

Spain's first fintech programme from one of the most important global start-up networks in the world

CaixaBank and the international platform 'Plug and Play' create a programme to strengthen innovation in fintech services, in collaboration with start-ups

- ***The initiative 'Barcelona Engagement Programme' will drive disruptive projects in fintech and payment methods services through co-creation with innovative businesses.***
- ***The teams of CaixaBank Payments and Consumer, imaginBank and Plug and Play will work together with start-ups to resolve real business challenges.***
- ***Plug and Play will collaborate with the various programmes that CaixaBank promotes for innovative businesses, such as the Entrepreneur XXI Awards, the zone2boost programme or the Payment Innovation Hub.***
- ***With its headquarters in Silicon Valley, Plug and Play is the primary global innovation platform and the most active venture capital fund, with more than 220 investments per year.***

Barcelona, 27 January 2020.

CaixaBank and global start-up platform Plug and Play join forces to drive innovation in the fintech sector **Juan Antonio Alcaraz**, CaixaBank's Chief Business Officer, and **Saeed Amidi**, founder and CEO of Plug and Play, have signed an agreement to collectively promote new services for the banking and insurance sector through a collaboration programme with start-ups, which they will support throughout their growth process. It is the first fintech programme in Spain with the participation of Plug and Play, considered the primary global innovation platform and the most active venture capital fund.

For Juan Antonio Alcaraz, "the aim of the project is to strengthen innovation in key areas for the financial sector today, such as user experience or the momentum of new business models. Thanks to a very early commitment to innovation, CaixaBank has been able to place itself as an international pacesetter in technology, through a model of co-creation with

third parties. This agreement will contribute to strengthening the model, through new ideas contributed by businesses in their early stages, and also through the connection with the international Plug and Play network, with start-ups from the fintech sector offering disruptive proposals, both in the mobile sphere and in payment services, which have already demonstrated their success on the market."

Meanwhile, Saeed Amidi said "We are very proud to form part of this project alongside CaixaBank. CaixaBank is a financial institution that has clearly shown its commitment to innovation, and is open to the ideas and contributions of third parties, with a focused objective to grow and improve user experience. This collaboration will demonstrate the quality of our services, and allow us to continue our path of growth in Spain. At Plug and Play, we have extensive experience in corporate innovation, with more than 400 partners around the world. Day by day, these big corporations trust in us to help them with their innovation strategy, especially in the implementation of new technologies from start-ups."

A new programme for start-ups: Barcelona Engagement Programme

The agreement is primarily articulated through the creation of the 'Barcelona Engagement Programme', the first innovation programme involving Plug and Play in Barcelona. A committee of specialists linked with the programme will identify and select innovative businesses in early phases with fintech and insurtech projects. These companies will be supported by experts to develop proof of concept, and will work together with teams from CaixaBank Payments and Consumer, imaginBank and Plug and Play to solve real business challenges.

Furthermore, the agreement with Plug and Play establishes the collaboration to locate innovative projects in the fintech sector that are setting up in other parts of the world, and to explore potential alliances.

Plug and Play has vast experience in strengthening collaborations between start-ups and large companies. Since it began in 2009, it has worked to create the main open innovation platform in the world, where 400 corporates and more than 25,000 start-ups collaborate to design the future of up to 17 different sectors, such as fintech, mobility or retail.

CaixaBank: a model of co-creation to drive innovative services

Meanwhile, the alliance with Plug and Play means that the platform will also collaborate with CaixaBank's various lines of open innovation. In its strategy to develop new services and user experience, the entity promotes collaborative work with third parties to detect trends and opportunities, through initiatives such as the Payment Innovation Hub, a multi-

sector alliance of businesses formed of CaixaBank, Global Payments, Samsung, Visa and Arval, or the zone2boost programme.

In this regard, it is important to highlight the synergies of the 'Barcelona Engagement Programme' with zone2boost, created by CaixaBank in collaboration with Global Payments and Ingenico. This programme, started in 2019, specialises in identifying new business initiatives in the area of technology for retailers and supporting them in their growth, so that they can offer entrepreneurs the opportunity to access high volumes of customers with their projects.

Support to start-ups and the entrepreneurial fabric

CaixaBank has a deep understanding of the entrepreneurial sector. The company has captured this experience in DayOne, a specific division for global start-ups and scale-ups with high growth potential. As well as advising innovative companies about financial services and everything they need to develop their business, DayOne provides an intensive programme of training and networking activities.

Furthermore, through DayOne, CaixaBank holds the Entrepreneur XXI Awards each year, co-awarded with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, through Enisa. It is the most established convocation for entrepreneurs in Spain: the awards will hold their thirteenth edition in 2020. The Entrepreneur XXI Awards recognise the work of the most innovative start-ups with the highest impact in their territories. As well as cash prizes, the winners gain access to international training programmes in key locations for the entrepreneurial ecosystem, such as Silicon Valley and Cambridge University.

About CaixaBank Payments & Consumer

CaixaBank Payments & Consumer is the company formed following the merger of CaixaBank's payment methods and consumer financing subsidiaries. The company manages an outstanding credit of around 8.3 billion euros, and is the leading company for card payments, with 17.8 million units commercialised and a turnover share of 23% of purchases and 28% through POS terminals in shops. CaixaBank also holds a leading position in the Spanish mobile payments market, in which its market share is of over 30%.

The creation of CaixaBank Payments & Consumer allows it to manage the entire consumer financing, marketplace and payment methods businesses comprehensively, to respond to the needs of the environment globally whilst technological capacities accelerate.

About imaginBank

imaginBank is CaixaBank's mobile only bank, aimed at the youth segment. With more than 1.5 million customers, it is a step forward in the innovation strategy of the company, recognised as one of the leading entities for applying new technologies to financial services. Furthermore, imaginBank incorporates all of CaixaBank's experience into the development of new payment methods

imaginBank has received notable international recognition. In 2017, it won the *The Banker* award, a publication of the Financial Times Group, for the launch of its chatbot, a customer help service that tells them about exclusive offers and discounts based on artificial intelligence. *The Banker* also awarded imaginBank in 2016 under the category of Best Technological Project of the Year.

About Plug and Play

Founded in 2006, Plug and Play has created the primary international innovation platform. To do this, it put start-ups, investors and large corporations who are changing the world into contact with each other. Plug and Play is based in Silicon Valley, and is present in 28 locations, including the United States, China, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore, Brazil and Indonesia.

They are experts in promoting corporate innovation, as well as in investment in startups. Its main investments include Dropbox, PayPal and Rappi, among others. The company is also the most active venture capital fund in the world, with more than 220 investments per year.