**Press Release**

60 Startups Pitch in One Day

**"The Level of Innovation in the Applications Is Impressive“**

Solothurn, February 2 2021 **On February 4, 60 startups will enter the race for up to five coveted W.A. de Vigier Awards. The young companies pitch their ideas on Selection Day via a public live stream on the foundation's website. 16 startups will advance to the next round, and up to five will receive prize money of CHF 100,000 each at the award ceremony in mid-June.**

"Selecting the Top 60 takes more and more time every year because the level of the applications, which has always been high, continues to rise and the ideas are more and more sophisticated and complex," says Regula Buob, Managing Director of the W.A. de Vigier Foundation. "In addition, we invite startups from a wide variety of industries to pitch. This breadth makes our work extremely exciting. Foundation board member Alain Nicod emphasized during our committee meeting that he had really never been impressed by so many startups as in this year's cohort," Buob adds. A total of 217 applications were submitted.

Each startup company is assigned to one of six industrial clusters and has three minutes to pitch its project. After the event the jury will select its Top 16, which will undergo a leadership assessment in the following weeks. In addition, specialist expert reports are prepared. From these Top 16, the ten best will then be selected during two presentation days. The ten finalists will present their highly innovative products at the Award Ceremony on June 16 2021.

**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 up to CHF 500,000 (five times CHF 100,000), is one of the most highly endowed startup prizes in Switzerland. Over the past 32 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**

W.A. de Vigier Foundation

Regula Buob, Managing Director

Untere Steingrubenstrasse 25 | 4500 Solothurn

076 390 31 15

regula.buob@devigier.ch | www.devigier.ch