Media release

Almost a billion invested in Venture Kick startups

St. Gallen / Zurich / Lausanne, February 9th, 2016. More than 896 million Swiss francs: this is the amount generated by investments in the 403 startup projects supported by the Venture Kick initiative, since 2007. Out of these projects until today, 300 became high-tech companies which created 3’434 new and highly qualified jobs. These stories have one thing in common: the founders which received their first pre-seed capital from Venture Kick are all researchers from Swiss universities. Since almost ten years, the private initiative Venture Kick has granted over 16 million Swiss in pre-seed capital to promising startup projects, and plans to support 60 more startup projects from all over Switzerland in 2016.

The amazing successes of Swiss universities spin-offs such as Abionic, Climeworks, Flyability or InSphero, coupled with the support of renowned entrepreneurs and Venture Kick’s donors (such as André Hoffmann, Hansjörg Wyss and Martin Haefner) show the strength of Venture Kick. The initiative does not only provide pre-seed capital to potential entrepreneurs at Swiss universities and institutes of higher education, of up to 130’000 Swiss francs. It also offers them a structured entrepreneurial path towards building a winning new venture. Presenting in front of experts at each stage to obtain funding, getting “kicking feedback” and learning about execution in building a startup during the kickers camp, exchanging with other venture kickers about their challenges, and accessing a broad network of business contacts, experienced entrepreneurs and investors are at the core of the Venture Kick experience.

Since the launch of Venture Kick in 2007, 403 project teams have benefited from the overall support of more than 16 million Swiss francs in pre-seed capital. They generated 3’434 new jobs. With Venture Kick, startup projects get access to investors and industry partners, who until today invested 896 million Swiss francs in them. The recently published Swiss Venture Capital Report shows that more than a quarter of all listed financing rounds are related to Venture Kick startups. In addition, 54 Venture Kick startups are listed in the actual TOP 100 Swiss Startups ranking. 7 even made it to the TOP10 and 3 of them were on the podium: L.E.S.S., Abionic, Flyability, Bcomp, QualySense, Glycemicon and Lunaphore.

Since the start of Venture Kick almost ten years ago, the amount of applications has increased year after year. In order to support this growing demand, Venture Kick's organizers are continuously seeking for new philanthropists and foundations willing to support the next generation of entrepreneurs at Swiss universities.
These Venture Kick startups made the headlines in 2015

InSphero, the world’s leading provider of organotypic 3D microtissues for highly predictive drug testing, secured a CHF 20 million financing round in July 2015. The 2009 Venture Kick winner and Switzerland’s No. 1 startup in 2014 won additional recognition in October 2015, as its CEO Jan Lichtenberg was awarded the Emerging Entrepreneur prize at the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year competition.

Flyability didn’t only win the Venture Kick final in 2015. CEO Patrick Thévoz and his team also received the Drones For Good Award in Dubai, with a prize of USD 1 million. In September 2015, Flyability entered the TOP100 Swiss Startups ranking for the first time, at the 3rd position. The company has started shipping its first units to customers internationally, for the inspection and the exploration of inaccessible places. Early 2016, Flyability partnered with the mountain rescue team of the Zermatt Glacier in the Swiss Alps to explore crevasses situated at an altitude of 3’500 meters ASL.

The 2010 Venture Kick finalist Climeworks is again breaking boundaries with its efficient solutions for capturing CO2 from ambient air. After closing an exclusive partnership with Audi to develop tomorrow’s carbon-neutral mobility, Climeworks will now build and operate the first commercial scale CO2 capture plant to enhance the growth of green foods such as vegetables and lettuce.

After getting the CE approval to bring its allergy test system on the European market, the 2010 Venture Kick winner Abionic now goes after the U.S. market. The EPFL spin-off opened an office in Boston and is aiming to secure approval from the FDA by 2016. In September 2015, Abionic was elected Switzerland’s best medtech startup in the TOP100 ranking for the fourth year in a row.

Don’t miss all the highlights of 2015, the detailed statistics about Venture Kick’s financing activities and job creation in our freshly published 2015 annual report.

You may order printed versions of the 2015 Venture Kick annual report at info@venturekick.ch

About Venture Kick

The mission of Venture Kick is the early identification, structuring and promotion of promising business ideas with a clear vision: To double the number of spin-offs at Swiss universities and to raise the attractiveness of these young companies for Swiss and international investors. Thanks to Venture Kick, entrepreneurs learn how to win customers and convince investors more rapidly. They benefit from hands-on execution boot camps (the kickers camps) and from quick access to extensive business networks. The program is open to young talents with innovative business ideas, who have not yet founded their company and are still enrolled or employed at Swiss institutions of higher education: students, postgraduates, researchers and professors.

Venture Kick is a highly competitive program. Each month, eight projects get the chance to present themselves to a jury. The four most promising then receive CHF 10,000 and qualify for the second round
held three months later, where the two best teams receive another CHF 20,000 each. In the third and final round, taking place six months later, the winner is granted CHF 100,000.

Venture Kick, an initiative of the Venture Kick Foundation, has been financed so far by Gebert Rüf Stiftung, ERNST GÖHNER STIFTUNG, OPO-Stiftung, Fondation Pro Techno, Fondation Lombard Odier, Debiopharm Group, André Hoffmann, Hansjörg Wyss, Martin Haefner and Rising Tide Foundation.

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