Meet the winners of the 2020 Swisscom StartUp Challenge

Fotokite, HEGIAS AG, qiio AG, Robotic Systems Lab (ETH) and ZaiNarInc have won the 2020 Swisscom StartUp Challenge, which this year focused entirely on 5G. Earlier today, they gave a successful online pitch to the panel of eleven judges comprising representatives from Ericsson, Qualcomm CDMA Technologies and Swisscom. In March 2021, they will have the chance to spend a week performing test cases on their 5G applications and prototypes at Swisscom's 5G lab and in different locations and regions across the live network. Alongside the panel of judges, the public also voted for its favourite: HEGIAS AG.

For the first time, this year's development programme with partners Ericsson and Qualcomm CDMA was open to start-ups from across the world involved in the development of 5G applications and prototypes. Applications were received from a total of 125 start-ups from 30 different countries. Since the launch of the Swisscom StartUp Challenge in 2013, around 1,300 start-ups have applied to take part. The efforts have boosted innovation transfer with Swisscom and launched numerous successful collaborative projects. Swisscom Ventures has invested in ten of the start-up companies. The top 100 Swiss start-ups of 2020 included ten previous Swisscom StartUp Challenge participants, such as CREAL, Gmelius, Involi and PXL Vision.

Around half of this year's finalists are working on applications using autonomous drones and robots, covering protection and rescue, tourism and agriculture. The other start-ups are developing applications and prototypes for artificial intelligence, virtual reality and the Internet of Things. Around 80 percent of applications came from Switzerland, with the remaining 20 percent from other countries, including China and Argentina.

Five winners selected by the panel and a public-choice award

On 17 December 2020, the top ten start-ups pitched to the panel of experts. The judges included Martin Bürki (Managing Director Ericsson Switzerland), Enrico Salvatori (Senior Vice President & President Qualcomm EMEA), Christoph Aeschlimann (Chief Technology Officer Swisscom), Friederike Hoffmann (Head of Connected Business Solutions Swisscom) and Roger Wüthrich-Hasenböhler (Chief Digital Officer Swisscom).

The start-ups not only needed smart ideas and a convincing business model to impress the panel; they also had to show team spirit and determination. The panel were particularly impressed by the following start-ups: Fotokite, HEGIAS AG, qiio AG, Robotic Systems Lab (ETH) and ZaiNarInc. Alongside the judges' winners, the public also chose their favourite in an online vote. The start-up HEGIAS AG was the public's choice, with 25 percent of the votes.

Testing in the cutting-edge Swiss 5G network

In March 2021, the five winners will have the chance to carry out testing and development as part of a one-week exploration programme in one of the world's most advanced 5G networks and in Swisscom's 5G Lab. They will be supported by mentors and experts from Ericsson, Qualcomm CDMA Technologies and Swisscom. Swisscom will also consider potential business partnerships and investment by Swisscom Ventures.

Friederike Hoffmann from Swisscom says: "I have been greatly impressed by the vision and innovation of these start-up companies! The Exploration Programme gives us the chance to experience at first-hand the opportunities offered by the latest 5G technology. You have to see the applications in action to grasp the true potential of 5G. I am really looking forward to it."

Short profiles on the winners

Fotokite: Fotokite provides Public Safety teams with live on-site and remotely streamed situational awareness solutions to help them stay safe, save lives, and preserve property. Fotokite systems are mounted on top of Public Safety vehicles and operate with the single push of a button, streaming aerial thermal and RGB video to help them size-up emergency response scenes. Fotokite is a 50-person ETH-Zurich spin-off with offices in Zurich, Syracuse, and Boulder.

HEGIAS AG: HEGIAS VR is world's first browser-/cloud-based and automated solution for visualization and communication using virtual reality for the construction and real estate sector. It enables architects' 3D plans to be viewed and altered in a virtual world by one or more people from any location at the touch of a button, at any stage of planning or construction.

qiio AG: qiio provides plug and play, edge-to-cloud secure cellular IoT solutions optimized for bidirectional connectivity through the cloud. We provide customers with everything theyneed to

securely connect, monitor, and control their industrial assets. qiio's technology is ideal for high-security IoT applications requiring remote management, monitoring and predictive maintenance in hard-to-reach places.

Robotic Systems Lab (ETH): We bring cutting-edge technology in teleoperation and automation for heavy machinery to a product level - and provide a solution to work in places which are too dangerous or too remote for humans to operate. Our unmanned solution enables safe clean-up of the ammunition, tree harvesting in remote forests, removal of rockfalls and mudslides on roads and allows continued work during Pandemies.

ZaiNar, Inc (USA): ZaiNar provides real time location for any 5G device to within a meter in 3D. ZaiNar location is powered by patented advancements in signal processing for tracking phones, cars, drones and IoT without hardware changes and without additional battery drain. ZaiNar uses an order or magnitude less spectrum than other positioning techniques and is flexible across frequencies and protocols.

Berne, 17 December 2020

www.swisscom.ch/startup