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Startup accelerator BaseLaunch aims to attract promising healthcare ventures to Basel, Europe's leading life sciences hub.

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BaseLaunch, Switzerland's new accelerator for healthcare startups, provides handpicked ventures with access to the Basel region's life sciences ecosystem. BaseLaunch has been initiated and is operated by BaselArea.swiss, supported by Novartis Venture Fund, Johnson & Johnson Innovation, Pfizer, and partners with digitalswitzerland's Kickstart Accelerator.

BaselArea.swiss, the office for promoting innovation and inward investment for the northwest cantons of Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft and Jura, today announced the launch of Switzerland's new healthcare startup accelerator BaseLaunch. Harnessing the Basel region's unique position as a global life sciences hub, as well as its rising popularity among investors and a program tailored to healthcare entrepreneurs, BaseLaunch is looking to attract the next generation of breakthrough companies.

"A healthy and well-endorsed startup scene is necessary to bolster and further expand the elite position of Switzerland's exceptional life sciences economy," stated Domenico Scala, President of BaselArea.swiss. "Switzerland has much catching-up to do in this regard and BaseLaunch is a strategic initiative to fill this gap."

"The expertise of BaselArea.swiss in connecting innovators and supporting entrepreneurs enables BaseLaunch to be extremely focused on the unmet needs of healthcare startups while at the same time contributing to the excellent Swiss innovation landscape, particularly in the life sciences arena," added Dr. Christof Klöpper, CEO of BaselArea.swiss. As the designated healthcare vertical of digitalswitzerland's Kickstart Accelerator and a partner of established public and private bodies, BaseLaunch is closely aligned with key national and regional initiatives.

BaseLaunch has already garnered support from global biopharmaceutical companies and innovation champions Novartis Venture Fund, Johnson & Johnson Innovation and Pfizer. These healthcare partners are engaging with BaseLaunch to find and support transformational innovations that solve unmet medical needs.

"BaseLaunch aims to support the best healthcare innovators and offers them fast access to founder-friendly venture grants, insights, industry access and state-of-the-art infrastructure. We want to enable and individually guide them to become fully embedded into the life sciences value chain," explained Alethia de Léon, Managing Director of BaseLaunch.

The program consists of two phases, which extend over a total of 15 months. During the first phase, lasting three months, entrepreneurs work closely with the BaseLaunch Team as well as a network of entrepreneurs-in-residence, advisors and consultants to further develop their business cases. Financial support through

BaseLaunch can be as high as CHF 10,000 per project. Up to three startups accepted for the second phase will receive the opportunity to secure a one-year grant of up to CHF 250,000 to generate data and reach business plan milestones in the labs at the Switzerland Innovation Park Basel Area.

BaseLaunch accepts applications for the inaugural acceleration program cycle until June 30, 2017. Additional program cycles will start in late 2018 and 2019. A Selection Committee of industry experts will handpick the ventures invited for each program cycle.

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Comments from BaseLaunch healthcare partners

Richard Mason, Head of the Johnson & Johnson London Innovation Centre:

"This program offers grants and lab space to selected startups - with no strings attached - illustrating that what we want to create here is an optimal environment for startups that focuses on supporting transformative science and great ideas in Switzerland."

Dr. Anja König, Managing Director, Novartis Venture Fund:

"We are pleased to help energize the Basel region's center of gravity for European healthcare ventures, offering startups the support they need to accelerate their ideas."

Uwe Schoenbeck, Chief Scientific Officer, External Research and Development Innovation & Senior Vice President, Worldwide Research and Development, Pfizer:

"Through Pfizer's support of BaseLaunch, we hope to advance the pace at which promising science is translated into potential medicines."

About Basel.Area.swiss

BaselArea.swiss is the office for promoting innovation and inward investment for the northwest cantons of Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft and Jura. The core function of BaselArea.swiss is to promote the strengths of the Basel region as a centre for business and to support both Swiss and foreign entrepreneurs and companies in the implementation of their innovation and business projects in the region. BaselArea.swiss today employs 18 people and has an annual budget of 3.6 million francs, which is borne by the cantons of Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft and Jura as well as the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

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About BaseLaunch

BaseLaunch, an initiative of BaselArea.swiss, works to attract and accelerate promising and groundbreaking healthcare startups and strengthen the Basel region's position as leading life sciences hub. The accelerator program provides participating teams with infusions of funds, insight, infrastructure and industry access, and integrates them into one of the most dynamic biotech and pharma ecosystems in Europe. BaseLaunch is supported by healthcare partners Novartis Venture Fund, Johnson & Johnson Innovation and Pfizer as well as other public and private partners. Applications are vetted by a selection committee consisting of Dr. Fabian

Buller, Director New Ventures, Johnson & Johnson Innovation, Dr. Phillipe Dro, CEO, NeMoDevices, Trudi Haemmerli, CEO and Director, PerioC Ltd, Managing Director, TruStep Consulting GmbH, Dr. Anja König, Managing Director, Novartis Venture Fund, Dr. Alex Mayweg, Venture Partner, Versant Ventures and Dr. Nathalie ter Wengel MD, European Head External R&D and Innovation, Pfizer. For more information and to apply for the program, please visit: www.baselaunch.ch.

Key dates:

Application deadline: June 30, 2017

Notification of phase I participants: August 15, 2017

Phase I: September 15 – December 7, 2017

Notification of phase II participants: November 30, 2017

Phase II: January 2 – December 21, 2018

About Kickstart Accelerator

Kickstart Accelerator is one of Europe's largest multi-corporate and zero equity accelerators with the aim of putting the Swiss innovation ecosystem on the global map of entrepreneurship. The program is open to the best international startups within the following four verticals: FinTech, Food, Smart Cities and Robotics & Intelligent Systems. In 2017, Kickstart Accelerator has entered into a partnership with BaseLaunch to offer a healthcarespecific vertical. Kickstart Accelerator was launched 2015 by digitalswitzerland and is operated by Impact Hub Zurich.

Mediakit for press conference

- Press release
- Short bio selection committee
- Partners

Further material available for download

- Portraits (Domenico Scala, Christof Klöpper, Alethia de Léon)
- BaselArea Logo
- BaseLaunch Logo

Short bio selection committee

Dr. Fabian Buller, Director New Ventures, Johnson & Johnson Innovation

Fabian is Director of New Ventures at Johnson & Johnson Innovation. Fabian is based in Zurich, Switzerland, and affiliated with Covagen AG, one of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson. Before joining the Johnson & Johnson family, Fabian was Director of Business Development at Covagen, a company acquired by Janssen in August 2014. In this role, he helped grow a successful biotech company and was instrumental in entering a strategic research & licensing partnership and, ultimately, in the sale of the company. Fabian holds a PhD degree from the Institute of Chemistry and Applied Biosciences at ETH Zurich.

Dr. Phillipe Dro, CEO, NeMoDevices

Dr. Philippe Dro is CEO of NeMo Devices and has over 20 years' entrepreneurial experience in the life science industry, including playing a pivotal role in executing strategic transactions at several biotech/medtech companies. He has previously served as CEO of GlycoVaxyn AG, a Swiss biotech startup in vaccines, which was acquired by GSK in early 2015. Before GlycoVaxyn, Mr. Dro was CEO of EndoArt SA, a medical technology company spin-out from the École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), which was acquired by Allergan in early 2007. From 1999 to 2003, he was Chief Financial Officer and Head of Business Development at drug discovery company Axovan AG. Mr. Dro received a doctorate in Pharmacy from the School of Pharmacy of the University of Grenoble, France and holds an MBA jointly from École supérieure de Commerce de Lyon (France) and Cranfield School of Management in the United Kingdom.

Trudi Haemmerli, CEO and Director, PerioC Ltd, Managing Director, TruStep Consulting GmbH

Trudi Haemmerli started her career at the Paul Scherrer Institute and then joined Ciba-Geigy. She had a key role during the merger in 1996 to create Novartis and continued her career with increasing responsibility in Regulatory Affairs, and leading the Global Regulatory CMC department for over 5 years. She then moved to the US to run Global Research Operations before returning to Basel in 2010 to help restructure Novartis' Compliance organization and policies. In April 2014, she left Novartis to become CEO and Director at PerioC Ltd., a Life Sciences start-up. She is also Managing Director of TruStep Consulting GmbH. She joined as a new member of the Swiss Commission for Technology and Innovation for Startups and Entrepreneurship (CTI) in January 2016 and has recently been appointed to the Board of Directors for the new Innosuisse that replaces CTI from January 2018. She is also an active Business Angel investor. Trudi Haemmerli studied Chemistry in the UK, completed the ECPM Certification at the University of Basel in 2007 and graduated with the St. Gallen MBA in 2013.

Dr. Anja König, Managing Director, Novartis Venture Fund

Dr. Anja König is a Managing Director in Basel, Switzerland. She is active in the UK, Switzerland and the rest of Europe. Prior to joining NVF, she was an Associate Partner at McKinsey and Company in New York, a global consultancy, where she worked with healthcare companies in the US, Europe and Emerging Markets. Anja holds a PhD in physics from Cornell University. She serves on the boards of Bicycle Therapeutics, F2G and Forendo Pharma.

Dr. Alex Mayweg FRSC, Venture Partner, Versant Ventures

Dr. Alex Mayweg is a Venture Partner at Versant Venture's Basel office in Switzerland. Alex joined Versant in 2016 from F. Hoffmann La Roche where he served as global head of medicinal chemistry. He previously held various other appointments and positions at Roche's Basel and Shanghai site, having joined Roche in 2003. Prior to Roche, Alex earned a Ph.D. in organic chemistry at Oxford University, followed by post doctorate training at Stanford University. His undergraduate degree was in chemistry from the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London.

Dr. Nathalie ter Wengel MD, European Head External R&D and Innovation, Pfizer

Nathalie ter Wengel, a medical doctor, is the European Head Global External R&D and Innovation at Pfizer, where she is responsible for establishing new collaborations and exploring licensing and other corporate development opportunities across all therapeutic areas. After having worked in the hospital, with extensive experience in internal medicine, Nathalie started her commercial career as European Medical Manager at Pfizer. It was this experience, coupled with her father's illness, that convinced her of the urgent need for change in the pharmaceutical industry. Consequently, she started up a company called myTomorrows focused on compassionate use, and served as Chief Medical Officer before joining Galapagos as Business Development

Director, where she played a key role in the very successful NASDAQ IPO and in partnering filgotinib.

Partners

Initiated and operated by

BaselArea.swiss

Healthcare partners

Johnson & Johnson Innovation

Novartis Venture Fund

Pfizer

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