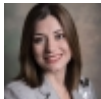


# Disrupting the Way We Build Startups <sup>[1]</sup>

Submitted by [Laura Cantero](#) <sup>[2]</sup> on 12 November 2014 - 11:46am



<sup>[2]</sup>



Grupo Guayacán is thrilled to share that we have been awarded a grant by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to launch I-Corps Puerto Rico <sup>[3]</sup>, a customer discovery boot camp for entrepreneurs looking to build and develop scalable business models. We are partnering with the Georgia Institute of Technology's VentureLab to launch a local version of the successful Startup Gauntlet, a program modeled after the National Science Foundation's Innovation Corps (NSF I-Corps). Georgia Tech's VentureLab has successfully taught Startup Gauntlet to 28 cohorts, encompassing a total of 492 participants.

NSF I-Corps teaches researchers, students and entrepreneurs a new way to think about entrepreneurship and commercialization. Through the I-Corps program, participants learn to replace the **idea** as the kernel of the startup, with a **customer problem**. Extensive customer discovery is used to find a compelling business model. Only then can a decision be made about whether to launch a startup business.

The I-Corps program is designed for small teams of entrepreneurs, ideally 2-4 people, who want to learn about the Customer Discovery method developed by Steve Blank, and the Business Model Canvas popularized by Alex Osterwalder. These teams must have identified an innovative idea and be interested in validating it, and building a business model around it. Through the intensive five-week program, each team will learn about their potential markets by conducting more than 100 customer discovery interviews with likely customers and market influencers.

I-Corps Puerto Rico will be taught by Keith McGregor and Paul Freet, director and principal, respectively, of Georgia Tech's VentureLab. Both Keith and Paul are experienced entrepreneurs and I-Corps instructors. The program is well known for its boot camp-like approach towards entrepreneurship, forcing each team to validate the assumptions and concepts that underlie their business idea before going on to building a sustainable business model.

This program poses a unique opportunity for Puerto Rico to support innovative ideas – whether they come from students, academic researchers, or any other members of the community – by forcing potential entrepreneurs to validate the assumptions that underlie their business model before starting up their company. It is also an ideal method for beginning to lay out the infrastructure needed for academic research to be commercialized, instilling entrepreneurial capacity in an important group of innovators with the potential to build truly global, scalable ventures.

We should seize this opportunity to leverage a proven methodology plus the insights and expertise of the Georgia Tech instructors to make this first I-Corps Puerto Rico session a complete success. Our vision is to eventually work to build local capacity, so that different organizations in Puerto Rico can offer the I-Corps program and thus we can have an even greater impact on the ecosystem. In order to realize this vision, we must establish a solid foundation for this program, built on strong and meaningful multi-sectorial collaboration. The potential is there, evidenced by the varied group of public, private, and non-profit organizations that are supporting this effort, including: The College of Engineering at the University of Puerto Rico (Mayagüez), Microsoft Puerto Rico, University of the Sacred Heart, the Puerto Rico Department of State, and Banco Popular's Echar Pa'lante initiative. Now it's time to make it happen!

*Teams interested in applying for I-Corps Puerto Rico must submit a brief online application at [www.icorpssouth.com/puertorico](http://www.icorpssouth.com/puertorico)<sup>[4]</sup>. The application process will be open through November 26th. For questions or comments please contact Keila López ([klopez@guayacan.org](mailto:klopez@guayacan.org))<sup>[5]</sup>.*



## Apply Now for I-Corps Puerto Rico



**Who:** Entrepreneurs looking to validate their business ideas

**What:** I-Corps Puerto Rico, led by Grupo Guayacán in partnership with the Georgia Institute of Technology

**When:** 5-session boot camp for teams of 2-4 people starting in January 2015

**Where:** Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust

**Why:** Effective idea validation leads to build stronger venture with true potential for global scale

**How:** Apply Now!

<http://www.icorpssouth.com/puertorico>

Application Period: November 5 - November 26



## Tags:

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