



Ifakara Innovation Hub
STRATEGIC
PLAN
2023-2028

A Word from Our Hub Director



Masoud Mnonji
Executive Director

The Ifakara Innovation Hub (IIH) Team has always been forward-thinking and focused on what we can accomplish together through the power of innovation to positively impact the community around us. We are focused on harnessing innovation to positively impact the community.

As global innovation hubs set new standards, we aim to evolve by embracing new technologies, ideas, and consumer preferences. Our vision is to make Kilombero Valley a leading center for innovation and entrepreneurship, with a focus on healthcare and livelihoods. The 2023/2028 strategic plan outlines key objectives, from immediate projects to long-term initiatives, to ensure quality program delivery and sustainability. We aim to become the leading rural innovation hub by supporting local entrepreneurs and focusing on rural innovations, particularly in healthcare and medical device manufacturing. To achieve this, we will build partnerships with government, private companies, academia, and development partners, providing robust support to innovators.

Our strategy emphasizes organizational capacity, program delivery, and financial sustainability. Together, we can make this vision a reality.

Masoud Mnonji

About **Ifakara** Innovation Hub (IIH)

Located in the heart of rural Tanzania, Ifakara innovation hub (IIH) facilitates the development of locally relevant solutions to socio-economic challenges facing rural Tanzania. We achieve this by supporting innovators in Kilombero Valley and surrounding areas to develop, test, prototype and eventually commercialise their products and services with focus on improving health and economic outcomes. The overall outcome of the IIH is to accelerate the economic potential to create high impact jobs and businesses in rural Tanzania.



Our Vision

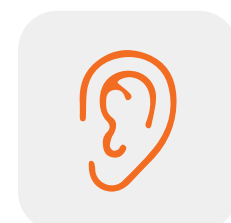
A Tanzania where everyone has universal access to health and wealth.



Our Mission

We facilitate the development of locally relevant solutions to socio-economic challenges facing rural Tanzania. We achieve this by supporting innovators through capacitation, mentorship, collaboration, and resource mobilisation.

Our Core Values



Empathy



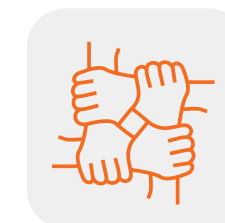
Creative



Impact-led



Diversity



Collaboration



Fair

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

We are dedicated to promoting and improving the healthcare through innovation to ensure better access to healthcare, particularly for vulnerable and underserved communities.

RURAL LIVELIHOOD PORTFOLIO

Within our rural development initiatives, innovation takes center stage in the fight against poverty and increasing the quality of life amongst rural communities.

Contextual Analysis

GLOBAL CONTENT

The global community has a unique opportunity to eradicate extreme poverty and improve the world through innovation. In the next 30 years, 2 billion more people will be added, with 90% living in low- and middle-income countries.

Disruptive innovations will be essential to meet needs like food, water, healthcare, and energy. The world faces challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, food insecurity, and global threats like war.

By investing in innovation, we can create sustainable solutions to transform economies and societies, ensuring global competitiveness in the coming decades.

TANZANIA CONTEXT

Tanzania's GDP has grown steadily at 6-7% since the early 2000s, making it one of Africa's fastest-growing economies. In 2020, Tanzania reached lower-middle-income status, with a GNI per capita of \$1,080. This growth stems from macroeconomic stability, natural resources, and population growth. In 2021, GDP grew by 4.9%, driven by agriculture and services. Projections estimate growth between 4.5% and 5.5% in 2022/2023.

However, around 76.8% of the population still lives on less than \$3.20 a day, with pronounced social exclusion and a stark divide between urban and rural areas. Urban areas have better access to healthcare, education, water, sanitation, and information, while rural areas suffer from extreme poverty, with most of the population dependent on subsistence farming. This highlights the need for targeted interventions to improve rural living conditions.



Despite the general positive economic trajectory, there is still a stark divide between Tanzanian urban and rural areas.

Contextual Analysis

RURAL TANZANIA (IFAKARA) CONTEXT

Ifakara is among the five districts that makes up the Rufiji Basin, a vital food basket in Tanzania. It is a small town in the Kilombero District, Morogoro, south-central Tanzania with a population of about 450,000 and an area of 183,791 sqKm. Being the headquarters of Kilombero district administration, Ifakara is accessed by road, railway and a small airstrip, and has access to the internet, mobile and cable telecommunication. People of Ifakara are engaged mainly in agriculture, fishing along the Kilombero river and mining. With a growing population, trading is also becoming a major economic activity in Ifakara and connecting Ifakara with Ulanga and other districts.

The history of Ifakara, in connection with Switzerland, started early before independence when a dispensary was established in the 1920s with Swiss government support to bring modern science into the medical field. Ten decades later, the Swiss interest and investments in Ifakara have contributed to the establishment of cluster organizations that have shaped Ifakara greatly. part from the cluster organizations, Ifakara hosts several international development organizations such as SolidarMed, Africa Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Save the Children, Plan International, and USAID programs implementers just to mention a few), as well as big private companies such as those investing in agriculture, forestry, and mining, financial institutions, et al., (such as Kilombero Sugar Company, Kilombero Valley Teak, Kilombero Plantations Limited, MSABI, CRDB, NMB and Tanzania Postal banks, etc.)

Despite the cluster organizations and other key business and development actors mentioned above, Ifakara like any other part of rural Tanzania, still struggles with development challenges and hence hindered to provide essential human development services to improve health outcomes, generate wealth and eradicate poverty to build a prosperous Ifakara community.



The early work of Swiss Researchers such as Rudolf Geigy in the Ifakara valley was the beginning of a long enduring connection with Switzerland that remains today.
Source: R.Geigy.Stiftung Foundation

Contextual Analysis

THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY

A 2021 needs assessment revealed key challenges hindering Ifakara's sustainable development and recommended that IIH collaborate with the government, partners, and locals to find innovative solutions. The study highlighted the need for locally grown solutions, and IIH is tasked with accelerating agricultural value chains, providing financing for youth and women, educating entrepreneurs, and innovating technologies for agriculture, fishing, and mining. It also called for IIH to catalyze the creation of medical devices to improve health and economic outcomes. Ifakara presents numerous opportunities, including maximizing agricultural value, using research from the Ifakara cluster, and leveraging natural resources and a growing workforce.

Given the set of challenges and opportunities in Ifakara, IIH is well placed to play a catalytic role in supporting the innovation and commercialization of products and services to tackle the most persistent development bottlenecks in Ifakara, and to seize economic opportunities. With its dynamic vision of expanding the innovation ecosystem in rural Tanzania through indigenous knowledge (IK) exploration and exploitation of technological innovation, IIH seeks to support the testing and development of products and services to better lives in Ifakara and beyond.

For the Ifakara IIH to attain this vision, investment needs to be made to raise awareness of its existence among people who are living in other communities, academia (Universities and research institutions), the private sector investing in Ifakara, and the general Tanzania public. This will contribute to creating not only awareness of the innovation programs but also a pipeline of future innovators and entrepreneurs that will create local solutions to tackle.



IIH is strategically positioned to drive the innovation and commercialization of products and services aimed at addressing the most persistent development challenges in Ifakara. Source: Ifakara Innovation Hub

Our Strategic Interventions

INTRODUCTION

There are several factors regarding Ifakara Innovation Hub that were taken into account when creating the strategic plan. This included but not limited to; our structure, our infrastructure, our stakeholders and our SWOT analysis. One other critical factor that was looked into is **the sustainability of the organisation.**

Having started as a project under IHI in 2019, IIH is now ready to branch off, and become an independent entity and self-sustaining. Research on how organisations have evolved from past projects informed IIH's spin-off strategy for sustainability. In 2010, PEPFAR initiated the transition of HIV projects from international organisations to local partners. This led to the creation of two notable NGOs in Tanzania: THPS and MDH, which evolved from the Harvard School of Public Health and ICAP-Columbia University. Over 10 years, these organizations have grown into successful, sustainable local NGOs.

Success factors included but not limited to availability for funding for both organizational capacity development and project implementation, development of robust systems and structures for administration, management and accountability, as well as swift move to creating and implementing a resource mobilisation strategy.

The same success ingredients are recommended for spinning off the IIH from IHI to ensure both fiscal and programmatic sustainability. In implementing this strategy, the IIH project under IHI will evolve to an independent entity that will continue to strengthen the innovation ecosystem.



Having started as a project under IHI in 2019, IIH is now ready to branch off, and become an independent entity and self-sustaining Source: Ifakara Innovation Hub

Our Strategic Interventions

Our Key Strategic Areas

There are three (3) key strategic priorities that were identified throughout the contextual analysis process and in conversations with IIH ExCo, IIH management, and IIH stakeholders. To make an impact on the community that the IIH serves, and the nation at large, IIH will pursue these strategic areas over the next five years to advance its purpose in contributing to the national development goals and in strengthening the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Tanzania.



STRATEGIC AREA 1

Support innovators/entrepreneurs to transform innovative ideas (innovations for livelihoods and health) into marketplace impact-making products and services.



STRATEGIC AREA 1

Strengthen IIH's institutional capacity development and sustainability.



STRATEGIC AREA 2

Strengthen innovation ecosystem to ensure innovation and social entrepreneurship flourish.

Strategic Area 1

Support innovators/entrepreneurs to transform innovative ideas (innovations supporting health and livelihoods) into marketplace impact-making products and services.

In line with our vision; our goal with strategic area 1 is to increase the number and success of high-impact startups in the region through the entrepreneur in residence (EiR) program, advisory and mentoring services, network effect, and enhanced access to funding. The process of bringing aboard innovators for both portfolios and providing the support that is required to transform their ideas into marketplace products and services is complex.

The innovation ecosystem in Tanzania is still in its early development phase and hence, the vision to support innovators and entrepreneurs will have to consider two stages:

- Ideation to Proof of Concept (PoC) - 30% of IIH program
- Product development to commercialisation - 70% of IIH program.



Our goal is to increase the number and success of high-impact startups in the region
Source: Ifakara Innovation Hub

Strategic Area 1

Support innovators/entrepreneurs to transform innovative ideas (innovations supporting health and livelihoods) into marketplace impact-making products and services.

Tactics that will be employed in implementing strategic area 1 have been highlighted below;

IDEATION TO PROOF OF CONCEPT- 30%

- Raise awareness among communities, researchers, and innovators in Kilombero Valley to encourage participation in IIH programs.
- Identify, map, and mobilize innovators in the region.
- Collaborate with researchers to translate findings into impactful products and services.
- Select and register promising ideas.
- Provide IIH innovation and entrepreneurship programs to transform ideas into proof of concept (PoC).

PRODUCT DEVT TO COMMERCIALISATION-70%

- Offer IIH's EiR programs to high-impact ventures, guiding innovative products from proof of concept to market through various services.
- Provide seed funding and in-kind support to help innovations in health and livelihoods progress from PoC to pre-seed, seed, and growth stages.
- Build a pipeline of investor-ready startups, showcasing them to local and international investors.
- Accelerate access to early-stage capital through pre-investment advisory, investment facilitation, and syndication.
- Develop commercialization roadmaps for market-based research with potential.
- Connect startups with public and private sector investors for mass production and distribution.
- Create a portal to showcase local innovations and connect startups with investors, mentors, and partners.
- Foster Kilombero Valley's startup community by sharing resources, hosting events, and promoting the region's innovation identity.

GENERAL SUPPORT

- Strengthen PDP partners' capacity for effective collaboration.
- Promote sustainable local solutions to local problems.
- Build a network of expert consultants and organizations to support innovation in the livelihoods portfolio, similar to the health (medical devices) portfolio.
- Create a network of program graduates for networking and capacity building.
- Promote product commercialization through market research and demand creation.
- Support market penetration of hub-developed products and services in collaboration with innovators and stakeholders.

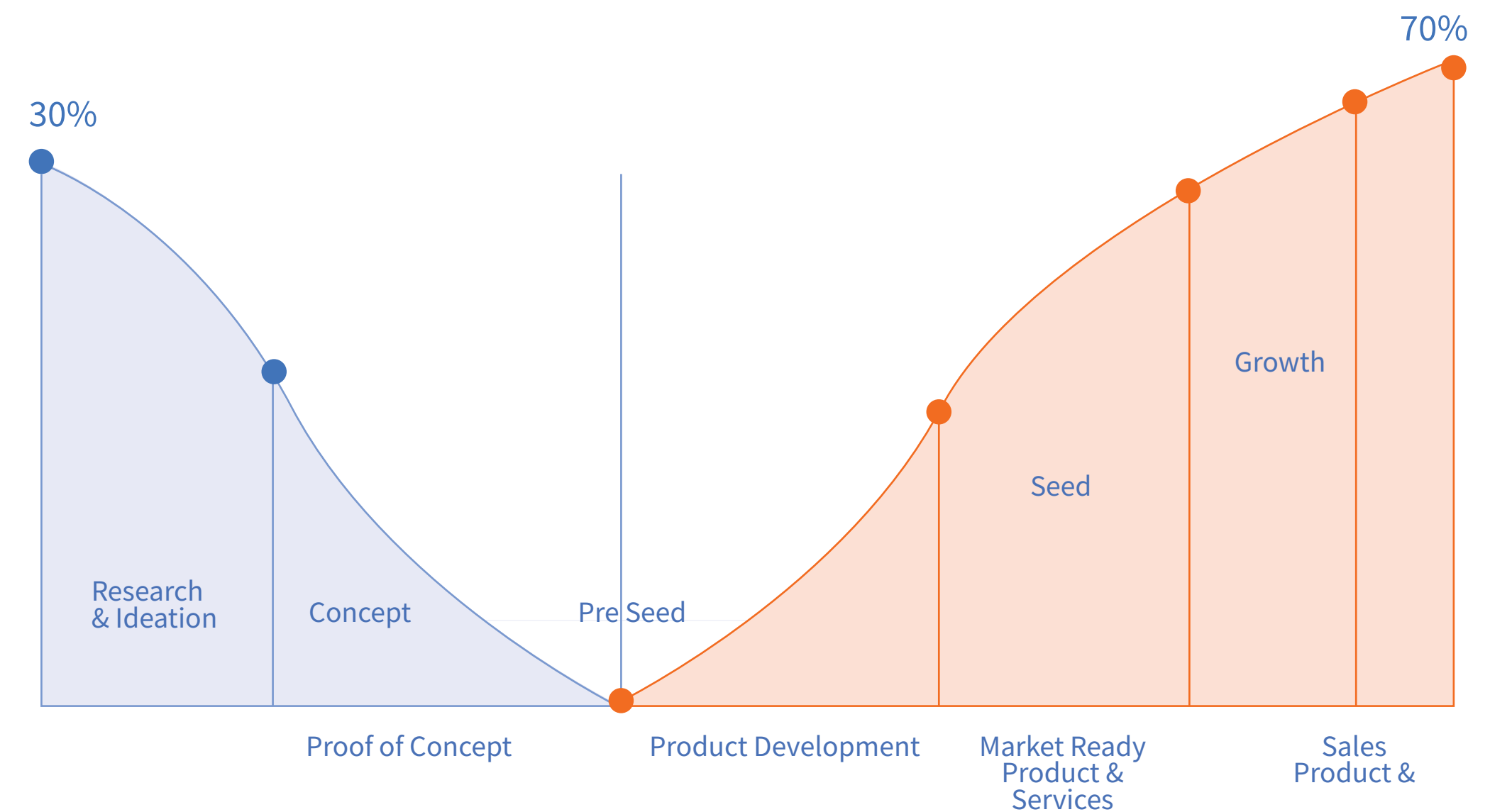
Strategic Area 2

Strengthen IIH's institutional capacity and sustainability.

The IIH is currently hosted as a project under IHI in collaboration with other strategic partners. For the effective and efficient functioning of the IIH there's an urgent need to make the entity independent and self-sufficient. The institutional capacity involves spinning-off the IIH from the IHI hosting framework, developing and strengthening the skills, abilities, processes, and resources for both the governance and management arms.

The sustainability piece is geared towards a financially stable entity that does not rely fully (100%) on donor's funding to accomplish its mission. This includes the ability to generate own funding to run programs, maintain and grow the team, as well as being able to invest in startups that have participated in the program.

Activities under this strategic area are urgent and should be started with immediate effect.



This strategic area was emphasized by all stakeholders throughout the process to develop the strategic plan and it is core to long-term strengthening of the innovation ecosystem and sustainability of initiatives.

Strategic Area 2

Strengthen IIH's institutional capacity and sustainability.

Tactics that will be employed in implementing strategic area 2 have been highlighted below;

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Create a plan/framework for spinning off IIH as a project at IHI to an independent entity by December 2023.
- Register a non-profit organization to serve fundraising, resource mobilization, and hosting the current program. Conduct IIH organizational capacity assessment.
- Conduct IIH executive committee and staff development and training needs assessment.
- Create an organizational and leadership development plan.

BUSINESS AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Develop a business and partnership development plan.
- Develop a fundraising and resource mobilization plan.
- Develop a strategy for the business/income-generating arm of the IIH.
- Register and establish an income-generating entity (company limited by guarantee) in 2023/2024, which will serve as a Venture Accelerator and host of the income-generating arm of the IIH.
- The financial accelerator will establish a traditional equity structure and support investment syndication (debt, equity, crowdfunding, etc.).
- The IIH business entity will provide direct and indirect financial support via internal funding, angel investors, and external groups to facilitate pre-seed, seed, and growth stage funding for IIH beneficiaries.

Strategic Area 2

Strengthen innovation ecosystem to ensure innovation and social entrepreneurship flourish.

IH acknowledges the critical need for strengthening the innovation ecosystem in Tanzania. As part of the 2023/2028 strategic plan, IIH will invest in mobilising actors, assets and relationships to provide a supportive enabling environment for innovation and social entrepreneurship to thrive. With emphasis on mission-driven approaches, the IIH will work on creating a shared sense of purpose and working towards solving social challenges through innovation and entrepreneurship.

INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

- Identify, map, and mobilize a wide range of partners and actors contributing to developing the innovation ecosystem in Tanzania.
- Invest in innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem research.
- Create/develop the state of the innovation ecosystem report in Tanzania and publish findings.
- Benchmark best practices, existing strengths, gaps, and leadership opportunities required to build a healthy and vibrant rural innovation ecosystem.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

- Advocate for policies and legal frameworks that favor innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Develop and implement traditional and new media community engagement and PR strategies that communicate IIH's work.
- Participate in innovation forums in and outside the country.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND REPORTING

- Makers' Forum Reports – develop and publish an annual report on trends in the manufacturing of medical devices and other products in Tanzania. Continue to be a convener of
- medical devices symposium in Tanzania and represent Tanzania in such convenings outside the country



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