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700 m2 start-up co-working space opens at Espoo Innovation Garden

## **VERTICAL GROWS TEAM WITH SONERA TO BOOST HEALTHTECH-STARTUPS**

**Vertical Startup Accelerator, focusing on health-tech start-ups, has today entered into a strategic partnership with leading telecommunications provider Sonera to boost the emergence of new technologies in the rapidly developing area of healthcare. Vertical, founded by entrepreneurs and professionals within enterprise and start-up development, also recently partnered with one of the biggest global manufacturers of consumer electronics – Samsung Electronics. Vertical also announces the program selection criteria on-line at [www.vertical.vc](http://www.vertical.vc) and its new home, a 700 m2 co-working space in Espoo, where first cohort of companies will be incubated starting already in June. The first acceleration program of Vertical will start in August.**

“Finland is one of the hot-spots for development of next-generation mHealth technology and related communications services and therefore we are very pleased to join forces with the professional and ambitious team of Vertical Accelerator to boost Finnish early stage companies in this sector,” says Mr. **Ville Lahti**, Head of Consumer Strategy, **Sonera**. “Our strategic intent is to work very closely not just with start-ups, but also with larger companies and public authorities to really facilitate an ecosystem that works in the spirit of Open Innovation.”

Vertical also announces a partnership with **Ingram Micro**, the largest full service logistic group in the world. Ingram Micro will serve as content partner and provide their know-how on global markets for the start-ups. “We want to be the best distribution partner for our customers, we are delighted to be part of Vertical and its mission, said **Mikael Carlson**, Head of Business Development, **Ingram Micro** Finland.

“Finland is already one out of ten countries that repeatedly and increasingly export more health technology than they import. The national turnover within the sector is 3 billion euros, out of which 1.8 billion exported representing already half of Finland’s high-tech-exports with 8,3 % annual growth in 2014,” says Mrs **Terhi Kajaste**, Chief Executive Officer of **FiHTA – Healthtech Finland**.

“Another 3 billion euros is the compound annual turnover of Finnish companies producing and selling sports equipment and related electronics,” **Pekka Sivonen**, co-founder at Vertical Startup Accelerator emphasizes. “We are bound to accelerate both of these sectors to grow faster than the market. This is the prime driver of our recent activities of putting together a powerful syndicate of companies such as Sonera, Samsung and Ingram Micro that can actually provide the go-to-market for the technologies and products developed here into global markets.”

Proactive healthcare with the extensions to sports, health and wellbeing represent biggest business opportunity ever to start-ups in casual health area. This is why Vertical also announces collaboration with the University of Jyväskylä for best-in-class research worldwide in the area of sports and athlete training. “With more than 450 researchers and sports specialists in this domain, Jyväskylä is leading center of sports research and education in Northern Europe and World-recognized hub of academic education and research excellence in sports, says Mr. **Aki Karjalainen**, coordinator of Jyväskylä Sports Hub at Faculty of Sports and Health Sciences of University of Jyväskylä. In Finland University of Jyväskylä educates all Physical education teachers, Master’s level sports coaches and Master’s level physiotherapists and gerontologists.

Close ecosystem-collaboration with the academia and City of Helsinki and Espoo are already producing results. One great example of this is **Upgraded Life Festival (ULF)**—event that gathers 800 people and 70 start-ups from the areas of Health, Wellbeing and Wearables into a conference to be held at **Academic Medical Center Helsinki**, Meilahti on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

As the largest event of the sector in Northern Europe in 2015, ULF has been put together by the **HealthSPA** - the non-profit community development organization that currently has more than 250 early-stage companies. "Without the full support from the **Helsinki University**, **Helsinki Think Company** and **FIHTA** – Healthtech Finland this would not be possible", says Mr. **Sebastien Gianelli**, Chairman of the **HealthSPA** ecosystem booster. Sebastien Gianelli is also one of the co-founders of Vertical Accelerator.

Health technology start-ups are in many ways the focus of attention and efforts in a country like Finland, which is in the process of totally renewing its nationwide healthcare-system. Health technology has also been identified as one clear growth and investment area of massive international potential. To address this potential, a national growth strategy was announced last year by the co-operation of three Finnish ministries (Ministry of Employment and Economy, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Education and Culture), Tekes and Academy of Finland. The implementation of this strategy program is proceeding with a number of parallel actions by various stakeholders. **City of Helsinki**, University of Helsinki and **Aalto University** are speeding up the development within the business sector for health technology by their joint Health Capital – initiative.

The Social Welfare and Health Care Reform that will shortly take shape in Finland under the soon to be nominated new government. Healthy life-style choices and clean food trends combined with high skill-sets in mobile and software knowledge, interests naturally several international actors. Vertical Accelerator channels these interests by turning them into real action with the Finnish Society.

Sonera's communications and entertainment services enable flexibility in everyday life, a freedom of choice and new opportunities for consumers, companies and communities. At the end of 2014, Sonera had approximately 4.5 million subscribers. We operate throughout the country and employ approximately 3,000 people. [www.sonera.fi](http://www.sonera.fi).

Sonera is part of the TeliaSonera Group, the leading telecommunications company in the Nordic and Baltic countries. Through our subsidiaries and associated companies, we have a strong position on the markets in Eurasia, Russia, Turkey and Spain. Our operations lean on the principles of responsible business operations, which we implement and develop in pace with changes taking place in society. Read more about us at [www.teliasonera.fi](http://www.teliasonera.fi).

Ingram Micro helps businesses *Realize the Promise of Technology™*. It delivers a full spectrum of global technology and supply chain services to businesses around the world. Deep expertise in technology solutions, mobility, cloud, and supply chain solutions enables its business partners to operate efficiently and successfully in the markets they serve. Unrivaled agility, deep market insights and the trust and dependability that come from decades of proven relationships, set Ingram Micro apart and ahead. More at [www.ingrammicro.com](http://www.ingrammicro.com).

University of Jyväskylä (JYU) is a multidisciplinary, dedicated scientific university. Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences is the only academic institution in Finland educating experts in Sport Sciences. The Faculty conducts internationally recognized research on sports, health and their connections, spanning the entire human life cycle. The research activities encompass basic and applied research, as well as research serving product development. Internationally significant areas of research are neuro-muscular mechanisms and adaptation in physical exercise plus Health Sciences, especially physical activity and health, aging and health promotion. JYU works closely with other Jyväskylä-based organizations like Kihu, Likes and JAMK. More at [www.jyu.fi](http://www.jyu.fi).

Vertical is a startup accelerator that is solely focused on health technologies and smart life. The accelerator program is run twice a year for 4 months at a time. Each time up to 15 early stage companies within health technology, wellness, bioscience and nutrition is chosen for the program. The accelerator offers companies an environment where to develop and grow their business: together with selected partners, the accelerator offers members a co-working space, a training program which focuses on going from minimum viable product to *minimum meaningful product*, organizing of financing, assistance, and connections within marketing and international product distribution. More information on [www.vertical.vc](http://www.vertical.vc).

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