**Press Release**

60 Startups Pitch in One Day

**"We Want to Show What Switzerland Has to Offer in Young Leaders"**

Solothurn, February 10, 2020 **On February 13, 60 startups will compete for five coveted W.A. de Vigier Awards. On Selection Day, the young companies pitch their ideas in front of the Foundation Board, investors and invited guests. Sixteen startups advance to the next round, and five will receive CHF 100,000 each at the Award Ceremony in early June.**

"After last year's Selection Day was such a big success, we decided to make it a regular annual event for the W.A. de Vigier Foundation. We see the event as a showcase of what our country has to offer in terms of top-class leaders. We want to support these 'Leaders of Tomorrow' at an early stage by providing seed capital as well as targeted coaching, and we have to continue supporting them later as scaleups. This requires a great deal of joint effort in our country. Switzerland's startup ecosystem is picking up speed, and we absolutely must maintain this momentum," says Regula Buob, Managing Director of the W.A. de Vigier Foundation.

Each startup company is assigned to one of six industrial clusters and has three minutes to pitch its project. After the event at the Palais Besenval in Solothurn, the jury will select its Top 16, which will undergo a leadership assessment in the following weeks. In addition, specialist expert reports are prepared and the startups take part in a 24-hour workshop. From these Top 16, the ten best will then be selected during two presentation days. The ten finalists will present their highly innovative products to an invited audience at the Award Ceremony on 3 June 2020.

**About the W.A. de Vigier Awards**

The W.A. de Vigier Award is the oldest prize for young entrepreneurs in Switzerland and, with annual prize money of CHF 500,000 (five times CHF 100,000), is one of the most highly endowed startup prizes in Switzerland. Over the past 31 years, the foundation has distributed over CHF 11 million of seed money. The results are over 90 flourishing startups, successful IPOs, multiple company exits and above all, many newly created jobs.

The following aspects are relevant for the evaluation of the projects: The entrepreneurial personality, the degree of innovation, the value for society as a whole, the technical and financial viability, market prospects and the potential for job creation.

**Contact details for questions**

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