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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Australia Helps Pakistani Startups to Launch

The Australian Government is working with Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) business incubation centre Plan9 to assist Pakistani start-up entrepreneurs learn the business acumen and management practices necessary to run small and medium enterprises.

Australian High Commissioner Margaret Adamson on 17 July 2016 helped launch season eight of Plan9's business incubation Launchpad which will assess a total of 150 startups from Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad with 15 to be chosen for incubation in the Plan9 centre for up to six months.

Ms Adamson said the Australian Government was pleased to continue to support Plan9 to promote a culture of entrepreneurship by encouraging youth, specifically women, to contribute to the economic growth of Pakistan. In 2015, the Australian Government partnered with Plan9 to deliver an Australia Awards Short Course on business incubation management which saw participants exchange innovative ideas with professionals in Australia and Pakistan, strengthening industry-academic links and helping to build public-private partnerships in business incubation.

"I have met many young entrepreneurs in Pakistan with bright ideas and I am excited that we are bringing these ideas to life with Plan9. We hope that the acquired skills and knowledge and the exchange of experience with business incubators will contribute to the advancement of small and medium enterprises in Pakistan to support the country's economic growth and future development," Ms Adamson said.

PITB Chairman and Founder of Plan9 Dr. Umar Saif said that after four years of continuous hard work and determination, Plan9 was entering the 8<sup>th</sup> cycle of incubation and had expanded from tech startups to include two new categories – Social Entrepreneurship and Ed-Tech.

"With more people supporting and believing in the technology ecosystem, it is rapidly progressing and growing as a lucrative industry," Dr Saif said.

PITB Director Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development, Nabeel A. Qadeer noted that Plan9 had graduated more than 100 startups creating an eco-system where graduates did not have to look for jobs but were instead becoming job creators thus addressing unemployment and in turn benefitting Pakistan's economy.

"It is heartening to see how this idea has now spread like a wildfire with more incubators following the precedent Plan9 set four years ago," Mr Qadeer said.

Launchpad, which will also involve Ilm Ideas 2, will involve workshops and training, presentations by startups followed by judging and selection for incubation. The Launchpad activities in all three cities will involve tech industry professionals, bloggers, media and experts running incubators internationally.

Launchpad updates can be found at: [facebook.com/Plan9Incubator](https://facebook.com/Plan9Incubator); [twitter.com/Plan9incubator](https://twitter.com/Plan9incubator); [plan9.pitb.gov.pk](http://plan9.pitb.gov.pk)

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