

Limburg, The Netherlands. November 20, 2017

# Limburg at the heart of large-scale matchmaking between investors and high-tech start-ups in the Benelux

*Benelux Venture Forum visits Brightlands region*

**The 17th edition of the Benelux Venture Forum (BVF) is taking place on November 21st and 22nd in Limburg, The Netherlands. During this unique matchmaking event, high-tech start-ups will have the opportunity to meet with international investors. The event offers Limburg the opportunity to present itself at a Euregional and international level as an innovative and attractive region for both entrepreneurs and investors. Leading financial experts will be welcomed in our region. Brightlands Innovation Factory will host the event, which is co-organized with the Province of Limburg, LIOF, Chemelot Ventures, Medtronic, DSM, APG and Brightlands.**

## **Campus sectors**

40 start-ups will have the opportunity to pitch in front of a jury of financial experts. Companies are carefully selected through a high-level group of investors which are members of the "International Venture Club". This is a great opportunity to bring expertise and financial support on board. The participating companies will be prepped by the BVF organization. They can even take part in the 'Venture Academy' on the Brightlands Smart Services Campus. The top 10 companies will have the opportunity to qualify for the European Venture Contest Final, which will take place in December in Düsseldorf. The event will bring together companies in the four focus areas of Brightlands: Smart Services, Food & Nutrition, MedTech and Materials.

**Limburg – Innovation – Talent**

During the evening program on November 21st, Limburg will be presented as a strong innovative region with a unique entrepreneurial ecosystem, especially for high-tech start-ups. This will be done via a so-called 'fireside chat' led by Maurice Olivers (Brightlands Communication & Branding) and Lia Voermans (Brightlands Director External Strategy). Eleven representatives from various forums and industries will share their vision on where Limburg is today regarding Innovation and Talent, and the challenges that the region encounters. A central role will be reserved for Constantijn van Oranje.

Participants of the fireside-chats are:

**Constantijn van Oranje**/Startup Delta, Twan Beurskens/Provincie, Tys van Elk/LIOF, Robert Jan Galema/INKEF Capital, Paulien Strijland/Brightlands Innovation Factory, Leo Kretzers /Medtronic, Joep Beukers/APG, Casper Bruens/Chemelot Ventures, Thomas Cleij/Maastricht University, Stefan Jockenhövel/Maastricht University, Margareta Merke/Boostani, Herman Worries/DSM, Léon Klinkers/Brightlands Innovation Factory.

### **Collaboration – the region is joining forces**

Brightlands Innovation Factory hosts the Benelux Venture Forum event in Limburg. Co-organizers are the Province of Limburg, LIOF, Chemelot Ventures, Medtronic, DSM, APG and Brightlands. This joint organization has one common goal: to strengthen the region and grow entrepreneurship in Limburg. The Benelux Venture Forum (BVF) is a large contributor to this goal as it brings together highly promising entrepreneurs, active international and regional investors and corporations seeking investment and partnerships. The Forum plays an important role in the European and Benelux innovation scene. It fosters start-ups in the high-tech industry and it promotes Luxembourg, Belgium and The Netherlands as innovative, attractive and interesting countries to do business or to invest in.

**Constantijn van Oranje**, Startup Envoy: *“StartupDelta endorses the Benelux Venture Forum, as a great place for high-tech start-ups and investors to meet, exchange ideas and expertise and to accelerate their business. Brightlands, is becoming a real driving force for innovation and internationalisation in the region. It plays an important role in providing innovators access to potential customers and capital from abroad.”*

**Léon Klinkers**, CEO Brightlands Innovation Factory: *“What drives me is the fact that investors selected 40 promising European companies and then come to our region together with these companies. This interaction between investors and companies is based on a unique format that is strongly endorsed by TechTour (organization behind BVF). As Brightlands we will use this two-day visit to powerfully demonstrate the strength of this region by offering a dynamic program in the whole province of Limburg.”*

**Twan Beurskens**, Vice Governor and Regional Minister of Economic Affairs and Knowledge Infrastructure for the Province of Limburg: *“The Benelux Venture Forum plays an important role in the European and Benelux innovation scene. The two-day visit of the BVF to our region shows that Limburg is regarded more and more as a strong innovative region that offers many opportunities to innovative high-tech start-ups because of the unique Brightlands ecosystem. With such high quality events we foster the growth of Limburg entrepreneurship and show the strength of Brightlands to the best European start-ups and investors.”*

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#### ABOUT BRIGHTLANDS INNOVATION FACTORY

Brightlands Innovation Factory is the entrepreneurial backbone of the Brightlands ecosystems. We get inspired by daring ideas for a better and more sustainable world. We empower today's pioneers in advanced materials, health, nutrition, and smart services on their journey from a bold idea to a legendary company.

At Brightlands Innovation Factory, all the bases are covered. World-class industry knowledge and expertise are coupled with expert-supported programs, value-added services and facilities, and access to funding.

Incubate. Accelerate. Validate. Scale. That's what we do.

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# Brightlands Innovation Factory

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