



Global Innovation Through  
Science and Technology

# 2022 Year In Review



The GIST Initiative is proud to reflect on 2022 as we celebrate another year of fostering global science and technology innovation. As the world continues to reopen after the unprecedented COVID pandemic, global innovation is surging to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changed world. GIST continues to deliver high-quality, high-impact, interactive training and networking opportunities that build robust, sustainable, and equitable innovation ecosystems in over 130 different emerging economies.

These programs each employ a specialized blend of our unique expertise, delivering meaningful resources to the ecosystems that need it most. From intensive on-the-ground regional trainings and pitch showcases to immersive hybrid programming, GIST continues to employ a range of tools to connect leading U.S. mentorship to entrepreneurs across the globe.

Building on our track record requires thinking big: to date, GIST has trained over 15,000 startups that have gone on to generate \$250 million in revenue. With the world beginning to reopen in 2022, we felt strongly that this hard reset was an opportunity to rethink old models and envision more effective ways to catalyze innovation. As a cooperative partnership between the U.S. Department of State and numerous private enterprises—plus our amazing global community of entrepreneurs and changemakers—we took our mission of empowering early-stage global science and technology innovators to the next level.



**\$75K** **60%**

Awarded to women innovators in APEC economies.

Over half of all GIST program participants are women.



### Pursuing Our Mission for Full Equality

Empowering women in science and technology is a cornerstone of our mission.

**\$2.64**  
**MILLION**

Raised in external funding this year by startups after participating in GIST programs.

**16**  
**9**

Unique emerging economies participated directly in GIST programming this year, with

Different sectors represented, including IT, Health & Medicine, Education, Energy, and Environmental Solutions.



### Direct Support to Global Innovators

We are the only U.S. State Department program to directly support innovators working around the world.

## A YEAR OF IMPACT

OVER \$500,000 DIRECTLY INVESTED BY GIST THIS YEAR

### Support in the Face of Global Challenges

No innovator gets left behind, even in the most challenging of times. This year, we've stepped up to offer unprecedented support to Ukrainian innovators.



**5** Global entrepreneurship events sponsored this year to benefit the Ukrainian entrepreneurship ecosystem.

**39+**

Ukrainian ventures directly supported by GIST programming this year.

**\$415K**

Total amount awarded to support Ukrainian innovation this year.



### Working to Empower Climate Solutions

We've worked to uplift climate solutions from innovators on the frontlines in the battle against climate change.

**\$25K**

Awarded this year to ventures working to create innovative water solutions.

**17+**

Ventures supported who are working directly towards sustainable development goals.

**75%**

of GIST countries supported this year are classified as "Highly Vulnerable"\* to climate change.

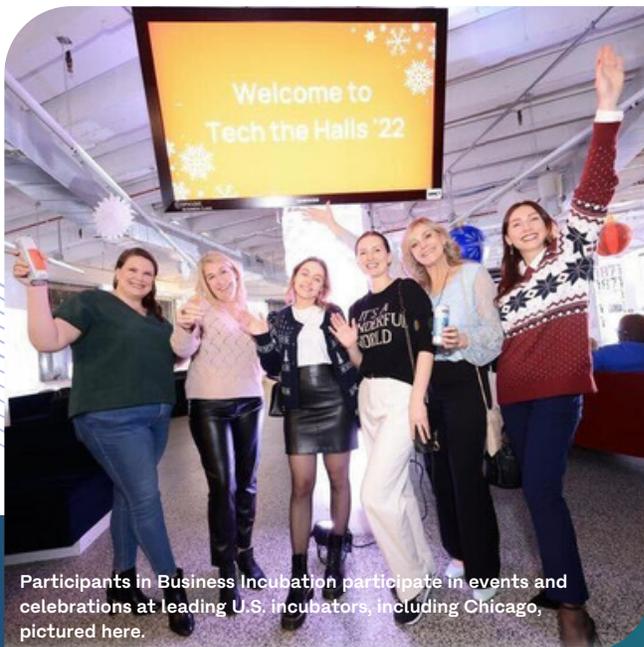
\*Using the ND-GAIN Global Vulnerability and Readiness Index

# The Future of Innovation in Ukraine

Next to the pandemic, one event defined 2022 like no other—the war in Ukraine. We are especially proud of our work through the years to support innovators in Ukraine but 2022 saw a particularly focused effort. In an unprecedented pivot, GIST redrew its planned programming to create the GIST Ukraine Business Incubation program. Currently, 15 Ukrainian innovators are arriving for 6 months of U.S. incubation, in cities as diverse as Chicago, Phoenix and Tucson Arizona, with what will be our longest and deepest Business Incubation program ever. But there was more to be done. GIST helped to put Ukrainian innovators front and center across multiple events around the world. From San Francisco to Copenhagen and beyond, we helped ensure they were both seen and heard by the global innovation community. Perhaps our strongest showing was the Ukrainian delegation to Web Summit Portugal, the largest tech event in Europe, where 24 Ukrainian startups participated. As Web Summit special guest, First Lady of Ukraine Olena Zelenska, described, *"This is why the Ukrainian pavilion at Web Summit is impressive. All of [these teams] prove that the time to invest in Ukrainian IT is now."*



Innovators meet with the Consulate General of Ukraine in Chicago.



Participants in Business Incubation participate in events and celebrations at leading U.S. incubators, including Chicago, pictured here.



Crowds gather around the GIST-sponsored Ukraine delegation at CES Las Vegas.



# Bhutan Rises

This summer saw a new first for GIST as we invited 4 select Bhutanese founders to the United States for GIST Bhutan Business Incubation: a two-week venture development journey from September 4–18 which took them from world-leading entrepreneurial mentorship in Atlanta to networking in Washington D.C. From creating menstrual pads with local (rather than imported) materials, to youth-focused nature conservancy on the frontlines of climate change, these founders are showing the world that Bhutan’s nascent science and technology ecosystem has the ambition and talent for sustained success. We couldn’t be more excited to play a part in it.



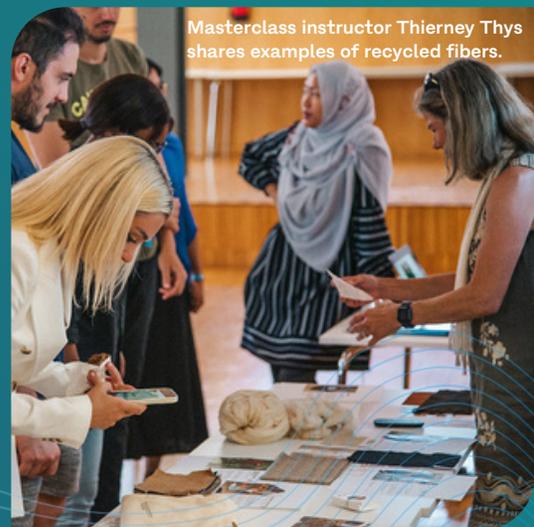
Bhutan innovators present at the State Department (left) and gain insight from innovation leaders in Atlanta (above).



# An Ocean of Opportunity

Summer also saw the first major event in the new GIST Oceans Series, a concerted effort to focus on the blue economy of the future. Beginning in the spring with a series of articles and interviews, this introduction to the series culminated at the United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal. Innovators from around the world had the opportunity to share their work on a global stage, make meaningful connections with other key ocean stakeholders, and learn about cutting-edge scientific and business insights from leaders in the field.

GIST’s events included the innovation Masterclass: Fast Fashion To Ocean Action, GIST TechConnect: Elevating Diverse Voices in Ocean Advocacy and Innovation, and our premier event on June 28th, the Pitch Showcase for Innovative Water Solutions. National Geographic Explorer and Masterclass instructor Thierney Thys described GIST as “truly remarkable in its ability to attract such talented young entrepreneurs from so many different parts of the world.” That creativity was on full display as the young innovators inspired us with innovations as diverse as drinking water kiosks in rural India to affordable prosthetics constructed with recycled ocean plastics. Look for more from this series in the coming year.



Masterclass instructor Thierney Thys shares examples of recycled fibers.

# A New Pitch Competition is Born in Bangkok

From November 14-16, GIST once again brought together a group of impactful innovators to learn, inspire, and connect, this time in Bangkok, Thailand for the CATALYST Asia-Pacific Pitch Competition: Advancing Women in Innovation. 16 women-focused innovators from APEC economies dived deep into their pitches and business models with GIST trainers, explored pathways to equitable workplaces in the new Gender Equity workshop, and competed for over \$70k in prizes. This was a formative experience for the participants, giving them a safe space to share diverse perspectives and the opportunity to work together building entrepreneurial models that protect and advance women in the startup sector.

Emerging from this event, innovator Nadea Nabilla described the experience:

*"I thought this would be very competitive but surprisingly we are kind of just like sisters. We are helping each other."*

The impactful solutions coming out of the cohort touched on the world's biggest challenges from developing technology around carbon capture and early Alzheimer's detection, to lab-derived meat alternatives and affordable electric propulsion for smallholder fishermen. The success of this event's structure, providing meaningful learning opportunities and shared experiences, is proof that the future of pitch competitions is more dynamic and expansive than ever.

First place winner Dr. Choe Peng Leo (Malaysia) developing her venture in the CATALYST venture development workshops.



3rd place winner Tran Pham Thi Niu (Vietnam) presents her award for her venture Brain Analytics, developing novel early detection technology for Alzheimer's Disease.

This constant connection to our global innovation network wouldn't be possible without our community of [Innovation Hubs](#), 39 partnered organizations throughout the world who bolster networking and entrepreneurial skills to build durable, long-term, supportive ecosystems in their local communities. The ultimate goal of the program is to stimulate local entrepreneurial activity and ensure participants can grow their skills and scale their businesses together – both in their home country and through the GIST Network's global connections. This effort has allowed the venture community to be able to survive in moments of extreme uncertainty, like in Ukraine, and has allowed others to continue to flourish and grow.

# Many Places, One Network



## The Best is Yet to Come!

2023 is sure to be just as exciting of a year, and we can't wait to share what's next!

From GIST Innovates: The Balkans to the continuation of Business Incubation: Ukraine, to programming throughout Asia and the Pacific, we are thrilled to reach more innovators, touch more communities, and empower more economies. Join us as we work to build a better future for global innovation.

Subscribe to [our newsletter](#) and follow us on social media to see what 2023 has in store!

Don't hesitate to reach out for questions, collaboration, and more!  
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