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### **Startup Canada: Integrating, supporting new talent from outside the region vital to Prairies' economic future**

*National Action Plan addresses urgent needs of region's entrepreneurs*

**EDMONTON – November 27, 2012 – Startup Canada** ([www.startupcan.ca](http://www.startupcan.ca)), a grassroots non-profit network committed to promoting a vibrant entrepreneurial culture, is calling on business leaders, policy makers and public institutions across the Prairie provinces to support entrepreneurs and skilled immigrants as a means to bridge the talent gap and drive economic diversification.

Startup Canada's call to action in the Prairie provinces 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.

"Here in Alberta, our communities are among the most bustling economies in the country," said **Ken Bautista, Co-Founder and CEO of Startup Edmonton**. "We can ride the wave, or use this wealth and good fortune to invest in a new generation of high-growth businesses who'll keep pushing the bar as the world shifts to a knowledge-based economy where the renewable resource is creativity and innovation."



“Entrepreneurship is about innovation,” added **Brett Wilson, entrepreneur and former Dragon**. “As a society, we tend to think that entrepreneurs are people who graduate from business school. But anyone can have an entrepreneurial mindset, and innovation can literally happen anywhere. The biggest thing we need to do as a country is to inspire and encourage innovation.”

## **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 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](http://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.