

Entrepreneur Soft Landings Program – Echar Pa'lante (EPL)

Location: Puerto Rico

Status of Country: Distressed

Project Timeframe: November 2017 – May 2018

Type of Assistance: Technical Assistance



Class on customer discover through the Soft Landing Program - Photo from <https://innovate.gatech.edu/blog/georgia-tech-soft-landings-program-accepting-applications-foreign-companies/>



Photo from <https://innovate.gatech.edu/news/georgia-institute-technology-launches-initiative-assist-international-companies-seeking-business-georgia/>

Echar Pa'lante (EPL) is a non-profit spinoff from the largest bank in Puerto Rico, Banco Popular. Their role is to drive growth of the innovation ecosystem. Their membership includes over 150 members of a multi-sector alliance. EPL visited Georgia Tech and the EDAUC in November 2017 to discuss creating a small landing space at Georgia Tech. The landing space at Georgia Tech would be for entrepreneurs who needed a temporary break from the infrastructure challenges on the island. The program is intended for foreign small and medium size companies who are looking to expand into a new market but want to minimize the risk associated with expanding into a new market by having guidance from the program.

Under efforts from the GT EDAUC, the non-profit Georgia Advanced Technology Ventures, donated space for the startups. The Soft Landings program is a 14 week long program which provides entrepreneurs with education on how to effectively run a company in the U.S. including education in legal, operational, introductions to partners and

additional professionals, and assistance in putting together a business plan. In addition to the education benefit provided through Georgia Tech, the program also provides structure and guidance to ensure that companies are able to understand critical factors affecting their business. The path to getting information for each company is unique for each company depending on what path they want to take including paying a consulting firm or interacting directly with a target company in the U.S.

As of 2018, two Puerto Rican startups have visited Georgia Tech. The startups are receiving services and connections from the existing ecosystem partners in and around Georgia Tech.

