

## **Swisscom looking for world-class start-ups**

**The Swisscom StartUp Challenge 2016 has been launched. Swisscom is looking for high-tech start-ups, in particular from the IT & telecommunications, Internet of Things, big data and FinTech sectors. A top-class expert jury will select the top five start-ups, who will be awarded a place on the business acceleration programme in Silicon Valley and will have a chance of receiving investment from or working together with Swisscom. The deadline for applications is 15 May 2016.**

Through its StartUp Challenge, Swisscom is offering start-ups the opportunity to join a one-week business acceleration programme in Silicon Valley, where start-up companies can have their business model put to the test by mentors and establish valuable contacts with international partners and investors.

### **A top-class expert jury will select the five best start-ups**

In order to gain a place on the business acceleration programme, the start-ups have to make a strong impression during the selection process. Swisscom, along with its partner venturelab, is inviting ten young entrepreneurs to pitch their products and services. This year, the pitch will take place at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL) campus in Lausanne, where Swisscom and the EPFL are establishing a competence centre for digitisation as part of their strategic partnership. The start-ups will be judged by a jury of top-class experts, including Roger Wüthrich-Hasenböhler (Chief Digital Officer at Swisscom) and Adrienne Corboud (Vice President of EPFL). The five best start-ups will be flown to Silicon Valley.

### **2015 winners: journey to Silicon Valley as a springboard for investments**

Last year, over 150 candidates applied for the StartUp Challenge. Gaining a place on the programme was the catalyst for success for last year's winners, one of which was Ava Women ([www.avawomen.com](http://www.avawomen.com)). Following the trip to Silicon Valley, the start-up secured investments of CHF 2 million. Based on sensor technologies and big-data analyses, Ava developed a wearable device that helps couples to conceive. "While the Swisscom week was especially valuable for Ava since we will

start operating out of the US from this year on, I would suggest this trip to any start-up that wants to learn about the fast-paced and demanding Valley start-up ecosystem,” says Lea von Bidder, co-founder and head of marketing at Ava.

Crowd ([www.getcrowdapp.com](http://www.getcrowdapp.com)) is another start-up that impressed during their pitch and won an investment from Swisscom. Their app makes it easier to organise your free time based on self-learning algorithms that were developed together with the Federal Institute of Technology. CEO Simon Heinzle described the week spent in Silicon Valley: “Intensive, exciting and above all packed full to the brim with investor pitches, meetings with potential partners and successful entrepreneurs – this was a truly unique opportunity for Crowd!”

**Swisscom StartUp Challenge a true success story – already more than 450 start-ups have taken part**

Swisscom is strongly committed to start-ups and has invested more than CHF 100 million in start-up companies since 2000. The StartUp Challenge is a central pillar of this commitment. It will be held for the fourth time this year – and looking back on the 450 start-ups that have already taken part, it can be considered a true success story. Swisscom and its partner companies have so far invested more than CHF 50 million in the StartUp Challenge’s 30 finalists. “For young developers of cutting-edge technology, investments are a real springboard to success. With our commitment to start-ups, we’re strengthening start-up companies’ ability to innovate and promoting the SMEs of tomorrow,” remarks Roger Wüthrich-Hasenböhler, Chief Digital Officer at Swisscom.

Further information and the conditions of participation for the Swisscom StartUp Challenge are available at: [www.swisscom.ch/startup](http://www.swisscom.ch/startup)

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**swisscom**

**Press release**

**About Swisscom's commitment to start-ups**

Swisscom has been supporting Swiss start-ups for years now, e.g. through partnerships with regional funding organisations, the online platform at [www.swisscom.ch/startup](http://www.swisscom.ch/startup) and a strong partner network. Swisscom Ventures' Swiss Early Stage Fund aims to promote innovative start-ups and develop the transfer of knowledge.

**About venturelab: World-class start-ups. Swiss-made.**

venturelab is a promotional programme for Switzerland's most talented start-up companies. Since 2004, start-ups have benefitted from a unique national and international network of industry players and leading investors. venturelab has helped to create many innovative companies that are asserting themselves internationally and seeing strong growth, such as Abionic, Climeworks, GetYourGuide, InSphero, L.E.S.S. and MindMaze. And in 2015 alone, 69 venturelab alumni made it into the TOP 100 ranking for the best Swiss start-ups.

[www.venturelab.ch](http://www.venturelab.ch)