

“la Caixa” and the Spanish Ministry of the Economy, Industry and Competitiveness, acting through Enisa, have announced a new edition of Premios EmprendedorXXI (EnterpriseXXI Awards), which go to the most innovative start-ups

- ***The event is now in its eleventh incarnation in Spain. Widely viewed as Spain’s most prominent event for start-ups, the competition is now to be staged in Portugal for the first time.***
- ***The entry period runs from 4 September through to 3 November, during which time innovative companies with less than three years on the clock can put their names forward.***
- ***This year round, a total of five sector-specific prizes are on offer (Life Sciences, Information Technologies, Digital Businesses, Industrial Technologies and Agro-Food), plus a further 19 region-specific accolades (17 in Spain and 2 in Portugal).***

Barcelona, 4 September 2017

“la Caixa”, acting through private equity management company Caixa Capital Risc, and the Spanish Ministry of the Economy, Industry and Competitiveness, for its part acting through Enisa, have just announced a new edition of the Premios EmprendedorXXI (EnterpriseXXI Awards). The event aims to name and support ground-breaking companies promising the greatest growth potential.

Premios EmprendedorXXI has always attracted a large number of companies from all across Spain, given the support the initiative has enjoyed from CaixaBank (providing the largest commercial branch network in Spain), from Enisa and from regional and local entities and bodies dedicated to providing financial aid and support to fledgling businesses. In the 2017 edition, a total of 135 regional institutions are helping to organise the event.

This year round the competition is also being held in Portugal for the first time, following CaixaBank’s takeover of BPI in February. This means that eligible Portuguese companies - highly innovative businesses with less than three years in business- can now fight it out for the main prizes on offer.

Awards to the best of each sector and each territory

In this edition, a total of five main prizes will be handed out; one for each of the following five sectors: Life Sciences, Information Technologies, Digital Businesses, Industrial Technologies and Agro-Food. The winners in this category get sizeable prize money (25,000 euros per prize) and access to an international programme of growth organised alongside the Singularity University and a prestigious business school.

Meanwhile, a further 19 prizes will be handed to those companies to have made the biggest impact in their sector or field: 17 in Spain (one for each autonomous region) and 2 in Portugal (northern-central region and Lisbon-south and islands). The winners from the different regions will receive 5,000 euros and a grant to pursue an international course in business growth called *Ignite Fast Track*, which is being offered by Cambridge University (United Kingdom).

Moreover, the Israeli Embassy in Spain will award a runner-up prize for innovation consisting of a one-week training programme in Israel organised by the Tel Aviv-Yafo Academic Centre, in partnership with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In total, the 2017 competition will hand out close to 490,000 euros in prize money, making Premios EmprendedorXXI one of the most generous events in Spain and Portugal for budding businesses.

Entry period runs until 3 November

Entrepreneurs looking to enter their business initiatives have from 4 September until 3 November in which to do so. Entries can be made online at www.emprendedorXXI.es.

Entries will then be appraised during November and December and the finalists shortlisted. Following that, the regional prize ceremonies will be held during the first quarter of 2018. Meanwhile, the final phase of Premios EmprendedorXXI will take place in mid-March in Barcelona.

Prominent awards ceremony

Premios EmprendedorXXI is the most prominent event for Spanish start-ups and a key initiative in championing the best innovative business projects from across the country.

Since its inception in 2007, the initiative has invested 4.3 million euros in prizes and support actions, benefitting a total of 289 companies. Breaking it down further, a total of 2.5 million euros has been handed out in cash and a further 1.8 million euros in international training and networking initiatives.

Over its ten years of life, a total of 5,210 start-ups have taken part in Premios EmprendedorXXI and upwards of 257 business owners, investors and representatives from entrepreneurship support entities have sat on the various committees and panels.

About Caixa Capital Risc

Caixa Capital Risc, the venture capital arm of "la Caixa", invests in innovative Spanish start-ups promising high growth potential and accompanies and supports them as they develop and grow.

As a private equity management company, it is a multi-specialist investor that focuses on emerging sectors: life sciences, technology and digital technologies for industry. Caixa Capital Risc has **195 million euros** under management through eight investment funds and has more than 170 companies in its portfolio.

In addition to its investments, it is a major supporter of entrepreneurs across all of Spain. Through Premios EmprendedorXXI, "la Caixa" champions projects that bring training and visibility to new, high-potential companies, while helping to generate value-added contacts.

About Enisa

Enisa is a public company attached to the Ministry of the Economy, Industry and Competitiveness, through the Directorate General for Industry and Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises. It has been actively involved since 1982 in financing viable and innovative business ventures of SMEs and entrepreneurs in Spain.

Enisa finances these ventures through participating loans. To date, it has provided over 830 million euros to nearly 5,000 companies.