logistics.

Demand + compliance

02

Financial Readiness

Audited statements (BIR), strong **Debt Service Coverage Ratio** (>1.25x), and sound capital structures.

DSCR > 1.25x

03

Impact Readiness

BSP **Sustainable Finance Technical Group**-aligned metrics: CO2e reduced, energy efficiency, or waste diverted.

BSP SFTG metrics

FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

Financial Prerequisites for Philippine MSMEs

3-Year Audited Financials

Ex: BIR ITR and financial records required by local institutional lenders.

Bankable Financial Model

Detailed 5-year cash flow projections showing clear payback periods.

Clean Regulatory Standing

DTI/SEC registration, LGU Mayor's Permit, and DENR ECC clearances.

MENTOR INSIGHT

Lenders do not finance ideas; they finance auditability and risk governance.

Informal accounting is a leading barrier to green-loan approval for MSMEs (ADB, 2025).

LOCAL USE CASE & EVIDENCE

Green Transition in Transport & Agri



Transport sector Challenges

E-jeepneys cost ₱1.6M–₱3.0M ($28k–$50k), putting bank loans out of reach for single-vehicle owners.

Green Finance Institute Report (2025)

Blending solution

Cooperative aggregation; Landbank / DBP blended debt reduces equity constraints.

Agri-cold chain impact

Off-grid solar cold storage extends shelf life, saving farmers up to ₱150,000/ha a year.

Pitching Climate Tech to Investors

01



Lead with Financial ROI

Show cost reductions and IRR first. Green impact is the risk-mitigation multiplier.

02



Prove Local Resilience

Show your technology withstands Philippine typhoons and grid instability.

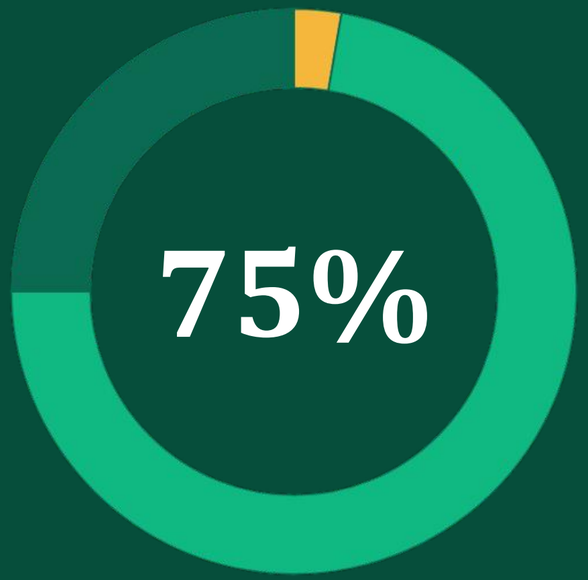
03



Align with Taxonomies

Map metrics to BSP SFTG guidelines for seamless bank due diligence.

Quantifying Green Impact for Investors



About 3%
unconditional

About 72%
needs finance & tech support

Philippine NDC: GHG reduction and avoidance below business-as-usual, cumulative 2020–2030.

UNFCCC / Climate Change Commission PH (2021)

kWh clean energy generated
Solar, efficiency and clean-power projects

tCO2e avoided
The common currency across green sectors

Tons of waste diverted
Recycling, EPR compliance, circular solutions

Core Pitch Story

1 Hook

CORE FOCUS

Local climate pain point

EVIDENCE REQUIRED

Validated market cost data

2 Innovation

CORE FOCUS

Green tech solution

EVIDENCE REQUIRED

Technical efficiency data

3 Financials

CORE FOCUS

Economics & payback

EVIDENCE REQUIRED

Audited DSCR & margin proof

4 Impact

CORE FOCUS

BSP SFTG metrics

EVIDENCE REQUIRED

Third-party verified CO2/kWh

5 Ask

CORE FOCUS

Use of funds & debt/equity

EVIDENCE REQUIRED

Clear deployment schedule

Global Gateway

Funded by the European Union

Expertise France

Expertise France is a public agency and the interministerial actor in international technical Cooperation.

As the **second largest agency in Europe**, it designs and implements projects that sustainably strengthen public policies in developing and emerging countries.

Governance, security, climate, health, education…
It operates in key areas of development and contributes alongside its partners to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

EXPERTISE FRANCE
GROUPE AFD

Implemented by:

EXPERTISE FRANCE GROUPE AFD

For a ***world in common.***

In cooperation with:

UPGRADE INNOLAB

Global Gateway

Funded by the European Union

European Union-Philippines Green Economy Partnership Green Economy Partnership

This partnership **aims to support the Philippines' transition towards a green economy**, including ***circular economy (CE),*** reducing waste & plastic, as well as to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy deployment to support climate change mitigation.

Upgrade Innolab is supported under:

Green Business

Infrastructure

Finance

€60 Million

(Php 3.67 Billion)

Total primary funding provided by the European Union to foster Philippine Circular Economy.

This initiative is implemented by Expertise France, co-led by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and co-implemented with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)

Implemented by:

EXPERTISE FRANCE GROUPE AFD

GGGI

In cooperation with:

UPGRADE INNOLAB

Global Gateway

Funded by the European Union

CIRCULAB

Accelerating Circular Innovation from the Ground Up

Building impact-driven, profitable, and scalable homegrown Filipino business ventures.

circulab@upgradeinnolab.com

EXPERTISE FRANCE
GROUPE AFD

GGGI

UPGRADE INNOLAB



Global Gateway

Funded by the European Union

CIRCULAB

Accelerating Circular Innovation from the Ground Up

Implemented by:

EXPERTISE FRANCE
GROUPE AFD

GGGI

In cooperation with:

UPGRADE INNOLAB

Global Gateway

Funded by the European Union

dti PHILIPPINES

Circulab accelerates high-potential circular startups and MSMEs through:

CIRCULAB

- Grant funding support
- Tailored mentorship and capacity-building
- Value chain and supply chain activation
- Technical validation and ESG integration
- Market access and investor readiness support

Circulab accelerates high-potential circular startups and MSMEs in **Mindanao**.

Implemented by:

EXPERTISE FRANCE GROUPE AFD

GGGI

In cooperation with:

UPGRADE INNOLAB

Global Gateway

Funded by the European Union

Program Design

The program aligns with:

OBJECTIVES	BENEFICIARIES	INTERVENTION	OUTPUTS	OUTCOME
Accelerate 10 startups/ MSMEs	Early-Stage CE Startups and MSMEs	Business Incubation & Acceleration	• **10 Startups/MSMEs Accelerated** • **1 Circular Innovation Playbook & Hub** • **Created 1,000 Green Jobs** • **Co-Developed 10 Pilots** • **Co-developed a CE Hub in Mindanao** • **Market Access & Investment provided** • **Capacitate at least 20 HEIs in CE Business Incubation.**	**CIRCULAB** aims to contribute to climate –resilient, inclusive, and regenerative development in the Philippines by positioning Mindanao as a hub for circular innovation.
Strengthen circular value chains	Women-led, Youth-led, and IP-led Enterprises	Value Chain Dev, & Technical Support		
Generate 1,000 Green Jobs	LGU and Cooperatives	Market Access & Seed Funding		
Partner with 10 communities/LGUs as Sustainability Hubs	Academic Institutions and Technical Partners	CE Stakeholders CapDev, & Roadmapping		

Figure 1: Program Design

Implemented by:

EXPERTISE FRANCE GROUPE AFD

GGGI

In cooperation with:

UPGRADE INNOLAB

Global Gateway

Funded by the European Union

Startup/MSME Transformation Map

One-on-one Mentoring & Portfolio Management

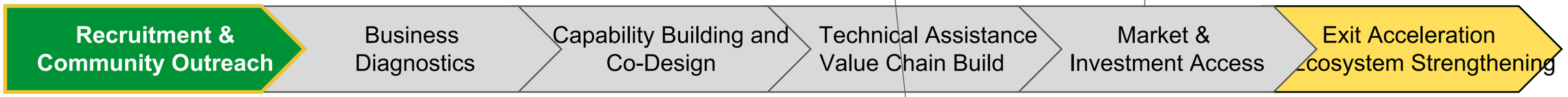


Figure 2: Startup/MSME Transformation Map

Exit Acceleration & Ecosystem Strengthening

- Increase revenue by at least 10 percent
- Develop Environmental Social Governance (ESG) manuals/policy for the enterprise
- Access funding/investment
- Increase speed in customer acquisition by 10 percent.
- Developed value chain roadmap per enterprise with identified local stakeholders

Implemented by:

EXPERTISE FRANCE GROUPE AFD

GGGI

In cooperation with:

UPGRADE INNOLAB

Community Transformation Map

Synergies with DOST (Department of Science, Technology, and Innovation) Roadmap with the identified Regions

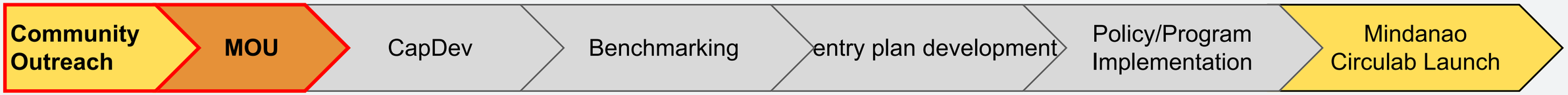


Figure 3. Transformation Map for LGU, HEIs, Incubators, and Community Groups

Mindanao Circulab Launch

- Green Startups Supportive Ordinance
- LGU developed programs, activities, and projects aligned with the Green Sector.
- Identified local champions among the partner LGUs and Communities.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Accelerating Circular Innovation from the Ground Up

Circulab is a venture-scaling accelerator turning circular economy solutions into scalable businesses that create environmental and social impact.

Deadline of submission: 31 December 2026

CIRCULAB | ACCELERATION PROGRAM

What will the selected ventures receive?



Up to

₱1,300,000 in funding support

- Structured acceleration programming
- Value chain & supply chain activation
- Technical validation & ESG integration
- Market access and investor readiness support

CIRCULAB | ACCELERATION PROGRAM

Eligibility Requirements



- DTI or SEC registered
- Valid business permits (Mayor's permit and other pertinent regulatory requirements)
- Have at least one full-time founder actively managing the venture
- Have a working and validated Minimum Viable Product with an identified market
- Operating within the Circular Economy
- Based in Region 10, 11, 12, 13, or BARMM

CIRCULAB | ACCELERATION PROGRAM

Proposals will be accepted until:
December 31, 2026

Circulab Guidelines

Scan the QR code to access

FULL GUIDELINES, ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND TEMPLATES

Submission Form

Scan the QR code to access

CIRCULAB ONLINE SUBMISSION FORM



CIRCULAB | ACCELERATION PROGRAM

Global Gateway

Funded by the European Union

Circulab Acceleration Program

Espoir School of Life Inc. – EcoUplift

A Siargao-based **sustainable materia**l provider that converts local agricultural discards into functional products to **replace single-use plastics.**

Anitu Forest Food Processing

A chocolate enterprise in Bukidnon that **processes local cacao by-products into high-value secondary raw materials** such as juice, tea and vinegar.

Lesstics Inc.

A green construction manufacturer that u**pcycles discarded coconut husks into Earth Board**, an industrial-grade, sustainable alternative to traditional timber plywood.

Lilamaya

An agri-tech social enterprise that deploys native stingless bees to farms for **natural biological pollination and processes the resulting bee by-products** into commercial wellness goods.

Envirotech Waste Recycling Inc.

A plastic waste recycling pioneer that intercepts and upcycles hard-to-recycle, single-use soft plastics into durable products like school chairs, building tiles, and emergency shelter kits.

Agrinex Solutions OPC

An agri-tech venture that uses Black Soldier Fly larvae to **bioconvert organic waste into affordable,** standardized protein feed products for local poultry and fish farmers.

GreenTAYO by Mothers for Peace

A community-owned initiative that deploys neighborhood **refill hubs to provide affordable,** plant-based household essentials and eliminate single-use plastic sachets at the source.

Implemented by:

EXPERTISE FRANCE GROUPE AFD

GGGI

In cooperation with:

UPGRADE INNOLAB

Global Gateway

Funded by the European Union

LET'S SHAPE THE FUTURE OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN MINDANAO

Follow us on Facebook: Upgrade Innolab Inc.

Implemented by:

EXPERTISE FRANCE
GROUPE AFD

GGGI

In cooperation with:

UPGRADE INNOLAB