

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Zcube Launches the 2024 Edition of Open Accelerator, an International Acceleration Program Aimed at Life Sciences Startups with Focus on Women's Health and Femtech**

- This marks the fifth edition of the acceleration program launched by Zcube, Zambon Research Venture. With a focus on women's health and femtech, it confirms its uniqueness and is poised to become one of the first programs globally to invest significantly in the femtech sector.
- Up to 5 startups can receive an investment of €100,000 each and join a dedicated acceleration and mentoring program.
- The Call for applications will open on Friday, March 8, 2024. The applications will be accepted until June 16.

**Zcube - Zambon Research Venture** announces the fifth edition of **Open Accelerator**, the international acceleration program for high-potential innovative startups in the field of life sciences. Starting this year, the program will focus on the femtech sector and will feature a new format. The initiative, one of the first internationally in terms of focus and invested capital, invites startups and entrepreneurial ideas aimed at developing products and services to address major medical needs and improve women's health and well-being. The targeted therapeutic areas include gynecology, cardiovascular health, oncology, sexual health, endocrinology, gastroenterology, nutrition, autoimmune disorders, mental health, neurology, reproductive health, and more.

The **Call for application** will open on **Friday, March 8, 2024**, on the International Women's Day, and will remain open until June 16. At the end of the selection process, up to 5 startups will be identified to receive an investment of **€100,000** each, through a SAFE (Simple Agreement for Future Equity) agreement and will have access to a training and mentoring program delivered by experts in the fields of investments, business development, venture capital, intellectual property, regulatory affairs, and market access.

Startups with the highest potential will also have the opportunity to build a partnership with the Zambon group, accelerating their market access phase and commercial positioning on a global scale.

*"We are eager to launch the fifth edition of Open Accelerator; we are excited to discover which companies can bring innovative solutions to change the Life Sciences and women's health sector. The choice to dedicate the 2024 edition to the femtech sector is deliberate: working in unexplored areas can contribute to creating benefits for the global economy. As highlighted by recent studies, bridging this gender gap is essential" - said **Giovanni Magnaghi, President of Zcube and Chief Financial Officer of Zambon** – "Since 2016, Open Accelerator has allowed us to offer direct access to capital and expertise to new and promising entrepreneurial ideas, thanks to the collaboration with prominent*

*partners participating in the open innovation ecosystem at our scientific campus, OpenZone, where part of the program is hosted”.*

The previous four editions of the program selected 46 startups from 23 countries, 8 of which have received up to €100,000 each in seed investment. The winner of the Distinction Award during the last edition of Open Accelerator comes from the femtech sector: **Hyivy Health**, a Canadian startup developing a medical device for pelvic floor rehabilitation. Founded in 2019 by Canadian entrepreneur Rachel Bartholomew following a diagnosis of cervical cancer, Hyivy Health aims to improve the standard of care for both patients and physicians through a holistic approach. **Bartholomew, CEO of Hyivy Health**, commented on the launch of the new edition of Open Accelerator: *“It is a turning point for the industry. Open Accelerator is one of the first programs to enter this field with resources and real opportunities for femtech startups on a global level”.*

*“Open Accelerator values the experience of Zcube and best expresses our vision of Zambon as an open company, where open innovation serves as a lever for cultural and entrepreneurial growth for both us and the entire system” - commented **Elena Zambon, President of Zambon and creator of Open Accelerator** – “Women’s health is a fundamental focus for Zambon and a central issue in international health agendas: supporting these entities and helping them bringing their innovative entrepreneurial ideas to market is an additional effort by our group to innovate cure and care to make patients’ lives better”.*

### **Open Accelerator – Program details**

The **Call for Application** will open on **Friday, March 8, 2024**. After the application deadline on June 16, an evaluation period will follow, involving due diligence activities and interviews conducted by a team of experts from Zcube, Zambon, and HTH - Health Technology Holdings, the operational partner of the program, as well as specialized advisors depending on the technology or specific therapeutic area.

The acceleration program will begin in September with a three-day kick-off at OpenZone, the scientific campus just outside Milan dedicated to health, created by Zambon with the goal of bridging different worlds, languages, and skills. This will be followed by weekly online workshops and lessons on key topics such as product development, market access, sales and marketing, regulatory affairs, and clinical validation. In addition to this knowledge, each selected startup will benefit from dedicated mentorship to guide them in overcoming the challenges unique to their entrepreneurial journey. All activities will be conducted in English to foster the development of a truly international network of connections.

The program will conclude with another three days at the OpenZone campus, scheduled for late November, focusing on business and financial plans, equity negotiation, term sheet drafting, exit strategies, and post-deal governance. At the end of the program, a **Demo Day** will be held to present the startups and projects to various international venture capital funds.

Coordinating Open Accelerator will be a team of professionals experienced in Life Sciences and Venture Capital including Federica Destro, External Innovation & Community manager at Zcube, Vittoria Pavoncello, Technology Scouting & Investment Specialist at Zcube, Michele Gaiotto, CEO of HTH and Advisor to Zcube, and Marco Gullà, Investment Associate at HTH.

For more information about the program, visit [www.openaccelerator.it/](http://www.openaccelerator.it/)

For more information about Zcube, visit [www.zambon.com/en/innovation/zcube](http://www.zambon.com/en/innovation/zcube)

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