



Brussels, 22 November 2018

European Commission presents KBC with Startup Accelerator Award for 2018 KBC awarded Corporate Startup Star

For the second year in a row, KBC's efforts have been recognised at Europe's Corporate Startup Stars, the awards presented by the European Commission to companies committed to promoting start-ups. KBC received the Startup Accelerator Award for its commitment to Start it @KBC, Belgium's largest accelerator with more than 650 start-up businesses. KBC also received one of the twelve Corporate Startup Stars for the way in which it values open innovation and for its participation in the Corporate Incubation Programme run by Start it @KBC.

KBC was also rewarded with a Corporate Startup Star for its intense collaboration with starter businesses. In 2018, KBC incorporated four of its own corporate start-up teams into the Corporate Incubation Programme of Start it @KBC to test their business model – just like the other start-ups – and to accelerate it, if successful.

Start it @KBC was launched by KBC in 2014. Thanks to the strategic collaboration with Accenture, Cronos Group, Flanders DC, Imec, joyn, Mobile Vikings, Telenet and local academic partners, Start it @KBC grew into the largest start-up ecosystem in Belgium. Under the leadership of its founder Lode Uytterschaut, the accelerator has supported more than 650 start-up businesses in Flanders and Brussels, and is also active on the international front. Start-ups follow an acceleration programme at Start it @KBC for three months and can benefit from mentorship, expertise and co-working spaces for a period of 18 months.

Erik Luts, KBC Group CIO: *"I'm very pleased with this recognition, which nicely confirms the pioneering role we and our partners play in the Belgian start-up world. This kind of cooperation is crucial for the start-up ecosystem and has now prompted numerous other start-up initiatives. But there is still work to be done. For instance, we want to boost female entrepreneurship even more from KBC and Start it @KBC and to continue focusing on intrapreneurship through the Corporate Incubation Programme of Start it @KBC.*

Investing in and sharing knowledge with start-ups is rewarding not only for them, but also for us as a company. The combination of the fresh start-up mentality at Start it @KBC and KBC's PEARL corporate culture stimulates intrapreneurship, including within the business environment. That's why we give KBC employees who have a good business idea the opportunity to develop it further in the Corporate Incubation Programme. This way they can quietly find out in the right environment whether their idea is scalable. After all, the best ideas often come from our own employees."

With Start it @KBC, KBC also wants to have a positive impact on the Belgian economy and society. This is one of the three pillars of KBC's sustainability policy, which is fully embedded in the company's business strategy. It ensures that KBC's sustainability principles are incorporated into all its activities and grounded in every part of the organisation, while enhancing the positive impact its day-to-day operations have on society.

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