

## Bayer recognizes innovation by Korean start-up

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**Singapore:** Vital Smith, a Korean startup which focuses on developing innovative technology for diagnostics devices is recognized and acknowledged by Bayer as the final winners of its Grants4Apps Accelerator 2016 program.

Grants4Apps, now in its 3rd year, is an open innovation initiative, launched in 2013 as a crowdsourcing program. It provides financial support to developers and startups for their software, hardware and technology projects, which contribute to improve health outcomes or pharmaceutical processes.

Kemal Malik, a Member of management board and the Head of Innovation at Bayer, commenced the event with a keynote speech followed by project pitches of the winning teams.

"We are excited that the 'Grants4Apps Accelerator' program is so well accepted around the world and we welcome the first startup from Korea this year," said Kemal Malik, Member of the Board of Management of Bayer AG and responsible for Innovation. "With our 'Accelerator' program we create an environment which advances digital innovation in healthcare. We are looking forward to supporting the four digital health startups to further develop their innovative projects."

'B bless' presented by Vital Smith, is a saliva-based smart ovulation tester designed for women to provide easier and more accurate way of measuring their ovulation period through smartphone and its application. Vital Smith explained that 'b bless' has high degree of accuracy, convenience and sanitation compared to other existing alternatives such as period check application or urine test. 'B bless' users can easily get data about their ovulation period by putting their saliva on the film of the tester and then sticking it to the camera lens of their personal mobile phone. The judges also evaluated a lipstickshaped design of 'b bless' which is customized for women.

The three other winning teams from Ghana ("Bisa"), Hungary ("Turbine") and Germany ("xbird") are working on digital health projects in areas such as telemedicine, artificial intelligence in oncology and patient engagement.

Ingrid Drechsel, President of Bayer Korea said, "We are very proud to have a Korean

team as a final winner of Bayer's 'Grants4Apps Accelerator 2016' program. Bayer designed the program to create an ideal environment to foster digital innovation in healthcare." She also added, "As Korea is highly advanced in terms of digital innovation, Bayer Korea is planning to offer proactive support so that more outstanding Korean talents would be able to enter the global market."

Joon-Woo Seok, the CEO of Vital Smith said, "We are very pleased to be selected as one of the final winners of Bayer's open innovation program." Mr. Seok mentioned, "As Bayer is a global leader in the field of Women's Health with a wide array of business expertise accumulated over the past 153 years, we expect that this opportunity would help us to fast-forward our project of b-bless to promote women's health and a better life in both local and global market."

The winning teams will get free office space for about 100 days at Bayer Pharmaceuticals headquarters in Berlin, as well as coaching and mentoring provided by managers of Bayer and external entrepreneurs. In addition, the company will provide each team with a financial support of 50,000 Euro and opportunities to meet up with professionals from venture capital and investment companies.