

Swisscom StartUp Challenge 2014: start-ups from French-speaking Switzerland set the tone

More than 100 start-ups entered this year's Swisscom StartUp Challenge. We have now selected the ten finalists, who want to conquer the global market with their innovative solutions. One thing stands out: start-ups from French-speaking Switzerland are outshining their German-speaking counterparts.

If the branded jeans you see while on holiday seem exceptionally cheap, it's probably because they are fake. To enable holidaymakers to spot fraudulent offers at first glance, the start-up "ScanTrust SA" has developed a mobile application that makes it simple to check whether or not a product is genuine. This innovative business idea won the new company enough plaudits to take it straight through to the final of the Swisscom StartUp Challenge.

More than 100 start-ups from the fields of ICT, media and cleantech entered this year's StartUp Challenge; of these, ten impressed the jury and thus got closer to their objective, Silicon Valley, to which Swisscom will be inviting five winners to participate in a business acceleration programme. The initiator of the challenge and head of the SME division at Swisscom, Roger Wüthrich-Hasenböhler, is very happy with this year's entrants: "The quality is high and the business models are impressive. This proves once again that Switzerland has people with excellent skills and an enormous entrepreneurial spirit."

Start-ups from French-speaking Switzerland more likely to excel

This year it has been mainly start-ups from French-speaking Switzerland that have stood out. Seven of the ten finalists come from the French-speaking part of the country, namely Geosatis SA, ActLight SA, ScanTrust SA, CashSentinel SA, Goodwall, eSMART Technologies Sàrl and VisioSafe SA. This also reflects developments in the national start-up sector: "While for many years everything focused around Zurich, a second start-up hotspot has developed in Lausanne and is now bearing fruit," Roger Wüthrich-Hasenböhler explains.

StartUp Challenge: what are the next steps?

Together with its partner, Venturelab, Swisscom has invited the finalists to make a decisive pitch on 14 August, where an expert jury will rigorously examine the ten finalists and then select five winners. The victors will be off to Silicon Valley to build contacts with international partners and experienced investors and perfect their own business models in collaboration with mentors. The audience prize, which will be awarded to the start-up that gains the most public votes, will also be presented at the pitch. Voting will take place from the end of July at www.swisscom.ch/challenge.

Swisscom has supported young Swiss entrepreneurs for many years, for example via partnerships with regional sponsoring institutions and the online platform www.swisscom.ch/startup. In addition, Swisscom supports innovative start-ups through an early stage fund worth over CHF 10 million and expands the transfer of knowledge to young entrepreneurs.

You can find brief portraits of the finalists at: www.swisscom.ch/challenge

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