

FinTech Partnerships – FMO Case Study

How a **digital innovation unit** is transforming a bank in Kenya

“Digitalisation should be the heart and the core of the bank, instead of just another project.”

Jacqueline Wangari Stewart
Digital Manager, iCube



Kenya’s I&M Bank is pioneering digital banking solutions through its iCube in-house innovation hub, launched this year to change the way the bank interacts with its customers.

Already, iCube has addressed customer acquisition with an online system that can speed up the entire client onboarding process by reducing the time to acquire an account by more than 67%. It has also deployed machine learning to assist the bank in the processing of client data, providing advanced analytics predictive modelling as well as a 360-degree holistic view of the client in order to better understand their needs.

The iCube team works closely with front office personnel to ensure the technology responds to real-life requirements. The bank made digital transformation one of the core pillars of its strategy and iCube was launched with a view to enable and deliver on the initiatives under this transformation. New technology is subject to in-depth internal discussion and can sometimes entail the use of third-party software. Innovations include an API

strategy, with more ground-breaking developments expected in the year ahead.



Changing the mindset from traditional banking

The importance of iCube to I&M Bank’s digitalisation strategy is significant. The bank has made a conscious effort to recruit digital talent externally and institute a mindset in its team that steps away from traditional banking culture, which is historically suspicious of new technology and slower to adapt. The iCube staff members are drawn from a range of backgrounds and not just fintech.

Rather than a banking unit, iCube was set up with a culture that resonates with a technology start-up, with customer centricity and agile ways of working at its core, including the creation of different chapters, each made up of individuals with the skillsets required for the initiatives.



It’s still about the banking

I&M wants iCube to act as an influencer and internal disruptor for the rest of the bank. There is recognition that digital innovation is

already changing the way banks deal with their customers, and iCube, through its interaction with the rest of the institution, has the opportunity to play an important role in changing the way the bank uses technology, its fast reaction speed to ever changing market dynamics and the way it operates as an organisation.

This transformative revolution is set to unfold as iCube’s changes impact the way the bank’s personnel carry out their duties. The new ways of working are a significant culture change and there are plans for some of these practices to be embraced across other areas of the bank. Employees are coming from subsidiaries such as I&M Tanzania and I&M Rwanda to see how its technology can improve the way they manage their own clients.

The changes do not undermine the institution as a whole - customer relations management and the storage of important data remain within the bank. And iCube’s innovations do not entail discarding the key brand values that have brought I&M its business and the loyalty of its customers.

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To be a partner in the digital transformation of your institution, FMO has implemented a dedicated FinTech team.



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