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## News Release

August 27, 2015

### Participants for Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany's Accelerator Program Selected

- **Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, holds pitch days for start-ups at its new modular Innovation Center**
- **Selected companies from the fields of healthcare, chemistry and IT**

Darmstadt, Germany, August 27, 2015 – Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading company for innovative and top-quality high-tech products in the healthcare, life science and performance materials sectors, has selected three start-ups for the first round of its in-house Accelerator Program. A total of 70 business cases from 16 countries were submitted during the application period. Following the two-day pitch held at the Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Innovation Center in Darmstadt, the companies Apoly, Contagt and Sulfotools prevailed against seven competing start-ups from around the world. The three winning companies were able to convince the judges with business cases from the fields of healthcare, IT and chemistry.

Over the next three months, the start-ups will be working at the Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Innovation Center to develop their ideas and products further. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, will be offering them the best possible support for the seed phase.

“The high quality of the applications made it difficult for us to select the start-ups for promotion. We are looking forward to working with Apoly, Contagt, and Sulfotools to help them transform their visions and plans into reality,” said Michael Gamber, Head of the Innovation Center.

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#### Merck KGaA

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“We are certain that not only the start-ups will benefit from our Accelerator Program, but that we will also draw valuable and lasting inspiration from the knowledge exchange with the young founders.”

### **Apoly**

Apoly, is a Leipzig-based startup that aims to revolutionize the traditional pharmacy through a mobile application. User can seek advice on their symptoms based on an algorithm that develops suggestions for suitable prescription-free drugs. To ensure quick and reliable delivery Apoly relies on a vast partner-network, built up from leading pharmacies in large cities. For deliveries within 60 minutes, users only have to pay a small fee.

“We are looking forward to benefiting not just from the financial but also the professional support of the senior executive team. Participating in the Accelerator Program will enable us to get to know potential partners and clients. For our business model, the network is crucial to our success, and Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany plays a central role here.” Luca Christel (CEO)

### **Contact**

The company offers a solution to or the problem of disorientation in medical practices and hospitals. A lack of orientation can often lead to patients not following through with their visit to the doctor because they simply cannot find the way to the practice or office. Contactg has identified the solution to this problem through its worldwide first indoor-navigation system for smartphones. Users can track their location through the mobile application, which subsequently leads them to their destination. The navigation happens via Bluetooth-beacons. Contactg is aimed at practices and hospitals with a high number of patients as well as companies with large premises, office spaces and a high number of employees.



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"We have gotten to know the Innovation Center as a large playground of ideas. We are keen on developing our ideas further together with the other teams and hope to benefit from sharing our knowledge with them. In the long run we would like to draw upon Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany's strong position in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry, as hospitals make up our main target group." Johannes Britsch (CEO)

### Sulfotools

Synthetic peptides are agents that can be found in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and dietary supplements. The production of synthetic peptides requires more than 10,000 tons of organic solvent, as well as a high surplus of amino acids, the central component of a synthesis. Thus, Sulfotools has created the Clean Peptide Technology Method, with the help of which users are able to replace solvent with water. At the same time surplus amino acid can be reduced to a great degree. This can save costs by up to 50%, while maintaining the same or an even better quality. The company's main goal is the complete replacement of the wasteful synthesizing process with the Clean Peptide Technology.

"Our background is academia. Taking part in the Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Accelerator Program is the next big step towards addressing our target group: pharmaceutical and other large industrial companies. It is important for us to build up a vast network of people from different professional backgrounds, and not solely from academia. The participants in the Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Accelerator Program have a variety of backgrounds - sharing ideas with them will help us develop our product further." Sascha Knauer (CEO)

### The Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Accelerator Program

The Accelerator program is aimed at young companies in the healthcare, life science, performance materials, and IT sectors. The program will run for three months, in which at least three selected start-ups will receive strategic and operational advice, as well as financial support of € 25,000 in the form of a silent participation. The program does not



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foresee an equity interest in the companies receiving funding, nor influence over their operational and strategic management. The first three start-ups are supposed to move into the newly built, modular Innovation Center in Darmstadt, from September 15, 2015, on.

In addition to providing financial and infrastructure assistance, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, will offer to coach the start-ups also supported by mentors and enable them to participate in several trainings. At the end of the three months, the companies will be part of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany's start-up network.

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Merck KGaA of Darmstadt, Germany, is a leading company for innovative and top-quality high-tech products in healthcare, life science and performance materials. The company has six businesses – Biopharmaceuticals, Consumer Health, Allergopharma, Biosimilars, Life Science and Performance Materials – and generated sales of € 11.3 billion in 2014. Around 39,000 employees work in 66 countries to improve the quality of life for patients, to foster the success of customers and to help meet global challenges. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company – since 1668, the company has stood for innovation, business success and responsible entrepreneurship. Holding an approximately 70% interest, the founding family remains the majority owner of the company to this day. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany holds the global rights to the Merck name and brand. The only exceptions are Canada and the United States, where the company operates as EMD Serono, EMD Millipore and EMD Performance Materials.