

# FINAL

*For immediate release*



*United States Department of State*



Catapulting Central American Entrepreneurs with Services Enterprises into U.S. Markets

***U.S. Department of State, America's Small Business Development Center, INBIA and Partners Name Finalists for the 2018 Cohort of the La Idea Incubator Program***

The U.S. Department of State, ASBDC, InBIA, and partners are proud to announce the 2018 La Idea Incubator Program Services Cohort Finalists:

- Belize Virtual Center Limited, Founder: Maycolh Montenegro, Location: Belize  
Belize Virtual Center Limited offers world-class virtual assistance services through experienced customer service representatives.  
[www.belizevirtualcenter.com](http://www.belizevirtualcenter.com)
- Building Innovation Systems, Founder: Javier Brenes Alfaro, Location: Costa Rica

Building Innovation Systems offers advisory, consulting and engineering design services of building automation systems, including integration with artificial intelligence systems.

[www.bisprojects.com](http://www.bisprojects.com)

- Blackbox Solutions, Founder: Nery Guzmán, Location: Guatemala  
Blackbox Solutions offers services to analyze massive datasets and convert that data into useful information to support decision makers in manufacturing, services, and logistics markets.  
[www.blackbox.gt](http://www.blackbox.gt)
- Cultura Hidropónica, Founder: Daniel Hidalgo Borge, Location: Costa Rica  
Cultura Hidropónica offers professional products, services and workshops for amateur and professional indoor/outdoor farmers using hydroponic techniques.  
<https://www.facebook.com/culturahidroponicacr>
- First Steps Marketing, CEO and Founder: Allan Antonio Canales, Location: Nicaragua  
First Steps Marketing offers digital marketing and design services to Central American companies. Services include web design, social media management, photography, virtual tours, graphic design, branding, search engine optimization (SEO) and video production.  
<http://www.1steps.net/>
- Gradient, Co-Founder: Sara Iris Garcia Avila, Location: Guatemala  
Gradient offers cutting-edge machine learning and big data services consultancy services to design and implement big data infrastructure, pipelines, and data workflows in growing companies, as well as data science services to extract valuable insights and predictions in a range of industries.  
[www.gradient.gt](http://www.gradient.gt)
- Mauisoft Enterprises, CEO: Mauricio Talbott, Location: Honduras  
Mauisoft Enterprises offers software development and IT support services to maximize operational and business development opportunities for their clients.  
<https://www.mauisoft.net>
- PUNTO CARDINAL S.A. DE C.V., Co-Founder: Guillermo Guevara, Location: El Salvador  
PUNTO CARDINAL S.A. DE C.V. offers consulting services that merge graphic design, photography, and video to communicate a client's message in a dynamic, fresh and creative way.  
<https://www.facebook.com/PCEndomarketing>
- SOLTIG, CEO: Andres Viquez Viquez, Location: Costa Rica  
SOLTIG offers web development & GIS consultancy, training and support services to government institutions and small- to mid-sized businesses.

[www.soltig.net](http://www.soltig.net)

- TRIXO, Founder: Roberto Campos, Location: Costa Rica  
TRIXO offers services and products to retailers and manufacturers to increase tracking and visibility of product sales.  
[www.trixosolutions.com](http://www.trixosolutions.com)

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*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/>

This grant is 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 (ASBDC), International Business Innovation Association (InBIA), CENPROMYPE in El Salvador, and the University Texas, San Antonio. The La Idea Incubator Program is designed to encourage 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 five-day "boot camp" for entrepreneurs from Central America to explore and/or develop a strategy for entry into the U.S. market for business opportunities. At the conclusion of the five-days in the U.S., participants will receive up to six months of additional virtual coaching and mentoring support 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. This round of selected participants (10) is the second program cohort, and will be dedicated to the services industry, beginning March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The cohort will be hosted at InBIA member and Soft Landing designee, the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians. This cohort will dive into pivotal services topics such as value proposition design, market research, negotiation tactics, funding options, and availability and customer relationship management.

*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](http://www.inbia.org)

#### *About America's SBDC*

America's SBDC (Small Business Development Center) Network is a partnership uniting private enterprise, government, higher education and local nonprofit economic development organizations. It is the Small Business Administration's largest partnership program, providing management and technical assistance to help Americans start, run and grow their own businesses. Learn more at [www.americassbdc.org](http://www.americassbdc.org).

#### *About Cenpromype*

CENPROMYPE seeks to develop initiatives that foster market activities based on the level of development of the region and the role played by MSME in the integration of Central America, and programs that enhance the management capacities of MSMEs, to influence public-private partnerships and focus on development policies. In this way we create the foundations upon which to build and promote an equitable and stable Central American society. Learn more at [www.cenpromype.org](http://www.cenpromype.org).

#### *About UTSA*

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) is one of nine academic universities and six health institutions in the UT System. UTSA hosts the Institute for Economic Development, a leading economic development organization with diverse programs that serve regional, national and international stakeholders. The Institute is host to the South-West Texas Border SBDC Network, which is leading the expansion of the SBDC model across 20 countries in the Western Hemisphere. Learn more at <http://www.utsa.edu>.

## *About Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians*



Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians is a 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Philadelphia. Its mission is to accelerate immigrant integration and economic advancement through education and training, employment, and entrepreneurship. The organization believes that a steady influx of new customers, workers, and entrepreneurs can reinvigorate Pennsylvania's aging population, renew its neighborhoods, and re-energize the economy. By making Pennsylvania a magnet for immigrants, the region will become a more vibrant, more creative, and more dynamic competitor in today's global economy. Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians works closely with government agencies, service providers, employers, business associations, trade unions, and economic development groups. Learn more at [welcomingcenter.org](http://welcomingcenter.org)