KICKSTART

MEDIA RELEASE

Kickstart launches next round as a deal maker for companies and scaleups

- **Large organizations push innovation through startup collaboration in Switzerland**
- **DeepTech and digitalization serve as pathfinders for new business models**

Zurich, 15 April, 2021 - Kickstart Innovation, one of Europe's leading open innovation platforms, launches its sixth cooperation open innovation program today. This ecosystem innovation program in Switzerland, which has taken place annually since 2016, establishes partnerships between national and international scaleups (startups in an advanced stage of development), corporations, cities, foundations and universities. Together, they test new, disruptive solutions and build fresh revenue streams, thus contributing to a growing innovation ecosystem. "Last year, we were able to establish a record number of more than 50 commercial collaborations which brought us to over 170 deals since we have started, despite the challenges posed by Corona," reports Katka Letzing, Co-Founder and CEO. "Many of the collaborations from previous years have accelerated the growth and market access for several of our scaleups. To date, more than 200 scaleups across 5 industry sectors have engaged from more than 40 countries. In addition, our startups have raised over CHF 850 million. Currently, for example, Planted, which has collaborated with leading retailers Coop and Migros, developed a plant-based, sustainable "meat" that has raised CHF17 million for their next expansion steps," continues Katka Letzing. Many well-known companies such as AXA, Coop, Migros, Swisscom, die Mobiliar, PostFinance, Sanitas, The City of Zurich, Credit Suisse have recognized the benefits that collaborating with scaleups can bring to their own ongoing development.

Benefit from strategic advice by industry experts and investors

One of this year's focus will be on circular economy, sustainability as well as digitalization. The goal of the open innovation program that runs from September until November is to facilitate deals in the form of pilots or commercial collaborations between scaleups and established institutions who are looking to scale new products/services, find fresh revenue streams and invest in circular models and practices.

Our innovation partnerships are interested in the following areas: EdTech & New Work, HealthTech, FinTech & InsurTech, Food & Retail Tech, Smart City & Technology, as well as Circular Economy. The scaleups receive access to three months of support from industry experts, investors who have successfully founded, scaled and often sold a company themselves and who can open further avenues of partnership and collaboration through their respective networks.

Kickstart alumni, OneDoc, for example, launched a collaboration with Medbase during the program, and have now enabled more than 1.2 million COVID-19 vaccination appointments on their online platform. "Swisscom Ventures invested in a STEM startup - Labster in 2018. The scaleup has raised over CHF 60 million by now. It's just one of the many alumni stories from Kickstart that show the possibility of scale, growth and success." explains Swisscom's Chief Digital Officer, Roger Wüthrich-Hasenböhler. The company is revolutionizing science education by preparing students for real lab work via simulations. The benefit, in addition to a reduction in costs, is that techniques are learned faster and are more fun to study.

Next to building partnerships, Kickstart also provides access to a diversified investor network for startups and alumni raising financing rounds. Partners with corporate venture arms are actively involved, including Swisscom Ventures, AXA Venture Partners, and others.

More info and the application link.

For more information, please contact:
Suki Dusanj-Lenz
Global Senior Communications Manager
press@kickstart-innovation.com

About Kickstart
Kickstart is one of Europe's largest zero equity, multi-corporate ecosystem innovation platforms that runs a scale-up program for high-growth startups with the goal to accelerate deep tech innovation in Switzerland. Science and engineering-driven technologies have the potential to solve humanity's biggest challenges. They require unprecedented collaboration between established organizations and the most audacious entrepreneurs out there. Kickstart is committed to build bridges and bring various organizations such as startups, scaleups, corporates, cities, foundations and universities together. Each year, Kickstart brings up to 100 entrepreneurs to Switzerland to collaborate with key players for proofs of concept, pilot projects and other innovation partnerships. Additionally, through the intrapreneurship program Kickstart helps established organisations accelerate internal innovation.

Kickstart is a spin-off of Impact Hub Zurich and was launched in 2015 by digitalswitzerland. In 2021, Kickstart runs five verticals: EdTech & New Work, FinTech & InsurTech, Food & Retail Tech, HealthTech, Smart City & Technology; an Intrapreneurship program and the Circular Economy Initiative together with partner organizations across industries: AXA, Coop, Migros, Swisscom, die Mobiliar, PostFinance, ETH Zürich, City of Zurich, Amt für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, MAVA Foundation, Credit Suisse, CSEM, Diabetes Center Berne, Empa NEST, Sanitas, University Hospital Zurich, Axpo, Panter, SATW, Impact Hub Switzerland, Canton de Vaud, Santenext, Swiss Federal Office of Energy SFOE, Swiss Healthcare Startups, Growpal, Switzerland Global Enterprise, Ringier, Wenger & Vieli AG, Google for Startups, Nespresso, Meyerlustenberger Lachenal Ltd., South Pole, evitive, WECOCO, Magnolia, Day8, HealthTech Cluster Switzerland, Pepikon and more.