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## Rockstart becomes a remote-first company

It took a global pandemic to accelerate remote working to where the world is today; nobody could have foreseen the profound impact that COVID-19 would have. For Rockstart, a global VC/Accelerator, the lockdown changed the company's strategy to move to a remote-first company. With the rapid shift of society adapting to 'digital as the new normal', Rockstart believes the tools and mindset are now in place to embrace virtual connectivity for the long term. From this summer onwards, the company will implement a flexible and digital work style.

*“Digital is at the core of Rockstart. Since the inception of Rockstart in 2011, we have been an international company counting employees from all over the world. We work with investors, startups and mentors across all continents, and the best way to serve our global network is being digital and becoming a remote-first company”,* says Rune Theill, CEO of Rockstart.

Rockstart already took the digital strategy to heart back in 2018 when the company started to adapt its accelerator program to a hybrid format – partly remote and partly in physical locations in collaboration with ecosystem partners. The change in format soon proved its value as the accelerators resulted in improved access for startups internationally and higher network engagement. The recent Digital Demo Day of the Artificial Intelligence program had more than 100 investors dialing in from all over the world, and the 2019 AgriFood program was launched in Copenhagen with startups from three continents participating without having to fly in to attend in-person events.

The CEO and co-founder Nikita Gulin of Agranimo, one of the startups in the AgriFood program, expresses his excitement for the remote-first development: *“Our team is distributed all over the world, from Russia to Chile. In comparison to other accelerator programs, Rockstart is more flexible. The program gave access to the local ecosystems in Denmark and the Netherlands, and much wider Rockstart's global network of investors and mentors, who we are still connected to. The remote setup enabled us to productively connect with mentors and the Rockstart team at any time”.*

Moving forwards, Rockstart will continue to connect startups to investors, corporates, peers and mentors from its hubs in the Netherlands, Denmark and Colombia. However, Rockstart will exchange its approximately 2800sqm in Amsterdam for a flexible and digital work style and focus on building meaningful connections between people and activities while being a remote-first company. Rockstart is not the only one adapting to this new way of working since the impact of COVID-19: a large part of its community has indicated a desire to work more flexibly and let go of its physical office infrastructure.

Since the onset of COVID-19 related restrictions, the Rockstart team has worked fully remote and seen a 7% uptick in employee's engagement. Weekly data gathered by the team showed that employees were not only more engaged, but also happier, healthier and more productive due to less commuting and more effective ways of communication. Rockstart will encourage employees to travel less and optimize for remote meetings to minimize environmental impact.

Sustainability has always been a strategic driver for Rockstart. Its investment thesis contributes to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Rockstart has recently introduced impact metrics across all programs to create more awareness about the need for a positive social and environmental impact.

*“Rockstart is a purpose-driven organization focused on accelerating positive change and contributing to solve global challenges within AgriFood, Energy and Health. Being a remote-first company with the environment in mind, perfectly aligns with our purpose and goals”,* says Rune Theill.

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#### ABOUT ROCKSTART

Launched in 2011, Rockstart has accelerated over 200 startups across four core domains that have raised a total of over €89 million and generated more than 850 jobs. Passionate about driving positive change with teams from all over the world, Rockstart plans to support and invest in its core domains, providing follow-on capital and unparalleled access to the market along the way. To do that, the accelerator partners with large players in respective industries to connect startups to their first customers and foster collaborative innovation.



Rockstart