



Brussels, 19 December 2017

KBC garners awards at SEP's 2017 Europe's Startup Stars

The '2017 Europe's Startup Stars' event in Brussels saw KBC recognised as one of 'Europe's Open Innovation Challengers'. In addition, KBC also won the 'Corporate Startup Investment Award'. The event is an initiative of the Startup Europe Partnership (SEP) at the EU Commission. Of the seven awards handed out, KBC was recognised together with KPN and Santander as joint winner of the 'Corporate Startup Investment' award.

At the awards ceremony on 18 December, the names of 36 companies were put forward as having, in SEP's view, done the most for start-up businesses in Europe, companies that devote themselves to working together with start-ups and set an example for open innovation in Europe. Twelve participants took prizes as 'Corporate Startup Stars'. Twenty-four, including KBC, were specially lauded as 'Open Innovation Challengers'.

The awards are a worthy reward for the following initiatives:

- KBC's joint ventures for enhancing the digital client experience, including with Joyn, Payconiq, Storesquare, Doccle, Thanksys and We.Trade.
- KBC's commitment to Start it @kbc and Surfstudio, in which it endeavours to enter into relevant partnerships with start-ups.
- The KBC Start it Fund and the Bolero crowdfunding platform, launched in 2016 by KBC Securities.

Erik Luts, Chief Innovation Officer at KBC Group: 'We're proud to be a role model in Europe and thus inspire others to tread in our footsteps. KBC is therefore pleased at this recognition from SEP, which shows appreciation for KBC's many years' devotion as a driving force behind so many innovative initiatives. KBC believes in the many advantages that a symbiosis with start-ups can deliver for clients.'

[SEP](#), an organisation set up by the European Commission in 2014 and the first pan-European open innovation platform, seeks to use the Europe's Corporate Startup stars project, under the leadership of [Mind the Bridge](#) and [Nesta](#), to put successful symbioses between businesses and start-ups in the limelight. The organisation hopes that this will even the playing field somewhat for businesses that want to commence start-up projects in the future and that best practices will be shared.

How the awards work

Annually, European start-ups are issued with a public call to nominate the corporates that are most active and supportive in working with start-ups. Nominated companies are called on to put their names down for SEP Europe's Corporate Startup Stars Awards, accompanied by detailed information and references relative to their open innovation organisation, activities (like one-off events accelerators, procurement programme's, investments, acquisitions, internal innovation) and the results achieved. Corporates identified through secondary research were also invited.

The ranking includes only the companies that applied to the SEP Europe's Corporate Startup Stars Awards by providing all the required information. Companies that didn't apply or that submitted insufficient information were not considered.

Applications are examined and assessed by Mind the Bridge and Nesta and a ranking drawn up together with the jury of SEP Europe's Corporate Startup Stars Awards.

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