Harnessing the Power of Open Innovation through Digital Collaboration
- a $12 billion opportunity for South Africa
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Foreword

William Mzimba
Chief Executive
South Africa &
Sub-Saharan Africa

Digitalisation changes the game. It blurs boundaries between industry sectors, lowers barriers to entry and creates bridges. As new partnerships made up of players from different industry sectors begin to form around the customer to offer not just products but solutions and ‘experiences’, innovation is laying the groundwork for companies to thrive in a digital era, and for countries to create dynamic and competitive economies.

Partnerships among a range of players in a global ecosystem, can help enterprises harness the power of entrepreneurs and innovators to bring new ideas into their businesses, and start-ups to leverage the strengths of bigger players to bring new solutions to market faster.

This model has an important role to play in South Africa. In a country where the economic outlook is unsure, digital technologies offer a platform for collaboration that can increase the reach and impact of innovation enterprise and economy-wide.

What is the prize if we can get this right?

Accenture’s Digital Collaboration Index shows that digital collaboration can deliver an uplift of $1.5 trillion to global economic outputs. In South Africa, it could help raise GDP by almost $12 billion, elevating current GDP by over 3%.

It is the kind of boost South Africa needs.

A slowdown in South Africa’s economic growth since 2012 highlights major structural constraints. Unemployment is at more than 25 percent with youth unemployment at almost 50 percent. Labour relations and service delivery remain a challenge, skills shortages constrain domestic growth, and inadequate electricity supply and overall weak business confidence inhibit private sector investment.

Underlining the importance of digital innovation as a growth driver is the following projection: by 2030, more than half of southern Africa’s population (40 million out of 75 million) will be of working age (between the ages of 15 and 64) and with more than a third of its workforce unable to find a job. Clearly, very different thinking and solutions are required.

The creation of collaborative digital ecosystems can help nurture, protect and incubate, and commercialise innovation to bring about an uptick in South Africa’s economic growth and a step change in problem resolution.

This paper explores the views of entrepreneurs and large companies to collaboration and innovation. We hope it will serve as a guide for government, policy makers, startups and industry leaders seeking to establish a true culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in South Africa.
Executive summary

To quantify the business and economic value of digital collaboration, Accenture developed the Digital Collaboration Index. Based on a survey of more than 1,000 entrepreneurs and 1,000 large companies across the G20 countries, it measures the effectiveness of an enterprise, country or region in terms of the collaboration mindset present and how successfully collaboration is translated into innovation and revenue growth.

The Index shows that digital collaboration can deliver an uplift of $1.5 trillion to global economic outputs. Additional research and inputs from thought leaders, executives and entrepreneurs in South Africa enabled the calculation of a Digital Collaboration Index for this country. It indicates that digital collaboration could help raise GDP by almost $12 billion in South Africa, elevating current GDP by over 3 percent.

The question is: how do we get there?

Open Innovation, a model of evolving innovation approaches, provides a guide.

Ecosystem innovation, the most mature form of Open Innovation, is the ultimate goal. It replaces first-stage innovation approaches that focus on narrow goals and are driven by corporate ventures and incubators with a more open, equitable form of collaboration involving multiple partners. However, South African companies—large and small—are only just taking their first steps on this journey.

This report presents the results of our G20 survey, which explores the views and attitudes of entrepreneurs and large companies to collaboration and innovation. It also compares South Africa’s responses to overall G20 responses and explores the links between digital collaboration, innovation and growth in large companies and startups.

The survey findings show that South Africa has some way to go to catch up to other G20 countries in terms of collaboration and innovation. We believe a foundation to facilitate digitally-based innovation needs to be built, and that foundation needs to extend beyond technology to the adoption of more mature forms of innovation and collaboration (such as joint and ecosystem innovation) by all role players—from startups and entrepreneurs to established companies, governments and bridgemakers. If we get it right, it will enable South African companies to leapfrog the evolutionary stages of innovation to significant advantage.

1 The G20 or Group of Twenty is an assembly of governments and leaders from 20 of the world’s largest economies, namely the European Union and Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK and USA.
2 Open Innovation is the use of purposive inflows and outflows of knowledge to accelerate internal innovation, and expand the markets for external use of innovation, respectively, as defined by Professor Henry Chesbrough in 2003.
Digital context: The journey to open innovation

In an increasingly digital and connected world, both startups and large companies are exploring the value that can be created by closer and deeper collaboration.

Collaboration—both inside and outside the “four walls” of a company—accelerates innovation, which is an engine for growth for companies and economies. Today, entire industries are competing with a new league of digital innovators that move rapidly from ideation to deployment. Start-ups and large companies are recognising that they have much to gain through closer collaboration: large companies are feeling pressure to innovate and become more entrepreneurial, yet find their culture and structures getting in the way while the majority of start-ups need to leverage the market power and scale of larger, established enterprises if they are to be truly successful. Digital technologies make such collaboration easy.

This has seen the rapid development of whole new ecosystems of partners from disparate industries and geographies, working together to deliver innovative solutions that meet the needs of digital consumers. This approach to innovation is called open innovation.

South African companies are not yet participating in innovation at this level, however. To do so, they need to align on the essentials of more digitally-enabled collaboration, such as the adoption of best practices to engage with a new ecosystem of partners. This will create the foundation that will allow them to leapfrog open innovation into the future. The prize is significant.
Digital collaboration in South Africa – the $12 billion opportunity

Accenture surveyed more than 1,000 large companies and 1,000 entrepreneurs (generally smaller startups) in G20 countries to explore their attitudes to collaboration and innovation. It found a statistically significant correlation between collaboration, innovation and growth among both large companies and startups.

Among the key G20 report findings:

• Of the G20 companies and entrepreneurs (generally smaller startups) surveyed, the vast majority believe that digital innovation is critical or important to their future performance.
• The best collaborators drive higher levels of innovation and revenue growth, generating a beneficial impact on GDP output.

To quantify the business and economic value of digital collaboration, Accenture developed the Digital Collaboration Index (DCI). Based on findings of the G20 survey, the DCI measures the effectiveness of an enterprise, country or region, in terms of the collaboration mindset present and how successfully collaboration is translated into innovation and revenue growth.

To understand South Africa’s current approaches to innovation and quantify the potential of digital collaboration to improve South Africa’s performance—and the country’s GDP—Accenture supplemented its G20 research, conducting in-depth interviews with South African executives, and conducting a quantitative survey of large companies, as well as entrepreneurs and small companies (47 executives from companies across industry sectors with an annual turnover of over $500 million responded to the survey, as did 51 entrepreneurs and small companies), analysing the national landscape, and using survey results to also identify DCI ratings for South African companies and categorise responses.

According to the Digital Collaboration Index the global economic opportunity that digital collaboration offers is $1.5 trillion, or 2.2 percent of world economic output.

In South Africa, a generalised increase in digital collaboration to reach high performance levels could raise South Africa’s GDP by almost US$12 billion, representing an uplift to current GDP of over 3%.
Digital is expected to play a significant role in revenue generation.

Large companies in South Africa expect to generate 29 percent of total revenue from digital technologies, products and services in the next three years, up from 15 percent today. Similarly, entrepreneurs expect to increase digital revenues to 25 percent of their total revenue, up from 14 percent today (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Digital as a driver of revenue generation**
What proportion of your revenues is currently generated through digital technologies, products and services? What proportion will it be in three years?

![Graph showing digital revenues by proportion and country](image)

Base: All respondents  
Source: Accenture Research

Collaboration is expected to be a critical tool to increase revenues generated through digital technology.

Large companies see collaboration with entrepreneurs as a way to inject new approaches, including technology and talent, into their innovation processes, while entrepreneurs are drawn to collaborate with large companies by the promise of accelerated commercialisation of their products and services.

Today, the proportion of revenues generated by collaboration with startups and entrepreneurs on innovation already represents a significant 11 percent of large companies' total revenues in South Africa. In three years, this is expected to rise to 13 percent. In five years, as collaboration accelerates, that figure is expected to nearly double to 21 percent.
Our economic modelling suggests that the more companies collaborate within their ecosystems, the more they innovate and grow their revenue.

Using the data from our 2015 global survey of entrepreneurs and large companies, we found that the collaboration high performers—those performing in the top 20 percent of the Digital Collaboration Index—achieved higher levels of reported revenue growth in 2014. This was true for both large enterprises and start-ups/entrepreneurs (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Collaboration high performs vs. rest**
Digital Collaboration Index (DCI) in South Africa: Collaboration High Performers vs Rest

![Diagram showing comparison between Collaboration High Performers and Rest in terms of Digital Innovation, Digital Collaboration, and Digital Ecosystem in Large Companies and Entrepreneurs.](image)

Average revenue growth in 2014 in South Africa: Collaboration High Performers vs Rest

- Collaboration High Performers are defined as those in the top 20% of Digital Collaboration Index (DCI) – they do better on every dimension of the index and demonstrate higher levels of innovation-led revenue growth
- There is potential for Rest of companies in South Africa to increase their DCI scores to the level of the Collaboration High Performers, and thereby achieve higher revenue growth

Source: Accenture Research Economic Value Modeling
If all companies in South Africa were to perform at the level of the 20 percent of highest performers, their revenues in 2014 could have been between 3 and 18 percentage points greater for entrepreneurs, and between 3 and 7 percentage points greater for large companies. The increment in business revenues, driven by enhanced innovation, would have a beneficial impact on GDP performance. A generalised increase in digital collaboration to reach high performance levels could raise South Africa’s GDP by almost US$12 billion, representing an uplift to current GDP more than 3%.

(Figure 3)

**Figure 3: Potential additional GDP growth enabled by improved digital collaboration**

1. How much effort required for companies in South Africa to achieve top 20% performance

2. Potential impact of increase in Digital Collaboration on innovation and revenue growth

3. How much effort required for companies in South Africa to achieve top 20% performance

Top 20% - “Collaboration High Performers”

**Entrepreneurs**

- Innovation up +33 points
- Revenue growth up 3% to 18% (6% on average)

**Large Companies**

- Innovation up +25 points
- Revenue growth up 3 to 7% (5% on average)

Potential GDP growth

$12 billion

$6

Indirect effect

$6

Direct effect

Source: Accenture Research Economic Value Modeling
Caution: Challenges on the journey

The kind of collaboration that brings together different types of companies with different cultures and organisational structures is not always easy.

For large companies, the challenge is compounded by a lack of clarity with regard to the core objectives and strategy for collaboration. Large companies also do not know how to integrate their legacy systems and walled-off research into a collaborative economy. Likewise, entrepreneurs often do not know how to liaise with large companies and pitch their proposals.

Our research points to three primary challenges faced by large companies and entrepreneurs as they attempt to increase their collaborative work:

1. An imbalance in perceived commitment

Large companies are committed to the idea of collaboration with entrepreneurs to drive innovation. Indeed, 89 percent of large South African companies affirm the importance of collaboration compared to 78 percent of entrepreneurs. But are entrepreneurs convinced such commitment exists?

About 28 percent of entrepreneurs feel that large companies are not committed to the collaborative endeavour; only a marginal share of large companies (5 percent) feel the same about their startup partners. In fact, large companies in South Africa have a stronger intent than global peers for collaboration with startups, as shown in Figure 4. However, large companies are often too slow to implement their collaboration programmes. This creates a perception among startups that their corporate partners are not committed to the collaboration.

Can motivations be better aligned? A vast majority of South African entrepreneurs (73 percent) collaborate with the objective to genuinely gain mutual benefits as independent partners, whereas relatively more large companies (41 percent) collaborate with the intent to consider buying the startup.

Figure 4: A perception of limited entrepreneurial culture within large companies

Which of the following is closer to your view?
Our company needs to work with start-ups/entrepreneurs to be sufficiently innovative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Large Companies surveyed</th>
<th>Entrepreneurs surveyed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G20 Overall</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% saying Yes</td>
<td>% saying Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+9 pps

More companies in South Africa than global feel the need to collaborate with startups to be sufficiently innovative.

More startups in South Africa than global felt they cannot be entrepreneurial within the company.

When you left the large company where you were working, was one of your reasons that you felt you couldn’t be entrepreneurial within the company?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G20 Overall</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7%
“FinTech are trying new things every day as the cost of trying is getting lower. The entrepreneurial world is indeed moving very fast. They don’t have to deal with constraints that banks have. The challenge for banks is to tap into this fast past source of innovation, without disrupting their core engine.”

Nvalaye Kourouma, Chief Digital Officer, RBB, Barclays Africa

2. The cultural divide

The cultures of entrepreneurs and large companies often diverge significantly. Those differences must be understood and managed effectively if the collaboration is to be successful. For example, entrepreneurs are likely to embrace more risk than large companies in their innovation process. Of entrepreneurs who previously worked at large companies in South Africa, 82 percent left because they did not feel they could be entrepreneurial within the company (Figure 4).

Can confidence levels be boosted? A lack of confidence or trust between large and small companies is one of the biggest challenges to collaboration. In South Africa, the power balance in collaborative innovation partnerships is traditionally skewed in favour of large companies that have a stranglehold on local markets, customers and/or finances. This makes startups and entrepreneurs in partnerships with more influential corporates less confident about their equality within the collaboration. On the other hand, large companies often find South African entrepreneurs fall short in terms of their resilience—the endurance required to see new ventures through and make them successful.

The old corporate mindset in South Africa is very guarded and risk averse and there is a lack of faith in a young or small business’ ability to deliver, and a lack of trust that large businesses will treat them fairly. Brett Commaille, lead partner at AngelHub Ventures

3. Government support

Not everyone is in agreement about whether the actions taken by government to support innovation and digital collaboration are sufficient. Many feel the government can do more. Almost three quarters of entrepreneurs (72 percent) and nearly half of large companies (49 percent) feel that actions taken by national and local government are either insufficient or ineffective in supporting collaboration between large and small companies (Figure 5).

Can the government do more? While being appreciative of the government’s ambitious plans, companies and industry experts feel the implementation of government plans can be improved. For example, South Africa’s National Development Plan sets out ambitious goals and proposes numerous measures to support the development of small-businesses. Yet, since these measures are slow to roll out, small firms must continue to deal with burdensome regulations and a lack of finances, which creates a difficult business environment.
Figure 5: Entrepreneurs, more than large companies, believe government actions are insufficient or ineffective

Which of the following best describes your government’s actions to support digital collaboration between large companies and start-ups/entrepreneurs?

Base: All respondents
Source: Accenture Research
The ultimate destination: ecosystem innovation

How does digital collaboration and open innovation among large companies and entrepreneurs in South Africa compare with global trends? The majority of G20 countries are ahead of South Africa in both areas.

Open innovation in the G20 is a journey of four phases (Figure 6) that extends from corporate venturing to the development of incubators and accelerators, and to joint innovation and co-creation, culminating in ecosystem innovation. The phases in which companies participate depend on corporate needs and the market forces in their sector. A handful of early-mover companies simultaneously adopt a mix of all four.

South Africa is taking its first steps on this journey. Big companies in South Africa have launched corporate ventures and incubator or accelerator programmes but these initiatives are at an early stage, with companies experimenting to discover what works in the local market. At present, joint innovation is rare, as is collaboration among a broader ecosystem of players who are focused less on specific goals and more on continuous idea generation, testing and learning.

To match the pace of their G20 counterparts, South African companies will have to leapfrog to the third and fourth stages of innovation (namely joint and ecosystem innovation) while simultaneously maturing their approach to corporate ventures and incubator and accelerator models. To do so, the guarded corporate mindset in South Africa needs foremost to open up and embrace Open Innovation.

1. Corporate ventures

Interaction with startups often begins with corporate venturing. This form of collaboration is especially important in the eyes of large companies that want to de-risk financial bets on internal research and development (R&D) through external investment, and to scout for next-generation technology and innovations. Nearly half of the top 100 companies in the global Fortune 500 ranking have a corporate venturing unit. However, corporate venturing in South Africa is still nascent, led by a handful of local and multinational companies that have recently begun setting up venture funds. General Electric’s recently launched fund for South Africa is an example of this.

2. Incubators/accelerators

These programmes typically run alongside large companies’ corporate ventures. They are currently used by about one third of large organisations, a percentage that is expected to hold steady over the next few years. At the same time, entrepreneurs anticipate that the importance of incubators will increase as large companies make startups a greater part of their DNA. In South Africa, there are over 50 incubators. It is a small yet growing movement. The first phase was largely driven by government support. In fact, over 70 percent of incubators are started by the government. The second phase of private sector investment in these programmes is now picking up. The Technical Incubator launched by Standard Bank in collaboration with the University of Johannesburg offers an example.

“Corporates here know they need to do something about the startup innovations, but they do not always know what.” Ian Merrington, CEO at The Cape Innovation and Technology Initiative (CiTi)
3. Joint innovation

Joint innovation or co-creation is seen as the most effective model of collaboration by all organisations surveyed globally. Joint innovation enables the partners to collaborate more broadly and jointly maximise market opportunities more effectively than they could independently. For example, Barclays Rise has signed proof of concept agreements with three startups in the information, communication and technology (ICT) space to test their products with Barclays. Although an important stage in the overall journey, joint innovation’s centre of gravity remains with the large corporation and its innovation and R&D process. Startups are expected to contribute their ideas within an environment of solving the large corporation’s problems and needs. Although partners may work toward the development of a common solution, they may or may not share control.

“The biggest challenge Fintech ventures face is to prove their model and scale-up. Scaling up is challenging because as they grow they have to worry about same issues that banks face. The good news is that banks have solved this equation before. So in a world where you can match the flexibility, creativity and agility of the start-up world with the strength and robustness of established banks, you can scale up in a more sustainable way. This requires a Bank-Fintech partnership that provides start-ups the freedom to continue to innovate. To make this possible, Barclays is embracing a co-creation model with the Rise platform.”

Nvalaye Kourouma, Chief Digital Officer, RBB, Barclays Africa

4. Ecosystem innovation

In this more radical step in the open innovation journey, innovation occurs among a broader ecosystem of collaborators working on a more equal footing. Ecosystem innovation enables enterprises to look beyond their four walls to bring in ideas more quickly, enhance their innovation programmes, and also create shared value at the intersection of corporate performance and society to solve big or common problems. For example, Unilever’s Foundry Ideas platform amplifies the company’s efforts, acting as a hub for entrepreneurs and consumers to work together to tackle some of the most defining sustainability challenges of our time. The company’s Pureit range of water purifying products was developed in collaboration with technology partners and scientific and public health institutions, and rolled out in many countries across Africa, South-East Asia and Latin America that face a shortage of affordable clean water.

Digital platforms and platform-oriented companies are a major enabler of ecosystem innovation. Digital platforms are generally owned or orchestrated by a single company that controls the development of core products or services. However, the success of the platform depends on the ability of the leader to nurture the ecosystem of players and participants, including startups, encouraging them to offer value-added services on the platform. Platform models can be innovation-based, such as Huawei’s open-source LiteOS. Alternatively, platforms can be market-making environments. The transportation service Uber and the lodging rental service Airbnb are examples in the business-to-consumer area.
Figure 6: Charting the journey of open innovation
Four phases which culminate in ecosystem innovation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Now</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate Ventures</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ecosystem Innovation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity investment made by a large corporation or its investment entity into a high growth and high potential, privately-held business</td>
<td>Creation of a broad ecosystem of partners to jointly develop new technologies or market solutions and integrate their components, typically through a digital platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong> to de-risk financial bets on R&amp;D through external investment, scout for next generation technologies or innovations</td>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong> to create shared value often at the intersection of corporate performance and society to solve big or common problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size Matters:</strong> Large company in charge of providing financial support</td>
<td><strong>Size does not matter:</strong> Orchestrator of the product or platform may exert stronger influence</td>
</tr>
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</table>

- **Incubators / Accelerators**
  - Set up or sponsorship of startup accelerators, by a large company either independently or jointly with other actors, which are fixed-term programs focused on mentorship and educational components
  - **Objective:** to de-risk financial bets on R&D through external investment, scout for next generation technologies or innovations
  - **Size Matters:** Large company in charge of providing financial support

- **Joint Innovation**
  - Collaboration agreement entered by a large company with one or more startups for co-creation, where partners work towards the development of a common solution
  - **Objective:** to de-risk financial bets on R&D, scout for next generation technologies or innovations
  - **Size Matters:** Large company tends to exert stronger influence in the co-creation process

- **Incubators / Accelerators**
  - Microsoft Innovation Centers present in over 100 locations worldwide connects Microsoft’s customers with startups under the ‘Grow through Customer Access’ Program. These centers, embodying partnership with local government, universities and industry partners, are incorporated within Microsoft Ventures. They offer three years of free software, developer tools, and free Azure Cloud Services under the ‘Build through BizSpark’ program.

- **Joint Innovation**
  - Mahindra Group’s Automotive Division in India co-creates with its suppliers and dealers in the areas of plant quality and manufacturing. Both Mahindra and the dealers reaped the benefits, from addressing vehicle defects to shaping new product features, including more productive relationships and faster cycle times. Co-creation began to spread in the extended supply chain network and other divisions.

- **Incubators / Accelerators**
  - Barclays Rise has signed agreements with three of the ten startups that took part in its 13-week Tech Lab Africa accelerator program. All three startups have signed Proof of concept deals to test their products with Barclays.

**South Africa Examples**
- **Citi Ventures** in the US has developed a complete, end-to-end system utilising a strategy comprised of venture fund, Global Innovation Labs, Citi’s Acceleration Fund, an internal incubator, startup accelerator programs and strategic partnerships. Citi Ventures has CEOs of Citi’s regional businesses on its Board, and runs a Catalyst Program of seconding staff from business units to Citi Ventures on a 2-yr rotational program.
- **General Electric** launched a 200 million rand (US$ 18.7 m) fund for South African small and medium enterprises. This fund is part of a broader pan-African engagement, which will inject more than 5 billion rand (over US$467m) into the continent. The fund will combine technical and general business development services and financing to build a more competitive cadre of local suppliers over the long-term.
- **Microsoft Innovation Centers** present in over 100 locations worldwide connects Microsoft’s customers with startups under the ‘Grow through Customer Access’ Program. These centers, embodying partnership with local government, universities and industry partners, are incorporated within Microsoft Ventures. They offer three years of free software, developer tools, and free Azure Cloud Services under the ‘Build through BizSpark’ program.
- **Standard Bank** funded The Technical Incubator, launched in collaboration with the University of Johannesburg. This facility provides entrepreneurs with access to technical support on manufacturing, design, 3D printing, patenting, and design support and new technologies thereby enabling rapid prototyping.

**Huawei** launched LiteOS, an operating system designed for running connected appliances and machines which the Chinese company says is the lightest of its kind and 20 percent faster than other systems. Huawei’s LiteOS is open-source – implying developers can modify the code and use it in a wide range of devices. Huawei is currently working with domestic and overseas partners to make an ecosystem centered on LiteOS.

Source: Accenture Research
### Figure 7: Charting the journey of open innovation

**Challenges and leading practices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Venture</th>
<th>Accelerator/Incubation Program</th>
<th>Joint Innovation</th>
<th>Ecosystem Innovation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leading Practices</strong></td>
<td>1. All inclusive vision, outside looking-in with inside looking-out</td>
<td>6. Providing mentoring and coaching to investee companies on top of funding</td>
<td>6. Develop open platform model to encourage creation of complementary solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Well-articulated and aligned goals, key performance indicators to monitor progress, effective governance structures</td>
<td>7. Identifying complementary partners for longer term progress to joint or ecosystem innovation</td>
<td>7. Establish framework for pooling and sharing IP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Engagement of top management and frontline business units</td>
<td>8. Identifying complementary partners for longer term progress to joint or ecosystem innovation</td>
<td>8. Aligning interests and honoring commitments among the collaborators</td>
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<td>4. Organisational structures and processes reflecting agility and other cultural characteristics akin to entrepreneurs</td>
<td>9. Creating equitable pathways for all collaborators, even though the sponsor develops and owns the platform</td>
<td>9. Creating open solutions to external collaborators to build complementary solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Integrated, long-term programs on the journey toward Ecosystem Innovation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges</strong></td>
<td>1. Misalignment in strategic and financial goals can make fund ineffective</td>
<td>1. Inability to foster an entrepreneurial culture weakens ability to attract good startups</td>
<td>1. Lack of clear interfaces and standards weakens platform / ecosystem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Poor investment decisions from lack of alignment with corporate objectives</td>
<td>2. Suboptimal performance due to lack of focus – technology, products, services, social etc.</td>
<td>2. Conflicting needs among partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Loss of top venture fund talent due to poorly designed financial incentives</td>
<td>3. Inability to attract specialist talent to manage accelerators/incubators</td>
<td>3. Inability to launch products and services at speed and scale</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Being overly risk averse</td>
<td>4. Inability to find mentors/coaches to inspire startups</td>
<td>4. Trade-offs related to speed of development, scale, features, customisation vs. standardisation</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>5. Delay in approval and cumbersome processes signals weak commitment</td>
<td>5. Delays in extending support signals weak commitment</td>
<td>5. Failing to keep up commitments to internal stakeholders and to external partners</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Lack of ecosystem experience</td>
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</table>

Source: Accenture Research
Leapfrogging to ecosystem innovation

If the ultimate goal is ecosystem innovation, let’s be realistic: most large and small enterprises in South Africa are taking their first steps on the journey. It is therefore important that stakeholders more fully align on the essentials of digitally-based joint innovation. This will put in place a foundation that can support more radical advances and leapfrog open innovation into the future.

**Actions for large companies**

**Embrace collaboration as a long term strategy**

A clear strategy for collaboration is the single most important factor for successful collaboration between large companies and entrepreneurs. However, our research finds that large companies in South Africa are undertaking sporadic initiatives to collaborate with startups and still do not invest in Open Innovation as a long term strategy.

An example of a sporadic initiative would be a hackathon or networking event that is run by large companies in South Africa, typically for a period of three months. After this, the initiative is disbanded and there is no follow-through relationship with participating startups. Such short-term initiatives are of limited value to both large and small companies. With senior management vision, support and empowerment, frontline executives will need to dedicate resources inside the business to support external collaboration as an integral strategy.

**Help develop the startup supply chain**

What startups in South Africa really need are customers. Buying directly from startups and/or providing them with indirect access to the enterprise supply chain can go a long way toward helping these small businesses to scale. Telkom, for example, is investing in local enterprises, suppliers and existing partners through its FutureSource programme, which aims to help them be more competitive and links them across the Telkom value chain (Figure 8). Enterprises participating in FutureSource receive business development training from South Africa’s top small medium and micro enterprise (SMME) development providers. Many startups may not initially meet the high standards set by large companies in their vendor due diligence processes. Companies can enable access for these startups via existing vendors, re-routing purchases to manage risk while continuing the mentorship under the corporate incubation or accelerator programme until such time as the due diligence standards are met for direct sourcing.

**Provide institutional support**

Apart from investing in startups and providing financial assistance, large companies can provide specialised mentoring programmes related to business strategy, business plan development, go-to-market strategy and other guidance to new entrepreneurs. South African banks provide institutional support to entrepreneurs and small businesses. For instance, FNB Commercial along with Edge Growth, through Vemula Enterprise Development Fund, makes equity investments into high growth SMEs struggling to raise capital through traditional channels. Funds are available to both early stage ventures and mature businesses. Entrepreneurs also get business development advice and support from FNB for business design and development, and for development of their growth and financial strategies. Companies providing the type of support that goes beyond solving their own problems (i.e., inside looking-out) to genuinely helping startups (i.e., outside looking-in) benefit by winning the trust of, and forming long term relationships within the startup ecosystem.

"The world is moving to ecosystem innovation enabled by digital collaboration between its large companies and startups: the key question is how and when can South Africa leapfrog to meet the world?" Lee Naik, Managing Director Accenture Digital in South Africa.
Figure 8: Examples of open innovation best practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Practice</th>
<th>Telkom FutureMakers</th>
<th>Barclays Rise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set clear goals</td>
<td>Supports innovation across the ICT value chain with entrepreneurs and Telkom’s own supplier network.</td>
<td>Creates a community for startups, corporates and entrepreneurs to help them co-create and scale ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide access to physical and digital infrastructure</td>
<td>FutureHubs provides a platform to stimulate innovation and collaboration, and to reduce startup costs for new enterprises.</td>
<td>Barclays Rise is a physical and virtual global community. The Cape Town hub provides co-working facilities, a world-class events space, and a bespoke environment for the Barclays Accelerator programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide access to mentors and thinkers</td>
<td>Participants of the FutureSource initiative receive business development support, mentoring and training from top SMME development providers.</td>
<td>The Barclays Accelerator, powered by Techstars, offers entrepreneurs access to leading thinkers at Barclays and to Techstars mentor and investor relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-create and support commercialisation</td>
<td>Through FutureFund, Telkom is making an initial investment of R100 million in the form of working capital, loans and equity. Telkom has appointed Identity Development Managers to manage the fund.</td>
<td>Barclays has signed agreements with three of the 10 startups that took part in its 13-week Tech Lab Africa accelerator programme. All three startups have signed proof of concept deals to test their products with Barclays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable access to the broader ecosystem</td>
<td>Telkom partners with global technology vendors such as Cisco, Microsoft and SAP to develop and capacitate ICT SMMEs with high end skills, increase their competitiveness and help them grow.</td>
<td>In addition to access to financial support, entrepreneurs get access to external funding of up to $120,000 from Techstars. They also get access to talent from local universities and a supportive local government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Align with national goals</td>
<td>This programme aligns with government’s objective of localising public sector procurement.</td>
<td>Cape Town offers a vibrant ecosystem encompassing universities, the FinTech community, and a local government that supports innovation, job creation and entrepreneurship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Actions for entrepreneurs
Align to the market

Companies assign high importance to startups’ alignment to their business priorities. It is important for entrepreneurs to recognise the specific needs and interests of large companies if they are to effectively collaborate with them. For example, SnapScan, a mobile payments startup and winner of the MTN Business 2013 App of the year award, partnered with Standard Bank. SnapScan’s network in the country then proceeded to grow to more than 14,000 merchants. This early relationship clearly benefitted the bank and the Stellenbosch startup. In addition to being mindful of the culture and often lengthy processes at large companies, corporates’ legacy systems can provide startups with an opportunity to innovate solutions that address those issues. Startups need to understand large companies’ decision-making factors for procurement/partnering and align their pitch accordingly.

Time it well

Many large companies and investors are not looking to support startups at the ideation or seed stage. Founders need to pitch to the right source of finance suitable to their startup’s development stage. Our research contradicts the commonly held view that there is a shortage of funding in the South Africa market. Instead, financiers say that a funding gap arises because startups are trying to get funding on the back of an idea, instead of a robust proof of concept. For example, mobile payment startups Consent (a universal core identity registry and mobile platform) and Peach Payments (a Web-based invoicing and electronic payments platform) successfully entered into a proof of concept agreement to test their products with Barclays at the Tech Lab Africa accelerator programme.

Adopt mentors and onboard specialists

Startups may lack the skills and experience, processes and business structures to manage the growth phase of their venture. It is important, therefore, to bring in professional management, as well as experienced mentors from large companies, venture capital boards and bridgemaker networks. For instance, Raizcorp Africa’s for-profit business incubator model provides entrepreneurs in its programme with a team of entrepreneurial guides to mentor them on strategy, finance, marketing and sales, and personal development. It also provides specialist services such as tax, HR and legal consulting to entrepreneurs. To date, more than 1,500 businesses have graduated from its ProsperationTM programme. Raizcorp is Africa’s only business organisation to be recognised as a Centre of Excellence by the Small Firms Enterprise Development Initiative, the UK government’s approved standards body for entrepreneurial development.
Actions for governments

Develop co-financing models

Government funding, paired with private sponsorship, has a strong positive impact on the entrepreneurship ecosystem, as evidenced in G20 countries. State funds, combined with corporate venture and private venture capitalist financing, are desirable for co-investment in early-stage startups. Mentoring by a coalition of investors can ensure the development of startups is aligned to the market, and not driven by the vested interest of any single investor. Government could co-invest with independent investors/venture capital firms, and, by giving these partners some degree of autonomy to make decisions, benefit from fund managers’ expertise. For example, LifeCo Unltd SA, in partnership with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and Standard Bank, has launched a R32 million fund to develop and invest in emerging social and environmental entrepreneurs. The IDC has provided 80 percent of the capital and Standard Bank has provided 20 percent. The organisation has helped established 80 entrepreneurs so far and has reached some 50,000 customers. Similarly, Standard Bank offers Khula Loans, a programme of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to help bridge a gap in SME funding.

Incentivise large companies to collaborate with startups

Collaboration between large and small companies is nascent across all its forms—corporate venturing, private sector incubation programmes, and joint and ecosystem innovation. Specific government policies, such as tax rebates, can be considered to support the collaboration.

Create collaboration networks

Collaboration between incubators in different locations or with a different industry focus is critical to nurturing cross-disciplinary talent, particularly in places where multidisciplinary universities are missing. South Africa’s DTI, through its Incubator Support Programme (ISP), partners with eligible private sector incubators that support the development of micro and small businesses or startups. The DTI has set a target to establish 250 incubators. It is currently supporting 105. A quarter of these are fully funded by the private sector and the rest are partly funded by the government through the ISP and Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda) programmes. Government and private players should continue to invest in developing and nurturing collaboration networks as they are an important vehicle to launch new businesses.

Develop digital infrastructure

Digital migration and development of digital infrastructure should be prioritised. A digital migration policy exists but the process has not yet begun. South Africa’s national broadband policy aims to connect 90 percent of residents by 2020 at a cost of 2.5 percent or less of average monthly income. International studies and benchmarks show South Africa ranks favourably in terms of inclusive ICT policies, but the country does poorly in terms of access and costs. Its broadband penetration is underdeveloped compared to other countries.

Support skills development

A comprehensive innovation policy focused on human capital development is the need of the
hour. South Africa had a Ten-Year Innovation Plan in place and is currently dovetailing these efforts with the National Industrial Policy Framework and other socio-economic policy imperatives. However, human capital development is still a major bottleneck for South Africa. Skill development plans are fragmented and experts say that while hard skills are important, softer psychological skills should also be addressed. Examples of skill development and innovation are emerging with the DTI encouraging cooperation between academic institutions and industry through the Technology and Human Resources Programme (THRIP). To further support skills development, government could set up a comprehensive skills foundation that addresses collaboration between universities, large companies, and key stakeholders in education, science and technology.

**Actions for bridgemakers**

Bridgemakers constitute a group of public- and private sector organisations, including government agencies, R&D centres, universities, venture capitalists and service providers that can create Open Innovation environments. Examples of bridgemakers in South Africa include The Cape Innovation and Technology Initiative (CiTi) and AngelHub Ventures. These kinds of organisations can act as intermediaries to help connect organisations to appropriate partners, act as a buffer between partners with conflicting cultures, provide support in mitigating risk, and assist in piloting and deploying technologies.

**Promote role models**

Successful entrepreneurs are often effective at investing in, and mentoring next-generation startups. As of the end of 2015, South Africa is not home to any unicorn (i.e., billion-dollar valuation) startups or serial entrepreneurs, however. For that reason, bridgemakers in South Africa have a more important role to play. By promoting past entrepreneurial successes, they can build the confidence of startup founders and young potential entrepreneurs.

**Build and connect with mentors**

Bridgemakers can provide the physical spaces to allow entrepreneurs and mentors to mingle, helping to create serendipity. For instance, Endeavor South Africa entrepreneurs are provided with customised support via a volunteer network of 2,700+ global and local business leaders who serve as mentors, coaches, advisors and role models.

**Connect with specialised clusters**

Connecting new entrepreneurs with a specialised global ecosystem or clusters can enhance their innovation capabilities and create a positive effect on their confidence and competitiveness. These clusters can provide entrepreneurs with access to funding, markets, talent, and support systems, like business guidance and back office support. For instance, the FNB Business in partnership with Endeavor SA has launched the FNB Business Innovation Award to recognise and celebrate successful entrepreneurs. The winner of the award gets to participate in a three-day Endeavor International Selection Panel (ISP). The ISP brings entrepreneurs from multiple countries together under one roof to have their business plans evaluated by renowned business leaders.
Conclusion: Eyes on the prize

Over the last decade, the digital economy has been driven and dominated by technology startups. The next decade will see the awakening of an entrepreneurial spirit among incumbent industry leaders as they strive to regain competitive advantage, disrupt their own markets or invent new ones. To do so, they will need to change the way they innovate, shifting past traditional small-scale and self-serving collaboration with innovators to harness the power of digital collaboration across a broader ecosystem.

A shift from collaboration that is oriented to a predetermined goal or business idea, to an approach that is more open and entrepreneurial will help them succeed. This will require cultural transformation—creating an environment of more trust, and more equal commitment to risks and rewards. Large companies and entrepreneurs will also need to commit to using digital technologies and platforms to reach, and work with a greater range of talent, ideas and business models.

The journey will not be easy, but by taking these steps, large and small companies can work together more effectively to drive toward entrepreneurialism and innovation. The benefits are significant. By achieving true open ecosystem innovation, organisations big and small can generate greater business and macroeconomic growth.

In South Africa, establishing a true culture of innovation and entrepreneurship will assist the country to find new ways to address many of its economic and social challenges. To do so, it will be vital for startups and established businesses to gain an understanding of how digital collaboration across broader ecosystems can drive innovation, support entrepreneurship and stimulate economic growth and job creation.

While many initiatives and incentives are being put in place by the South African government and forward thinking large enterprises to encourage and support digital and business collaboration, it will take a fundamental shift in the approach of organisations to fully leverage the benefits of ecosystem innovation.

We hope the ideas and recommendations presented in this paper serve to inform and expand the view of all role players—government and policy makers, industry and opinion leaders, large and small companies, and startups and entrepreneurs—with regards to collaboration and innovation, and motivate exploration of, and participation in broader market and business ecosystems.
Methodology

About the research

Accenture explored the views and attitudes of entrepreneurs and large companies relating to collaboration and innovation. The research, conducted in cooperation with the G20 Young Entrepreneurs’ Alliance, comprised:

- An online survey of 1,002 entrepreneurs and 1,020 executives at large companies.
- In-depth interviews with 20 executives at companies and institutions across the G20 countries.
- Analysis of the digital business and collaboration landscape in all G20 countries.

To understand South Africa’s current approaches to innovation and quantify the potential of digital collaboration to improve South Africa’s performance—and the country’s GDP—Accenture supplemented its G20 research, conducting in-depth interviews with South African executives (47 interviews were conducted with executives from companies across industry sectors with an annual turnover of over $500 million) and entrepreneurs (51 interviews), analysing the national landscape, and using survey results to also identify DCI ratings for South African companies and categorise responses.

What is the Digital Collaboration Index?

The Digital Collaboration Index measures the effectiveness of an enterprise in terms of the collaboration mindset present across a company and in terms of how successfully it translates collaboration into innovation and revenue growth. The Index considers survey-based metrics across three dimensions:

1. Digital innovation:
   Progress in digitisation as well as the extent to which digital innovation is considered to be a priority.

2. Digital collaboration between large companies and entrepreneurs:
   The extent to which large companies and entrepreneurs are inclined to collaborate with each other and profit from more open business models.

3. Strength of the broader ecosystem:
   The extent to which digital initiatives are supported by governments, as well as the inclination of companies to engage with the broader ecosystem of stakeholders, including R&D centres, financial service and capital providers, and academic institutions.
Accenture Open Innovation

Founded in Silicon Valley over two years ago, Accenture Open Innovation is a global organisation.

Accenture Open Innovation works with top-tier accelerators, start-ups, venture capitalists, universities and corporate R&D labs, to build and bring to market innovative solutions. Serving as a vital bridge between our Global 2000 clients and the startup community, Accenture Open Innovation connects clients to enterprise-relevant technology innovators and provides consulting, technology and operations skills to help them meet their business transformation objectives. We also connect our partners with compelling opportunities and growth to pioneering clients.

Discovering industry-specific start-ups

Discovering the best innovations and entrepreneurs and building the vision for successful partnerships with them across our 19 industries is a key capability of Accenture Open Innovation. For example, we work closely with the Accenture Next Generation Financial Services Lab in Sophia Antipolis, France, to produce a quarterly report of the most innovative start-ups disrupting the Financial Services industry. Our goal is to embed innovation into our client offerings and solutions.

Translating open innovation into guided disruption

Accenture’s clients have long sought IT solutions for back-office efficiency; now they are also looking for a slew of innovative technologies to help meet their digital business goals in front-office functions, such as marketing and customer service. To manage this magnitude of change, IT must be able to partner fully with business. Accenture can help activate technology innovations, leading the entire organisation through the multiphase process of guided disruption to convert the innovation into an enterprise-ready solution at a global scale.
Endnotes

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Accenture Technology Labs, the dedicated technology research and development (R&D) organisation within Accenture, has been turning technology innovation into business results for more than 20 years. Our R&D team explores new and emerging technologies to create a vision of how technology will shape the future and invent the next wave of cutting-edge business solutions. Using our knowledge of the technology ecosystem, our Open Innovation team help clients connect to the leading innovative startups to identify relevant technology trends, fuel innovation internally and develop transformative programs. Technology Labs help clients innovate to achieve high performance. The Labs are located in Silicon Valley, California; Sophia Antipolis, France; Arlington, Virginia; Beijing, China and Bangalore, India. For more information follow us @AccentureLabs and visit www.accenture.com/technologylabs

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