

## PRESS RELEASE

# BCN Health Booster accelerator is launched

**The initiative, backed by the Barcelona Science Park and the Barcelona City Council, kicks off with the support of Barcelona Activa and the collaboration of Biocat**

- Aimed at life sciences start-ups with an innovative project and social impact, BCN Health Booster is an acceleration programme that is part of the Barcelona Science Plan, designed as a tangible model for collaboration and consensus between public centres, companies, universities and administrative bodies to promote innovation in health and the return to investment in research.
- During a 3 year period, a total of eleven start-ups will receive free training, mentoring and advice from twenty-three mentors and experts in different strategic areas and they will be able to access a laboratory within a pioneering ecosystem for incubating businesses known as the Barcelona Science Park, an international benchmark in promoting innovation in life sciences.

**Barcelona, 2 June 2021.** The [Barcelona Science Park](#) of the [University of Barcelona \(UB\)](#) and the [Barcelona City Council](#) are launching BCN Health Booster, an acceleration programme to boost start-ups with an innovative healthcare business project, with support from [Barcelona Activa](#) and business support from [Biocat](#).

Under this initiative, that is part of the [Barcelona Science Plan](#), eleven recently created innovative business projects will have access to a laboratory at the strategic hub known as the Barcelona Science Park -an international benchmark in promoting innovation in life sciences- and will receive free training, *mentoring* and advice from a team of mentors and experts in strategic areas such as team management, sales and marketing, commercial law, financing, and internationalisation.

The programme also provides *networking* activities that promote interaction with the more than 100 member entities of the Barcelona Science Park Community and Biocat's national and international networks, and access to the Barcelona Science Park's state-of-the-art scientific equipment and infrastructure in order to benefit from an ecosystem that actively contributes to the growth of their business.

'Leading companies in the Catalan health sector such as Stat-Diagnostica, Greenaltech, SomBiotech, Oryzon Genomics and Enantia, among many others, participated in past bioincubators in the Park. We hope that this new acceleration programme will drive new projects that will become benchmarks in a few years', explains Maria Terrades, director of the Barcelona Science Park.

The President of Barcelona Activa and Deputy Mayor for Economy, Employment, Competitiveness and Finance, **Jaume Collboni**, said: 'We view this collaboration project with various key scientific organisations as an opportunity to retain talent in this sector in the city. We are delighted with the expansion of laboratories that will enable more entrepreneurial projects and projects of necessity to be designed and developed in Barcelona. Science and health are priorities in life and we want to be at the forefront of such valuable current and future projects. Collboni noted that 'life sciences represent 7.3% of our GDP and currently employ around 230,000 people. The growth model for life and health sciences is based on excellence, education, innovation and entrepreneurship. This is why the City Council's roadmap, Barcelona Green Deal, is committed to supporting all these areas, allowing entrepreneurial, scientific and university talent to develop their full potential in the city'.

According to the Deputy Mayor for Culture, Education, Science and Community of Barcelona City Council, **Joan Subirats**, 'this project fulfils an important objective of the Barcelona Science Plan, which is to stimulate the transfer of knowledge and technology from the world of research to economic activity. City Council connects science with culture and education through activities such as the City and Science Biennial or STEAM projects in schools, but we also have to make science the engine of a new economic model that is more resilient and sustainable, and that generates more well-being for citizens'.

Biocat's innovation director, **Núria Martí**, acknowledged that 'this initiative will equip *start-ups* with tools, knowledge, personalised support and access to international investors to boost their business development and accelerate their arrival on the market. These are all strategic activities within Biocat's mission to maximise the BioRegion's economic and social impact.

## The programme's strategic pillars

The BCN Health Booster accelerator is open to companies younger than five (5) years old that develop pharmaceutical, biotechnological or medical device products, as well as service companies geared toward the health sector that require the use of a laboratory to pursue their business activities.

A committee of experts will evaluate the applications using the following criteria: technical and economic viability, promoter team and social impact of the entrepreneurial project, prioritising *spin-offs* from public research centres, hospitals and universities.

The programme is structured around two pillars in an effort to accelerate entrepreneurial projects:

### -Subsidised access to laboratory space at the Barcelona Science Park

The Park is making 527 m<sup>2</sup> available for the programme in the Cluster II building, where the eleven selected companies will have access to a laboratory for exclusive use or for co-working, from 1 December 2021. Rents and general services will be subsidised by the Park for three years. The subsidy will be 65% in the first year, 40% in the second year and 20% in the third year.

### **-Free access to a business support programme**

The companies will have access to a Biocat business support programme during the three years, fully adapted to the needs or challenges faced by each company during this period, which will include mentoring and personalised consultancy; training (*customer discovery, intellectual property, market access and regulatory affairs, etc.*), and advice on access to funding, such as the preparation of pitch training, the one-pager and brochure, and participation in the Health & Bio Team Dating and Investment Readiness Series (TIROS) programmes, organised by Biocat.

### **The accelerator in figures**

The subsidy for the project from the Barcelona City Council is €468,936, of which €343,240 will go to partially subsidise laboratory rentals and €125,696 will be used to finance Biocat's business support programme.

The Barcelona Science Park will allocate €685,334 to adapt the new laboratories in the Cluster II building.

**-Applications deadline: 17 September 2021.**

**-For more information and registration: <https://www.pcb.ub.edu/bcn-health-booster/>**

#### **■ About Barcelona Science Park**

The [Barcelona Science Park](#) is one of Europe's model ecosystems in scientific, technological and business innovation in health and life sciences. Built by the University of Barcelona in 1997, it was the first science park in Spain. With a surface area of 100,000 m<sup>2</sup>, it houses more than 110 companies and public entities (including 6 large public research institutes) and nearly 3,000 professionals (54% women).

One of the Park's hallmarks is the wide range of Scientific and Technological Services to facilitate R&D&I, which it offers to both internal and external, national and international companies and research groups, complemented by a programme to dynamise the Barcelona Science Park Community to intensify the interaction between its members and the innovation ecosystem.

One of the Park's strategic lines of action also includes the organisation of scientific outreach activities to make research more accessible to citizens and encourage young people to pursue a career in science. Currently, as part of its Research in Society programme, it organises more than 100 annual face-to-face activities with the participation of around 6,400 individuals.

#### **■ About the Barcelona Science Plan**

The [Barcelona Science Plan 2020-2023](#) is Barcelona City Council's strategic science policy project, which has taken the form of a new Department of Science and Universities that implements science actions and programmes that will have a budget of almost €5 million in 2021. The plan, recently expanded to take into account the new challenges generated by the pandemic, is made up of 15 objectives and 70 actions to promote Barcelona as a city of science and research.

The plan includes an interdisciplinary perspective that links science with culture and education, but also incorporates multiple actions focused on the international projection of Barcelona as a city of science and the promotion of research and knowledge transfer for a new, more sustainable, and resilient production model.

### ■ About Barcelona Activa

**Barcelona Activa** is the municipal agency whose objective is to drive economic policy and local development to improve the quality of life for Barcelona's citizens by stimulating employment, boosting entrepreneurship, talent, and support for companies, and responding to the different needs of the people in its territory and from the perspective of the plural economy.

The economic development agency has been supporting entrepreneurial projects in the city for more than 30 years, with advice, specialised programmes and expert mentors who guide them through the business creation process.

### ■ About Biocat

**Biocat** is the institution that promotes the life and health sciences ecosystem in Catalonia and strives to maximise its economic and social impact. Biocat's strategy focuses on positioning Catalonia's BioRegion as a major European hub that offers innovative capacity to researchers *and* professionals with programmes to improve talent and entrepreneurship; accelerating technology transfer and business growth by supporting industrial liaison offices and *start*-ups; and attracting investors and investment to the ecosystem.

Created in 2006 by the Government of Catalonia and the Barcelona City Council, Biocat also promotes wide-ranging strategic policies and projects aimed at contributing to the country's competitiveness.

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