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Startup Canada: Embracing entrepreneurial diversity vital to B.C.'s economic success

National Action Plan addresses urgent needs of province's entrepreneurs

VANCOUVER – November 27, 2012 – Startup Canada (www.startupcan.ca), a grassroots non-profit network committed to promoting a vibrant entrepreneurial culture, is calling for British Columbia's business leaders, policy makers and public institutions to recognize that entrepreneurship happens everywhere and strong local support networks are important in every community.

Startup Canada's call to action in British Columbia is part of its national **Action Plan**, unveiled today to drive economic development, job creation and innovation across the country. The action plan is intended to make Canada one of the world's top five entrepreneurial economies, in which job creation and economic growth spring from innovative entrepreneurs powered by supportive local communities and financial networks.

The new action plan grew out of Startup Canada's 2012 national tour, the most extensive consultation process ever carried out with Canada's entrepreneurial community. The tour revealed a number of common challenges that must be addressed to create a more dynamic and successful startup environment across the country:

- Canada needs to re-discover its entrepreneurial roots and embrace entrepreneurship as central to its national culture.
- Canada needs to cultivate savvier and more visionary early-stage startups to produce more high-growth companies with global reach.
- Canadian entrepreneurship must be fuelled from the bottom up through development of vibrant local entrepreneurial communities, led by entrepreneurs (not by bureaucrats or not-for-profits, as is often the case today), as the basis of a national entrepreneurship network.

"Because we have such an abundance of natural resources in B.C. and across Canada, we've become blind to even bigger opportunities," said **Michael Tippett, CEO of Ayoudo and an Advisor to Startup Canada**. "When it comes to our money, we are recklessly cautious. Our most valuable resource is not our water, our oil, our fish stocks or our forests. It is our people and our ideas. That's where we're going to find the next great mother lode. Let's explore the possibilities."



“Entrepreneurship should be nothing new to Canadians,” added **Chief Leonard George of the Tseil-Waututh Nation**. “B.C.’s native peoples were trading goods up and down the West coast, and as far afield as Russia, long before contact with European culture. Business is the new way of hunting. The iPad and the cell phone have replaced the canoe, the club and the bow and arrow.”

“People don't expect to have one job for 25 years anymore and companies don't hire that way,” said **Katrina Carroll-Foster, Founder of Katrina Carroll-Foster Consulting**. “An increasingly viable and attractive option is full-time or part-time entrepreneurship. To ensure entrepreneurial opportunities are widely accessible to the broadest number of people, an innovative national organization like StartUp Canada can help level the playing field.”

The Way Forward

Startup Canada’s Action Plan is comprised of three national initiatives that will be financed through sponsorship dollars and a crowd-funding campaign from coast to coast:

Startup Canada Connect: A free, highly social online meeting place that will connect and support Canadian entrepreneurs with the tools and resources needed to build more successful businesses.

Startup Canada Communities: A national entrepreneurial strategy must be founded on vibrant local communities led by existing entrepreneurial champions. Building on the network created through its 40-city national tour, Startup Canada will encourage development of strong local networks that will create the conditions necessary for entrepreneurial growth and success locally and nationally.

Startup Canada Campaign: Entrepreneurs across the country have told Startup Canada they need more role models - more access to stories of successful Canadian innovators and entrepreneurs. Startup Canada will lever mainstream media, social media and key national institutions to celebrate and tell the stories of Canadian entrepreneurs, providing authentic case studies to inspire and motivate new generations of startups.

To learn more about Startup Canada’s Action Plan, please visit www.startupblueprints.ca.

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About Startup Canada

Startup Canada is an entrepreneur-led movement to enhance the nation's competitiveness and prosperity by supporting and celebrating Canadian entrepreneurship. Startup Canada is the first Canadian organization to harness the collective energies of entrepreneurs and enterprise support communities from coast to coast to promote a vibrant entrepreneurial culture and to create a unified brand as a rallying point for Canadians.

Startup Canada sponsors include Microsoft, Gowlings, Ernst & Young, Best Western Hotels, the Canadian Innovation Commercialization Program, Export Development Canada, Business Development Canada, RGA, Francis Moran & Associates The VideoBooth Company, Artik, Kick Ass Media, PubliAir, the Ottawa Technology Transfer Network, the Association of University Research Parks Canada, Blab Media, the Canadian Association of Business Incubation, the Evidence Network, Francis Moran & Associates, FreshBooks, Global Advantage Consulting Group, Podio, Backbone Magazine, HootSuite, ITWorld Canada, NextMTL, Paper.li and Techvibes.