

Press Release

(DRAFT - Embargo - July 27th at 9 am)

Startups rely on AI & sustainability for new partnerships

- **41 startups selected from over 1000 applications from 62 countries for 2023 innovation program**
- **One-third of the startups are from Switzerland**
- **Solutions connected to the circular economy increased to 41% this year**
- **Future topics: Digital workforce, renewable energy in underground spaces, marbled meat substitutes, cocoa-free chocolate, and quantum-based cybersecurity**

Zurich, 27 July 2023 – Following a marathon of pitches, 41 startups from 13 countries, including Germany, Austria, Singapore, USA, UK, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, Israel, Spain, and Estonia were selected for the 8th Kickstart Innovation program. Over 170 experts participated as jurors to select these startups out of 1000 applications coming from more than 60 countries in just six weeks.. These 41 finalists will work in Switzerland with companies, organizations, cities, foundations, and universities over the 11 week program to further advance partnerships and deep-tech and sustainable innovation. "A clearly emerging trend is the application of artificial intelligence and circular economy as a competitive advantage," explains Katka Letzing, CEO and Co-Founder of Kickstart, one of the largest open innovation platforms in Europe. "This includes, for example, the digital account manager from Swiss startup Aixa or Kloten-based Calvin Risk with the first platform for AI governance, risk management, and compliance." Leading organizations and companies such as [AXA](#), [Canton de Vaud](#), [City of Zurich](#), [Coop](#), [la Mobilière](#), [PostFinance](#), [Sanitas](#), [CSEM](#), [MSD](#) and others have been engaging in the Kickstart program to identify new trends and developments with a focus on technological innovation and the circular economy. "While established companies have many advantages over startups in terms of customer and process structure, there is also a risk of sleeping through new trends using AI and other technologies." reports Ralph Rimet, Head of strategic projects and innovation at la Mobilière. "That's why we're joining the Kickstart program again this year to enter into collaborative innovation partnerships and commercial deals." Since 2016, Kickstart has supported more than 400 startups and delivered more than 270 deals in the form of pilots and commercial projects from over 80 countries, raising more than CHF 2.5 billion in investment to date, including Planted, Neustark, Unsupervised and AAAcell.

Energy efficiency dominates Smart Cities

In five verticals (New Work & Learning, Finance & Insurance, Food & Retail, Health & Wellbeing and Smart Cities), the startups presented their business models and ideas for the future. In the Food & Retail area, many ideas came from Israel, Portugal and Estonia, among others. The Swiss company Advection Engineering is working on techniques to produce whole, marbled meat substitutes for today's generation. The British company Nukoko is producing chocolate without cocoa to be more environmentally friendly and less harmful to health.

With the increasing energy prices and the energy crisis, projects in the field of smart cities are focusing on energy efficiency. Enerdrape from Lausanne, for example, transforms underground spaces such as tunnels and underground garages into renewable energy sources for the heating and cooling needs of buildings. Urbio is a generative AI design software that accelerates the decarbonization of buildings. 20-40% of energy in buildings can be saved by creating



connections through smart thermostats and incorporating learning information about the thermal behavior of buildings.

In addition, AI is the dominant technology in New Work & Learning as well as in Health & Wellbeing solutions. The Austrian start-up Ada Growth supports companies in attracting, retaining and promoting female talent. For this purpose, a professional learning tool was developed specifically for women. Traditional corporate learning tools such as conferences and volume-oriented LMS offerings lack personalization. The future of learning lies in flexible, individualized microlearning apps that use an AI content production cycle to quickly scale to each member of the organization.

The 2023 Kickstart finalists can be found here (website/document link).

For more information, please contact: press@kickstart-innovation.com

About Kickstart

Kickstart is one of Europe's largest zero equity, open innovation platforms. Our mission is to build innovation ecosystems with purpose, by fast-forwarding innovation. We bring together public and private organizations, startups, investors and experts, with the shared ambition to deliver next-generation products and services and have a meaningful impact at scale. Each year, Kickstart engages 100 entrepreneurs to collaborate with key players for proofs of concept, pilot and commercial projects and other innovation partnerships. Additionally, through the intrapreneurship program Kickstart helps established organizations to promote and accelerate internal innovation.

Kickstart is a spin-off of Impact Hub Zurich and was launched in 2015 by digitalswitzerland. Since 2020, Kickstart has partnered with Impact Hub Switzerland, to launch the circular economy initiative. In 2023, Kickstart runs five verticals: New Work & Learning, Finance & Insurance, Food & Retail, Health & Wellbeing and Smart Cities together with partner organizations across industries: AXA, Coop, Swisscom, La Mobilière, PostFinance, ETH Zürich, CSEM, City of Zurich, Empa NEST, Sanitas, University Hospital Zurich, Panter, SATW, Impact Hub Switzerland, Canton de Vaud, Santenext, Swiss Federal Office of Energy SFOE, Swiss Healthcare Startups, Growpal, Switzerland Global Enterprise, Ringier, Google for Startups, MLL, South Pole, WECOCO, Day8, HealthTech Cluster Switzerland, DealStation, MAVA, SwissLEAP, EPFL, IMD, gfm, START Global and more.

Startups engaged this year: 41

New Work & Learning (7)

[Aixa](#) Switzerland
[Savvi HR](#) Germany
[BrainE4](#) Switzerland
[Ada Growth](#) Austria
[atwork](#) Switzerland
[weThink](#) USA
[MuchSkills](#) Sweden

Finance & Insurance (11)

[Atlas Metrics](#) Germany
[Calvin Risk](#) Switzerland
[Cyber Evolution](#) Italy
[Cyberangels](#) Italy
[CyLock](#) Italy
[DynamoFL](#) USA
[Holistic AI](#) UK
[JENTIS](#) Austria
[Pelt8](#) Switzerland
[Perx Technologies](#) Singapore
[QuSecure](#) USA

Food & Retail (6)

mia Germany
AssetFlow Portugal
Meala Foodtech Israel
Viva la Faba Germany
Cognitive Estonia
Advection Engineering Switzerland
NuKoKo UK

Health & Wellbeing (7)

Fimo Health Germany
XUND Solutions Austria
MiiCare UK
PIPRA Switzerland
QuantActions Switzerland
OptiChroniX Switzerland
NALU Switzerland

Smart Cities (9)

Enerdrape Switzerland
Preflet Germany
Urbio Switzerland
Viboo Switzerland
Uzuflly Switzerland
Granular Energy France
roofSec Austria
Plexigrid Spain
Hypermeteo Italy