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Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Opens Application Phase for Next Accelerator

- **Start-ups can apply for programs at company headquarters in Darmstadt or in China**
- **Focus is on four fields: biosensing & interfaces, liquid biopsy technologies, clean meat, and artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled health solutions**

Darmstadt, Germany, June 5, 2019 – Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, today announced that it has opened the next round of applications for startup companies to participate in the global Accelerator program. Startups can choose to participate in one of the two programs, either at the company's Innovation Center at global headquarters in Darmstadt or at its China Innovation Hub in Shanghai.

"We generate new business by driving innovation beyond what we are currently doing," said Isabel De Paoli, Chief Strategy Officer at Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. "Collaborating with startups around the globe via our Accelerator offers the exciting opportunity to create a win-win situation for both the startups and us. They gain access to a strong partner with a lot of experience in partnerships that helps them to accelerate their industry-ready business, whereas we obtain fresh stimulus to drive innovation beyond our current activities. Joining forces can create an impact in tackling the challenges of humanity."

The Accelerator with programs in Germany and China connects startups to innovation projects of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and its three business



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sectors for co-development and sustainable business partnerships. During a three-month period, startups receive financial support of up to € 50,000 and benefit from in-depth coaching from a global network of over 50,000 experts, as well as mentoring from senior management of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, coaching sessions and visibility by attending inspirational and renowned events in the startup ecosystem.

In Darmstadt, the chosen startups will have access to the modern workspace at the futuristic Innovation Center of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, with prototyping facilities in the Makerspace. In China, startups will have access to the local company network and mixed sites such as Guangzhou, Beijing and Shanghai with different business focus and ecosystems.

Besides the core areas of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, research in Healthcare, Life Science and Performance Materials, the main focus of the Accelerator is to partner with startups in the company's innovation fields:

- Biosensing & Interfaces: technologies to interface between the biological and digital world
- Liquid Biopsy Technologies: solutions to overcome challenges in the liquid biopsy workflow
- Clean Meat: enabling technology required to produce clean meat (specifically for the headquarters program at the Innovation Center)
- AI-enabled health solutions that include AI solutions for diagnosis rate improvement and precision medicine; AI-enabled drug R&D; Digital therapeutics (specifically for the program in China)

"We have a lot of experience in partnering with startups. To make collaboration happen, we ensure startups the right connections within our company," said Michael Gamber, Head of Innovation Center of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. "The last intake of our Accelerator program at the Innovation Center was incredibly successful and 90% of the startups are either collaborating or in negotiations to partner with us."

For example, iXensor, a startup alumni that recently completed the Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany Accelerator program at the Innovation Center in April, is one

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of the startups that reached a collaboration with Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany to gain initial access to the African market. The Taiwanese start-up conducted a first successful pilot test at Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany CURAFA™ points of care in Kenya and provided its latest technology devices to support an initiative that seeks to improve primary healthcare access for the local underserved population in emerging economies.

So far, 57 start-ups have already participated in the Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany Accelerator program since the first intake in 2015. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is currently looking for up to 12 startups to participate in the program in Darmstadt and up to six startups for its China Innovation Hub.

The Accelerator programs will simultaneously take place from mid-January to April 2020 at the Innovation Center of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, in Darmstadt and at the China Innovation Hub. Right after each program, selected startups will also have the opportunity to extend their stay either in China or in Darmstadt. Applications for both programs are open from now until August 25, 2019.

For more information, please visit this [website](#).

About the Innovation Center of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany

Complementing research and development in the company's business sectors, the [Innovation Center of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany](#), supports the scaling of new businesses beyond the company's current scope. With its initiatives, creative working environment and culture of openness and exchange, the Innovation Center connects employees, startups and companies to create groundbreaking innovations.

About the China Innovation Hub

As part of the global innovation network of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, the China Innovation Hub scouts, incubates and invests in innovative opportunities in the current businesses of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and in fields between and beyond these. The China Innovation Hub is committed to partnering with start-ups, academic institutions, industry players and local governments. By combining unique technology and expertise from Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and collaborators, the aim is to develop novel technologies and bring new solutions to the market for China and the rest of the world. The China Innovation Hub also provides support of ideation, incubation and training to local talent, partners and employees of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, to build win-win collaborations.

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About Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, operates across healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 52,000 employees work to make a positive difference to millions of people's lives every day by creating more joyful and sustainable ways to live. From advancing gene editing technologies and discovering unique ways to treat the most challenging diseases to enabling the intelligence of devices – the company is everywhere. In 2018, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 14.8 billion in 66 countries.

The company holds the global rights to the name and trademark "Merck" internationally. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the business sectors of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany operate as EMD Serono in healthcare, MilliporeSigma in life science, and EMD Performance Materials. Since its founding 1668, scientific exploration and responsible entrepreneurship have been key to the company's technological and scientific advances. To this day, the founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed company.