10 Startups for a Better Future: Participants of the RESPOND Accelerator 2020

- The selection phase of the new RESPOND Accelerator program of the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt and UnternehmerTUM is officially completed.
- 10 startups with innovative, impact-oriented business models have been chosen from among 409 applications from 74 countries.
- The first Accelerator program will start on June 22, 2020.

Munich, April 27, 2020 – The participants of the first cohort of the RESPOND Accelerator, a BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt program for impact-oriented tech startups with support from UnternehmerTUM, have been selected. Ten startups from five different countries, and their socially and ecologically relevant business models, have convinced the jury during the selection phase. For them, the program will start on June 22, 2020, with workshops on impact-oriented business and responsible leadership as well as numerous networking events in Munich.*

The 409 applications from 74 countries attest to the relevance of impact-oriented business models. After a detailed review of all applications, 43 startups had the opportunity to present themselves and their projects in 30-minute video interviews. The final decision was made after a virtual pitch event with 18 finalists.

The ten RESPOND startups at a glance:

- **Amparo** – Germany: Using an innovative and direct-mold technology, Amparo provides prosthetics to amputees worldwide. The Confidence Socket is the first interim socket system which can be custom-molded directly to the residual limb, up to ten times.

- **BOSAQ** – Belgium: BOSAQ provides decentralized drinking water purification systems for rural areas worldwide, both in industrial and developing countries. Through a new, patented purification process based on renewable energies and membrane technology, costs can be reduced dramatically.

- **Brickify** – Nigeria: Brickify recycles plastic waste into water-, fire-, and heat-resistant bricks that can be used for the construction of roads and low-cost housing. The bricks work like legos: they interlock, and no additional materials are needed in the construction phase.

- **goodbag** – Austria: The goodbag is a smart reusable bag, which, thanks to a sewn-in NFC chip, rewards users every time they use the bag. Every time they visit a partner shop, they can plant a tree against climate change, remove plastic waste from the ocean, or receive a discount.
- **GOT BAG** – Germany: GOT BAG in 2018 was the first company worldwide to roll out a backpack made of ocean plastic. Together with a network of 1,500 fishermen in Asia, they collect plastic from the ocean. The plastic waste is sorted and its PET parts are processed into yarn used to manufacture the backpacks.

- **Hawa Dawa** – Germany: Through a combination of Internet of Things (IoT) and smart data, Hawa Dawa provides real-time data on air quality and thus helps cities and companies better manage air quality.

- **KRAFTBLOCK** – Germany: KRAFTBLOCK develops and distributes sustainable, highly scalable modular thermal energy storage systems (with temperatures of up to 1,300 degrees C). Made from 85% recycled materials, the storage systems have a lower carbon footprint than competing systems.

- **Made of Air** – Germany: Made of Air produces a thermoplastic base material, which is made of 90% atmospheric carbon and thus carbon negative. The material is a sustainable alternative for use in construction, interiors, furniture, and more.

- **Meersens** – France: Meersens has developed a SaaS platform and an app that uses AI and environmental data to identify risks to public health. Users can detect early on whether they are exposed to, for example, UV rays or air pollution and protect themselves accordingly.

- **Plan A** – Germany: Plan A enables companies to monitor, reduce, or compensate their environmental impact. Their software calculates the company’s monthly carbon footprint and creates customized action plans for sustainability.

Dr.-Ing. Heba Aguib, Chief Executive RESPOND, BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt: “We are excited about the large number of convincing applications. All of the selected startups are developing outstanding innovations in order to tackle global challenges and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations.”

Miki Yokoyama, COO for RESPOND, UnternehmerTUM, adds: “Through RESPOND, the ten participating startups can gather valuable experiences in dialogue with other startups and top-level partners in technology and business and improve and scale their impact-oriented business models.”

*If on-site participation in Munich is not possible due to COVID-19, the program will kick off virtually.

For more information on the Accelerator program, visit respond-accelerator.com

**About RESPOND**

RESPOND is an accelerator program of the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt with support from the innovation and business creation center UnternehmerTUM. The program supports entrepreneurs who use entrepreneurial approaches to contribute to a peaceful, just, and sustainable future in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda. As part of the program, founder teams have access to workshops and mentoring at the intersection of business, society, and the environment. In addition, our founders benefit from close contacts to the global BMW Foundation Responsible Leaders Network and the extended network of both organizations. The Responsible Leaders Network connects more than 1,800 leaders worldwide who work towards social change in and between societies. More information is available here.

**About the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt**

The BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt is an independent corporate foundation whose activities contribute to the social responsibility and mission of the BMW Group. The BMW Foundation promotes responsible leadership and inspires leaders worldwide to work towards a peaceful, just, and sustainable future. Through its activities, it aims to support the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. It inspires leaders by providing them with a platform for personal and
professional development, and connects them across nations, regions, and sectors through its global Responsible Leaders Network. The third component of the Foundation’s activities is to invest – financially as well as with its staff, networks, or pro bono consultancy – in initiatives and organizations that work towards solving the social, political, and ecological challenges of mankind.

About UnternehmerTUM – Europe’s leading center for innovation and business creation

UnternehmerTUM is a unique platform for the development of innovations. UnternehmerTUM actively identifies innovative technologies and initiates new business through the systematic networking of talents, technologies, capital, and customers. UnternehmerTUM offers founders and startups a complete service from the initial idea to IPO. A team of 240 experienced entrepreneurs, scientists, and investors provides support, including venture capital, to startups on issues of business creation, market entry, and financing. For industry partners, UnternehmerTUM is a central platform for cooperating with startups and for expanding their innovative strength and culture. Founded in 2002 by Susanne Klatten, UnternehmerTUM is the leading center for innovation and business creation in Europe with more than 50 high-growth technology startups every year – including Celonis, Konux, and Lilium.