

Sambrinvest and Co.Station bolster their partnership to make a better contribution to the national recovery plan

In this period of COVID-19, it is more vital than ever to boost innovation and entrepreneurship in Belgium, particularly in Wallonia. It is with this in mind that Sambrinvest is becoming one of the key partners of Co.Station Belgium today. Its expertise in venture capital and innovation will strengthen the development of Co.Station's different ecosystems and enrich the know-how already brought by Co.Station's other partners: Accenture, Cresco, Leyton and Microsoft. Sambrinvest and Co.Station want to capitalize on this partnership so as to contribute to the local economic development as well as to the national recovery plan. The announcement of their partnership was welcomed by Thomas Dermine, the Secretary of State for Recovery.

Sambrinvest has decided to become a global partner of Co.Station in order to have an even greater impact on local and national economic development, thanks to a better complementarity between its financing solutions and Co.Station's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems. It is a natural fit for these two players, who have been working together for two years in Co.Station Charleroi, a space dedicated to innovative digital start-ups.

Secretary of State for Recovery Thomas Dermine, who is the former coordinator of the CATCH plan that guided the Charleroi territorial specialization strategy, is delighted with this strengthened partnership between Sambrinvest and Co.Station Belgium: *"This partnership is fully in line with a process aimed at making local ecosystems spearhead local economic development. These ecosystems are composed of companies, large and small, but also of stakeholders in research, innovation and training. In this regard, the partnership between Sambrinvest and Co.Station can accelerate the growth of the digital and creative ecosystem of Charleroi."*

Promoting investment in projects with high potential for societal impact

For Sambrinvest, strengthening the partnership with Co.Station is part and parcel of a three-fold objective. The first is to bring its expertise as a venture capital player to bear on the financing part of the projects that will emerge from Co.Station's innovation programmes. These programmes are fully compliant with Sambrinvest's specialization strategy and investment of projects with high innovation potential for Wallonia and Belgium. The second is to contribute to a better integration of Walloon stakeholders and companies in innovation platforms at the national level. The third is to enable Sambrinvest to contribute to the definition of Co.Station's innovation strategy at the national level.

"By ascending to the status of global partner of Co.Station Belgium, Sambrinvest shifts into a higher gear in its role of specialized investor. Against the backdrop of a crisis this partnership also aspires to being able to contribute to the national recovery plan by encouraging investment in projects with a high potential societal impact from this shared innovation dynamic," says Anne Prignon, CEO of Sambrinvest.

The objective of Co.Station is to bring together technology and digital start-ups and scale-ups, as well as medium-sized and large companies from different industries in its facilities in Brussels, Ghent and Charleroi so as to foment cooperation and innovation. These facilities promote open innovation on specific and societal themes that enable companies to grow and innovate. Co.Station plays the role of neutral operator and facilitator between all the stakeholders concerned and sets up innovation ecosystems related to themes, such as energy (IO.Energy), mobility (co.mobility), and the post-COVID-19 resilience of companies (co.responsibility). Other ecosystems will be launched by Co.Station Belgium in the coming months.

"We are incredibly pleased to welcome a financial player among the global partners of Co.Station Belgium. Our collective open innovation methodology serves as the basis for the creation of projects with potential for investment. The companies that will cooperate with Sambrinvest and Co.Station will emerge stronger from this partnership. Our community supports innovation and entrepreneurship from the very outset of the project design," concludes Béatrice de Mahieu, CEO of Co.Station Belgium.

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About Sambrinvest

With more than 35 years of experience working alongside companies and entrepreneurs, more than 270 companies in portfolio and €160 million under management, Sambrinvest is a major player in venture capital in the Charleroi metropolitan area. A reference financial partner for the creation and development of SMEs, Sambrinvest has developed a varied financing offer over the years, adapted to market trends and the needs of entrepreneurs. More than an investment fund, Sambrinvest is also a catalyst for the development of local ecosystems, such as biotech, digital technology or engineering.

www.sambrinvest.be

About Co.Station

Co.Station Belgium is an inspiring and innovative workplace that helps entrepreneurs to develop their business and medium-sized and large companies to innovate. It is also the ideal partner for building innovation ecosystems thanks to its large community of start-ups, scale-ups, companies and its extensive network of international experts, universities, governments and regulatory institutions. By operating and facilitating cooperation and action by and between these different stakeholders, Co.Station plays a major role in focusing on societal challenges and fostering great ideas for cooperation with large-scale impact. To achieve its goal, Co.Station can also count on 5 trusted shareholders: BNP Paribas Fortis, SD Worx, Proximus, USG and Befimmo. Its workspaces are located in Brussels, Ghent and Charleroi.

www.co-station.com