

Media release

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### **13 startup projects qualify for the first phase of BaseLaunch**

**The BaseLaunch Healthcare Accelerator program from BaselArea.swiss started on September 14. Over 100 applications were received from more than 30 countries, and the selection committee has selected 13 projects to go on to Phase I. Now, the project teams will work with industry experts to further develop their business case over the next three months.**

More than 100 projects from over 30 countries were submitted to the BaseLaunch accelerator program from BaselArea.swiss. The submitted projects ranged from therapeutics and diagnostics to digital healthcare and medtech. Instead of 10 as originally planned, the selection committee chose 13 promising projects, which will now proceed to Phase I. "The innovation potential of the project proposals was impressive," says BaseLaunch Selection Committee Chairwoman Trudi Haemmerli, CEO of PerioC Ltd and Managing Director of TruStep Consulting GmbH. "We look forward to seeing how the chosen project teams fine-tune their business cases during Phase I."

According to Stephan Emmerth, the BaselArea.swiss Business Development Manager for BaseLaunch, the selected projects cover a wide range of objectives: from new approaches for the treatment of diseases such as Alzheimer's or novel immunotherapies to innovative drug delivery methods and next-generation gene therapies for cancer treatment. Other projects focus on new diagnostic procedures for finding cancer biomarkers or revolutionizing the detection of neurological diseases by deploying digital measurement methods.

The development stages of the projects were just as varied. Some projects were submitted by entrepreneurs wishing to establish a company with the support of BaseLaunch. Other projects came from existing startups that had already successfully managed the initial rounds of financing and wanted to further develop the company with the help of BaseLaunch. The founders of these companies and members of project teams also had different professional career histories. Some of the applicants selected for Phase I have many years of R&D experience in the industry; others come from a university background.

"We have chosen the most promising projects. Additionally, selected projects should benefit as much as possible from BaseLaunch and its regional life sciences ecosystem," says Alethia de León, Managing Director of BaseLaunch. "We paid particular attention to a sound scientific and technical foundation, a high level of innovation and the entrepreneurial potential of the founding team." Alethia also commented on the productive and collaborative selection process with representatives from healthcare partners that included Johnson & Johnson Innovation, Novartis Venture Fund, Pfizer and Roche. "Our discussions during the selection process were very constructive," she says.

The 13 selected startups will have three months from September 14 to develop their business ideas. They will be supported by the BaseLaunch team as well as a number of experienced entrepreneurs and consultants. In this first phase, up to CHF 10,000 will be available for each of the projects. The selection committee will then select three of the Phase I projects to progress to

Phase II. This phase lasts for 12 months, with each project receiving funding of up to CHF 250,000. The selected project teams in Phase II will also have access to the BaseLaunch Lab in the Switzerland Innovation Park Basel Area, where they will be expected to achieve important research milestones and further develop their business cases.

**Overview of the selected projects:**

**ABBA Therapeutics** develops therapeutic antibodies against novel targets for cancer immunotherapy.

The  **$\beta$ -catenin project** aims to develop novel therapeutics for the treatment of colorectal, lung, liver, breast, brain and ovarian cancers by removing pathological proteins from the human body.

**CellSpring** analyzes human cells grown in special 3-Dimensional environments to develop new tools for diagnosing early-stage cancer.

**Eyemove** strives to detect early-stage neurological diseases through eye-tracking.

**Polyneuron Pharmaceuticals** is committed to the development of a promising new drug class to treat autoimmune disorders.

The **SERI project** develops new medicines to treat anxiety and stress related disorders by modulating the activity of cannabinoid molecules in the human body.

**SunRegen** develops novel drugs for neurodegenerative diseases.

**T3 Pharma** develops the next generation bacterial cancer therapy.

The mission of **T-CURX** is to exploit its unique 'UltraModularCAR' platform to provide best-in-class immunotherapy.

The mission of **TEPTHERA** is to offer individualized therapeutic cancer vaccines.

**TheraNASH** develops precision medicine for fatty liver disease (NASH) - a rising cause of liver cancer world-wide.

**VERSAMEB** is a regenerative medicine research and development company.

One **biotech** in stealth mode is developing novel Immuno-Oncology drugs.

**BaseLaunch**

BaseLaunch was set up in 2017 by BaselArea.swiss and collaborates closely with digitalswitzerland's Kickstart Accelerator as its healthcare vertical. BaseLaunch has set itself the task of accelerating the development of promising and pioneering healthcare startups and strengthening the leadership position of the Basel region as the pre-eminent life sciences hub. The accelerator program offers funding, expertise, and infrastructure and industry access to promising new ventures, and integrates them into one of the most dynamic biotech and pharma ecosystems in Europe. BaseLaunch enjoys the backing of healthcare partners Johnson & Johnson Innovation, Novartis Venture Fund, Pfizer and Roche as well as other public and private partners. Projects are reviewed by a selection committee, which includes the following members: Dr. Fabian Buller, Director New Ventures, Johnson & Johnson Innovation, Dr. Phillipe Dro, CEO, NeMoDevices, Trudi Haemmerli, CEO and Director, PerioC Ltd, Managing Director, TruStep Consulting GmbH, Dr. Anja König, Global Head Novartis Venture Fund, Dr. Alex Mayweg, Venture Partner, Versant Ventures, Dr. Nathalie ter Wengel MD, European Head External Science and Innovation, Pfizer and Dr. Jakob Busch-Petersen, Intrapreneur, External Innovation, Therapeutic Modalities, Roche.

For more information, please visit: [www.basellaunch.ch](http://www.basellaunch.ch).

Important dates:

Phase I: September 14 – November 30, 2017

Phase II: January 2 – December 21, 2018

**BaselArea.swiss**

BaselArea.swiss is the office for promoting innovation and inward investment for the northwest cantons of Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft and Jura. BaselArea.swiss currently employs 20 people and has an annual budget of 3.6 million francs, provided by the three cantons and by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). The core function of BaselArea.swiss is to promote the strengths of northwest Switzerland as a center for business and to help both Swiss and foreign entrepreneurs and companies implement their innovation and business projects in the region. With its extensive information platform and regular innovation reports, BaselArea.swiss contributes to the sustainable positioning of the Basel region as a leading center for innovation and commerce.

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