

## News Release

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June 9, 2016

### **Accelerator Program of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Expands its Reach to Silicon Valley**

- **Global application period for Accelerator programs in Darmstadt and Nairobi starts today**
- **Selected start-ups can extend the program by one month in Silicon Valley**
- **Accelerator in Darmstadt increases funding from € 25,000 to max. € 50,000**

Darmstadt, Germany, June 9, 2016 – Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, has started this week the application period for the next round of its Accelerator programs in Darmstadt, Germany, and Nairobi, Kenya. Globally, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is seeking young start-ups in the fields of healthcare, life science and performance materials with a focus on digital solutions. Individual teams in Nairobi and Darmstadt will have the option to extend their Acceleration period via a month-long visit to Silicon Valley. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is thus taking a further step toward internationalizing its Accelerator program and is giving its start-ups access to the highest-investment start-up ecosystem in the world.

With the next round of the Accelerator programs in Darmstadt and Nairobi, the Accelerator of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, will be pressing ahead to internationalize the program. For the first time, one of the selected start-ups from Nairobi and one from Darmstadt will each have the opportunity to move to Silicon Valley for one month after the three-month Accelerator phase. The start-ups will be able to apply for the visit within the program. Once they are in Silicon Valley, the start-ups can expand their network of founders, investors and experts. In addition,

Page 1 of 3



they will have the possibility to test their business model in the United States and prove their concept.

Michael Gamber, Head of the Innovation Center at Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, points out the advantages for the start-up companies: "Silicon Valley is the region with the world's highest venture capital ratio. We want to provide our start-ups with the best support to establish themselves internationally and to network. A bridge to the Silicon Valley is the logical step."

In addition to expanding the program internationally, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, has also increased the amount it is providing to the start-ups from the Darmstadt Accelerator program. Instead of € 25,000 as before, the three selected start-ups will receive up to € 50,000 in financial assistance. Gamber explains this as follows:

"We have recognized that many start-ups here in Europe need more financial support as of a certain level in order to develop further. By increasing the financial support, we're also creating the possibility to take on and foster start-ups at a more advanced stage."

The programs in both Darmstadt and Nairobi will start on September 12, 2016, and will end in December 2016. The application period will run through July 25, 2016, via the [website](#).

### **About the Accelerator Program in Darmstadt**

The Accelerator Program in Darmstadt supports early-stage companies that are focusing on the fields of healthcare, life science and performance materials. The program primarily backs digital business models. Selected companies will receive office space at the Innovation Center in Darmstadt as well as mentoring and regular coaching from a pool of more than 50,000 experts from 67 countries. Furthermore, they will receive financial support of up to € 50,000. [Check-ER](#), [Matibabu](#) and [PEAT](#) are currently completing the program. Alumni of the Darmstadt program to date are [Apoly](#), [Contagt](#) and [Sulfotools](#).

## **About the Accelerator Program in Nairobi**

The Accelerator program of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, in Nairobi supports early-stage companies that are focusing on the field of digital health. Selected companies will receive office space at a co-working space as well as mentoring and regular coaching. Furthermore, they will receive financial support of up to USD 15,000. The companies [Flare](#), [Totohealth](#) and [Miti Health](#) are currently participating in the Accelerator program.

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Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is a leading science and technology company in healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 50,000 employees work to further develop technologies that improve and enhance life – from biopharmaceutical therapies to treat cancer or multiple sclerosis, cutting-edge systems for scientific research and production, to liquid crystals for smartphones and LCD televisions. In 2015, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 12.85 billion in 66 countries.

Founded in 1668, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed corporate group. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, holds the global rights to the Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, name and brand. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the company operates as EMD Serono, MilliporeSigma and EMD Performance Materials.