



# AGORA PARTNERSHIPS **ACCELERATOR METHODOLOGY**

Agora Partnerships accelerates early- and growth-stage entrepreneurs using business to intentionally solve social and environmental challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Agora Accelerator provides these entrepreneurs with access to the knowledge, networks, and capital they need to grow their companies and their impact.

Since the first class of entrepreneurs in 2011, the Accelerator has served 125 companies and catalyzed more than USD \$47 million in investment. We have achieved these results because of the combination of our rigorous selection process based on four leadership qualities of agency, empathy, curiosity and perseverance and our unique acceleration methodology: personalized strategic business consulting, community-building events, and intimate opportunities to engage with mission-aligned investors.

# TIMELINE

*Aug-Oct*  
**Application**

*Nov-Dec*  
**Selection**

*Jan-Mar*  
**Onboarding**

**Entrepreneur Retreat**

**Personalized 1:1 Consulting**  
diagnostic  
business model refinement  
investment preparedness

*Ongoing*  
**Access to Capital**

*Ongoing*  
**Alumni Community & Continued Services**

ACCELERATOR

# TOOLBOX

## **Agora Consultant Services**

Receive 100+ hours of one-on-one personalized, strategic business consulting consisting of in-depth business analysis, problem-solving support, and growth strategy from dedicated professionals who are part of the Agora Consulting network.

## **Business Model Refinement**

Understand, refine and effectively articulate the fundamentals of your business including value proposition, revenue and cost drivers, value chain, talent management, and operating plan.

## **Investment Preparedness**

Understand growth strategy, create projections, and identify investment needs and potential deal structures. Prepare for discussions with investors and for due diligence.

## **Investor Network Matchmaking**

Connect with potential investors in Agora's Investor Network through strategic matchmaking of each company's capital needs with investor's criteria.

## **Innovative Financial Products**

Contribute to development of alternative financing structures through innovative Agora initiatives including partnerships with local financial institutions, impact investors and financing platforms, such as Kiva, that facilitate the flow of capital to entrepreneurs.

## **Mentor Network Matchmaking**

Connect with industry experts from Agora's Mentor Network who share their knowledge and experience to help you solve specific business challenges.

## **Impact Strategy**

Measure and communicate impact through targeted impact consulting and a Global Impact Investing Ratings System (GIIRS) assessment.

## **Active Entrepreneur Community**

Join a community of peers using innovative methods to solve challenging problems. Entrepreneurs share successes and failures and work together to create system-wide change.

## **Alumni Engagement**

Stay engaged with Agora Network of entrepreneurs, mentors and investors post Accelerator and access Alumni Services for additional consulting projects and future Investment Roundtables.

# DIAGNOSTIC

UNDERSTAND THE COMPANY HISTORY, CURRENT-STATE, AND BUSINESS MODEL  
IDENTIFY COMPANY NEEDS AND SELECT FOCUS AREAS FOR THE CONSULTING PROCESS

EVENT

## Entrepreneur Retreat

*Takes entrepreneurs out of day-to-day operations and brings them together for one week to learn and grow as leaders.*

The Entrepreneur Retreat includes sessions led by industry leaders on conscious leadership, purpose, and the impact investing landscape. With a focus on building the community, the Retreat facilitates peer-to-peer learning and networking with other industry experts, through workshops on impact strategy, business model refinement and investment preparedness. The Retreat serves as a place to reignite inspiration and to build trust between entrepreneurs and their Agora Consultants.

## Module 1: Talent Management and Governance

*Clearly understand organizational structure, including management team, roles & responsibilities among the team, and governance practices.*

Entrepreneurs analyze and formalize the organizational structure of their companies. This includes identifying key staff and their job descriptions, defining relationships, and identifying anticipated organizational growth. Entrepreneurs are also provided with resources to deepen their understanding of best practices around human resources, management, and governance. This module focuses on the motivations of entrepreneurs as well as their leadership style.

## Module 2: Revenue Streams

*Analyze historic and projected revenue streams.*

Entrepreneurs break out sales by product or service line, channels, customer type, and geography in order to identify key revenue drivers and trends. Entrepreneurs are then asked to describe their sales and distribution activities, including characteristics of their target market, their key customers, and their go-to-market strategy.

## Module 3: Cost Structure

*Explore cost structure by identifying fixed and variable costs by product or service.*

Entrepreneurs identify the direct and indirect costs attributable to the production of goods sold. This allows entrepreneurs to perform a cost allocation and determine the true profitability of each product, pinpoint cash flow issues, predict the consequences of changes in supply, determine working capital requirements, and create a profitable growth strategy.

ACTIVITY

## Business Model Canvas

*Map out all components of the business model.*

At the Entrepreneur Retreat, entrepreneurs work with their Consultants to complete a business model canvas for their companies. This process allows Consultants to understand the company's value proposition, infrastructure, customers, and finances and provides a launching point for the diagnostic phase of consulting.

# BUSINESS MODEL REFINEMENT

UNDERSTAND AND ARTICULATE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND GROWTH POTENTIAL  
CONNECT COST AND REVENUE DRIVERS TO GROWTH STRATEGY

## **Module 4: Industry and Competition**

*Develop a clear and comprehensive understanding of the competitive landscape.*

Entrepreneurs examine key success factors, calculate market size, and perform a competitive analysis in order to better position their companies to seize market opportunities. These exercises allow entrepreneurs to understand the competitive conditions within the industry in which they operate, identify threats and challenges, anticipate the behavior of competitors, and differentiate their products or services from other market offerings.

## **Module 5: Product and Customer**

*Identify product offerings and articulate how these offerings deliver value to target customers.*

Entrepreneurs deepen their understanding of their target customers and review the attributes of their product offerings to better segment the market. By examining both the product mix and problems customers face, entrepreneurs can best position their products to meet the needs of customers. Entrepreneurs also examine product life cycle in order to optimally manage products over time.

## **Module 6: Price and Promotion**

*Determine an effective pricing and promotion strategy by exploring when and why customers adopt new products or technologies.*

Entrepreneurs explore pricing methods to ensure that the price of each product reflects its full value, review both push and pull marketing concepts, and analyze customer purchasing behaviors. Entrepreneurs work to understand the needs of their target markets to effectively advertise products to reach new and/or remotely located customers.

## **Module 7: Production**

*Analyze production processes and determine how to turn inputs from suppliers into products that are valued by customers.*

Using the Value Chain Analysis tool, entrepreneurs carry out an analysis of their production process. Each production activity is examined in terms of cost and value-added to the final product and ultimately to the customer. The analysis allows entrepreneurs to describe key activities in their value chain and relate them to their competitive advantage.

### ACTIVITY

## **On-the-Ground Visit from Consultant**

Companies receive on-the-ground visits from their Consultants. Spending a few days working in person allows the Consultant to observe the internal processes, dynamics, and culture of the company. Creating an itinerary in advance of the trip allows entrepreneurs and Consultants to efficiently spend the in-person time working on specific projects that are challenging to complete virtually.

# BUSINESS MODEL REFINEMENT

UNDERSTAND AND ARTICULATE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND GROWTH POTENTIAL  
CONNECT COST AND REVENUE DRIVERS TO GROWTH STRATEGY

## **Module 8: Suppliers**

*Evaluate relationships, risks, cost structures, and processes associated with procuring resources.*

For each supplier relationship, entrepreneurs examine both quantitative and qualitative aspects including the cost of goods, payment structure, ordering processes, and the strength and importance of each relationship. This allows entrepreneurs to evaluate and improve cost structures and procurement processes in order to manage risks and find the right partners.

## **Module 9: Distribution**

*Evaluate the distribution strategy and its success at efficiently placing the product.*

Entrepreneurs optimize their company's distribution strategy by understanding the needs of their various customer segments, matching those needs to distribution channels, identifying natural partners, and effectively building out each channel.

## **Module 10: Impact Strategy**

*Articulate a theory of change and develop tools to measure and communicate impact.*

The Theory of Change exercise requires entrepreneurs to define and articulate their company's key activities, outputs, and short- and long-term outcomes. Entrepreneurs then work with their Consultants, using the IRIS catalog of standardized impact measurement definitions, to select appropriate, measurable metrics that best capture the impact their company makes. These metrics provide a helpful way for companies to communicate their impact to key partners and serve as part of the reporting requirements for Agora. Entrepreneurs are also exposed to additional methods of measuring and communicating impact to key stakeholders including GIIRS and B Corp certification.

## **Module 11: Risk**

*Understand risks and develop mitigation strategies.*

Entrepreneurs complete a risk matrix in which they categorize all the key risks, both external and internal, that their company faces. For each risk, entrepreneurs explore causes, consequences, and potential business impact, ultimately producing a "net risk score" before developing associated mitigation strategies.

# INVESTMENT PREPAREDNESS

COMMUNICATE GROWTH STRATEGY  
IDENTIFY INVESTMENT NEEDS & STRUCTURE  
PREPARE FOR CONVERSATIONS WITH INVESTORS

## Module 12: Operating Plan and Growth Strategy

*Define a growth strategy and develop forward-looking operating plan.*

Entrepreneurs identify and communicate their company's growth strategy in the short- and long-term. Entrepreneurs think through the various elements fundamental to the strategy from a holistic standpoint and develop a detailed execution plan.

## Module 13: Capital Needs Assessment and Investment Projection

*Quantify growth strategy and identify investment needs.*

Entrepreneurs are asked to quantify their operating plan, create financial projections and set clear and achievable goals. Consultants then work with entrepreneurs to identify any capital needs, and, if applicable, define deal type, size, and structure. This information allows Consultants to prepare entrepreneurs for conversations with investors and to match companies with potential investors in Agora's Investor Network based on an understanding of company needs and investor mandates.

## Module 14: Communicating with Investors and Due Diligence

*Design an investor communication strategy.*

Consultants coach entrepreneurs to deliver a polished and convincing pitch to potential investors. Entrepreneurs craft a specific investment "ask" driven by their company's value proposition and accompanied by a growth plan with both financial and impact projections. Consultants support entrepreneurs to find the right investors and prepare for due diligence.

ACTIVITY

## Professional Consulting Deliverables

Over the course of the Accelerator, Agora Consultants work with entrepreneurs to produce 3 investor-facing deliverables depending on company needs, which commonly include:

- **Executive Summary:** one-page document designed to market the company, impact and capital needs to potential investors.
- **Financial Model:** flexible Excel model that reflects cash flows, Income Statement, and Balance Sheet of the company, including historical data and financial projections.
- **Investment Memo:** professional memorandum that includes detailed information about the company, enabling investors to evaluate a company's investment potential and begin due diligence.
- **Pitch Deck:** summary presentation of the company that serves as a communication tool to help facilitate initial conversations with potential investors.
- **Due Diligence Folders:** an online repository of key company documents that are traditionally requested by investors during their due diligence process.

EVENT

## Investment Roundtables

*Agora partners with industry events to provide entrepreneurs with opportunities to intimately engage with mission-aligned investors by hosting an Investment Roundtable.*

Investment Roundtables provide opportunities for selected entrepreneurs to hold an in-depth conversation (1 hour) with a group of potential investors. To foster collaboration, Investment Roundtable conversations address a question of strategic importance to the entrepreneur, one on which he or she seeks genuine input. This dynamic allows both the entrepreneur and investors to quickly identify whether there is real potential to work together in the future.