IDEA Lab is MIT Sloan’s newest executive-level action learning program. Building ‘Innovation-Driven Entrepreneurial Advantage’ (IDEA) is deeply embedded in the culture of MIT and is an intellectual and practical cornerstone of the MIT Executive MBA Program. In their first years, all EMBA students take ‘IDEA Week’ which introduces them to the key concepts and MIT frameworks supporting the innovation process (eg. on iterative innovation loops of experimentation and evaluation) and the innovation ecosystem (eg. the key ecosystem’s stakeholders and the foundations of innovation- and entrepreneurial-capacity). In the second year, IDEA Lab is an opportunity for EMBA students to work with interested organizations – or on their own startup (perhaps resulting from IDEA Week) - to explore and leverage innovation ecosystems to build greater strength in innovation-driven entrepreneurial advantage. IDEA Lab projects will be co-created to faculty and students.

IDEA Lab will further explore the themes of innovation ecosystems, stakeholders and the innovation loop of experimentation and evaluation. In keeping with the emphasis on global issues critical to Global Labs experience, each IDEA Lab project will be a team-based entrepreneurial one that can be Boston-based (as this is a globally-important innovation ecosystem in its own right) or elsewhere, and will also include consideration of the global elements of the innovation economy, comparison/selection of innovation ecosystems, and/or global expansion. Three types of projects are envisioned.

**IDEA LAB PROJECTS**

IDEA Lab projects will draw from three distinctive types of group projects, each with a theme of innovation-driven entrepreneurial advantage (IDEA) in a global context:

- **Global expansion of a Boston-based Start-up venture**: these projects will emphasize location and expansion opportunities, drawing on the globally-distinctive elements of Boston’s ecosystem; or identify the strategic rationale for global expansion into another innovation ecosystem, determining the operational nature of this expansion. These projects may be proposed by an individual founder-EMBA who is driving the start-up venture and can be delivered with a team of EMBA students for IDEA Lab (or by the founder working alone). They can also be delivered for an existing Boston-based start-up.

- **Expanded Corporate engagement into Boston as a globally-important innovation ecosystem**: exploration of the potential for expanded engagement into the local innovation economy by an organization through an expanded presence in Boston. Considerations will include the nature of Boston-based engagement, choices of specific location and program design/development. Client organizations may be global corporations, government agencies or not-for-profits.

- **Start-up expansion into Boston from other global innovation ecosystems**: working through a series of partner regions (e.g. Singapore, London, Switzerland, Israel, Chile, etc), a small number of projects may be sourced that explore the opportunities for innovation-driven enterprises (IDEs) from other global ecosystems to expand from their current locales into the Boston innovation ecosystem. Projects will explore the timing, location, and strategic choices implicit in this decision.
SPONSORING A PROJECT: EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST BY 27 OCTOBER

Entrepreneur-sponsored IDEA-Lab Project: for startup founders looking to scale-up their startup, a team of MIT EMBAs – blending management experience and innovation insights - can provide unique insights and experience at a key time for a startup. An engaged sponsor is the single most important factor for a successful project. IDEA projects require a senior-level sponsor who can provide the strategic context for the project and make resources accessible for an EMBA team. Project sponsors and facilitators engage with their teams on a weekly/bi-weekly basis.

Corporate-sponsored IDEA-Lab Project: for executives looking to bring their organization into the Boston ecosystem, a team of MIT EMBAs – with their knowledge of the Kendall Square ecosystem, and management experience - can provide a unique service, bridging the world of corporates and innovation-driven entrepreneurs. An engaged sponsor is the single most important factor for a successful project. IDEA projects require a senior-level sponsor who can provide the strategic context for the project and make resources accessible for an EMBA team. Project sponsors and facilitators engage with their teams on a bi-weekly basis.

EMBA-founder-sponsored IDEA-Lab Project: for startup EMBA-founders looking to scale and mature their startup, working alone or with a team of MIT EMBAs can provide space in the EMBA program to develop insights and enable more rapid start-up execution using the unique MIT network. An additional sponsor may be suggested e.g. a trusted advisor or investor. For EMBAs working alone, mentors will be provided as well as “learning teams” of other EMBA-founders with similar stage challenges to meet and share experiences on a bi-weekly basis.

ABOUT MIT EMBAs and ‘Action Learning’ like the IDEA Lab

About the MIT Executive MBA Program (EMBA): The MIT EMBA boasts the most experienced executive student cohort in North America. Students average 40 years of age, and almost half have already earned at least one graduate degree. Our General Management curriculum focuses on global leadership, data-driven analytics, operations management, system dynamics and innovation.

Experience and Expertise. The MIT EMBA Program attracts a diverse student cohort (120 EMBAs per year) from a broad array of industries to benefit from MIT’s focus on science and technology, and reputation for innovation and entrepreneurship. Over 20 months, students travel to campus 30 times (every 3 weeks) for 26 weekends, 4 one-week modules, and a Field Study week. For IDEA-Lab, teams of 5-6 second-year EMBAs bring a combined average of 100 years of work experience.

Project Duration/Travel: IDEA Lab projects are part-time, lasting 4-months long (end-January through mid-May) with one full-time week set aside for Field Study/Work – March 17-24, 2018. Travel is not a requirement for IDEA Lab, but some travel is possible.

Deliverables & Expenses: Project sponsors are responsible for the travel and lodging expenses for the IDEA Lab team, if this is required. Deliverables will vary by project and generally include a report with executive summary and/or comparable slide deck with a set of recommendations including a plan for implementation.

Initial Expressions of Interest by 10/27/2017: https://actionlearning.mit.edu/idea-lab/apply/