

Aigües de Barcelona, CaixaBank, Naturgy, SEAT and Telefónica join forces to scout for talent and escalate Spanish innovation

- **Start4big is born: the first digital, open and multi-sectorial initiative promoted by 5 major European companies seeking international startups at maturity phase to develop disruptive pilots in order to improve the consumer experience**
- **Every six months, the programme is to launch 4 challenges – 3 that are multi-sectorial and one cross-cutting – based on areas such as robotics, blockchain or big data, among others**
- **The call for startups will remain open until 22 February and, once the pilots have been analysed, a jury formed by experts in innovation and digital transformation will announce the list of participants at the beginning of June**

Barcelona, 26 November 2018.- Aigües de Barcelona, CaixaBank, Naturgy, SEAT and Telefónica have joined forces to launch the first European initiative promoted by 5 major companies to increase innovation and strengthen the domestic and international business network. It is called Start4big: a digital, open and multi-sectorial project to scout for national and international startups that develop disruptive solutions and solve different challenges posed in order to improve the experience of its consumers and, in general, make everyday life easier.

Start4big is to launch a total of 8 challenges a year, split into two editions known as Innovation Waves and aimed at startups at an advanced stage of maturity. Each of these editions will last for 6 months and will include 4 challenges: 3 multi-sectorial, those in which the startups will work with two or more Start4Big partners, and one cross-cutting challenge that may have an impact on all the partners involved. The challenges, which will be based on areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, robotics, blockchain and big data, among others, will have a positive impact not only on companies and consumers, but also worldwide by making everyday life easier.

Participating startups will have the privilege of developing and testing prototypes in real environments alongside these major corporations that, as a whole, are present in over 80 countries and have a combined workforce of 200,000 employees. They will therefore have the chance to reach a significant customer portfolio of over 380 million people worldwide, distribution channels, and international positioning and visibility.

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To solve each challenge, they will have the support of experts from the innovation departments of each Start4big partner, providing them with access to data, infrastructures, resources and technical support and technology.

Although Start4big will not have physical headquarters, as it is to use the infrastructure of all its partners distributed around different areas, it will have a technical office in Barcelona. Furthermore, two committees (one strategic and one operational) made up of representatives from the 5 partner companies will be responsible for decision making.

Start4big generates synergies across strategic sectors and key players in the innovative ecosystem, leading to a worldwide innovation community and a maturity never before seen in Spain, formed by entrepreneurs, innovators, experts, investors and key players in the ecosystem. Along these lines, the programme is designed to be fully in line with the goals of Horizon 2020, a programme launched by the European Commission to create synergies among startups and corporations to increase the competitiveness of up-and-coming businesses in Europe and increase the European innovation capacity.

The first Innovation Wave

During the presentation of the project today at the Movistar Centre in Barcelona, the 4 challenges that are to form part of the first Innovation Wave were announced. These challenges will focus on:

- Helping users control and manage home consumption (cross-cutting challenge).
- Improving the customer experience and/or reducing the costs of the services and products involved in on-line transactions (multi-sectorial challenge).
- Providing new services using communications between different devices, vehicles and/or infrastructures (multi-sectorial challenge).
- Tracking the activities of customers in real time to customise their experience (multi-sectorial challenge).

From today until 22 February 2019, those startups interested in taking part in any of the challenges posed may register on the [Start4big](#) website. Once the call has ended, a jury formed by external experts in new technologies, investors and key players in the innovation ecosystem belonging to universities and leading companies worldwide will be responsible for analysing and assessing the projects. A group of internal experts from the partner companies will then analyse the proposals to select the final list of participants, which will be made public on 11th June 2019.

The pilots selected will be developed over six months as of 18 June. There is no specific number of participants in each challenge.

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About Start4big:

Start4big is the open, multi-sectorial innovation initiative promoted by Aigües de Barcelona, CaixaBank, Naturgy, SEAT and Telefónica. It provides startups from around the world with the chance to work with these major corporations on developing and testing prototypes in real environments and access the market more quickly. Its goal is to scout for national and international talent to strengthen the Spanish entrepreneurial fabric and offer valuable solutions to its customers and to society. It is the first time in Europe that five major companies belonging to strategic sectors have combined forces to take open innovation to another level: a multi-sectorial collaborative model in which to develop technological solutions that have an impact on all the areas in which these companies work.

For more information:

www.start4big.com



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