

Wayra (Telefónica) and HBX Group announce the winning start-ups to join the TravelTech Lab

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- Firstview, Hotelverse, Didit (Gamium) and Unblock are the lucky start-ups to join the TravelTech Lab by HBX Group, in collaboration with Wayra.
- The second innovation challenge looked for start-ups specialising in virtual reality, the metaverse and AI to help change the way travellers move, connect, and explore.

Madrid, 7 March, 2024 - HBX Group, a leading independent B2B TravelTech company, and Wayra, Telefónica's Corporate Venture Capital, today announced the winners of the second TravelTech Lab by HBX Group challenge after analysing 120 companies from 25 countries including Spain, France, UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore, and Korea.

Only 6 start-ups were given the opportunity to present their project to a professional jury composed of experts from both companies at the pitching hub during 4FYN, part of the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. The goal of the challenge was to find start-ups that specialise in virtual reality, the metaverse and AI to help B2B travel companies improve efficiency in their operations. After hearing the proposals, four winners have been announced to join the TravelTech Lab, for their solutions that create more engaging experiences and reshape distribution within the TravelTech industry.

The winning start-ups are:

- [Didit](#) (Gamium): an intuitive app that combines NFC, blockchain and artificial intelligence technologies to ensure secure identity verifications and smart digital payments.
- [Firstview](#): provides hotels with virtual reality and immersive digital content with 3D virtual tours, 360° aerial view, virtual sales platform, and reporting.
- [Hotelverse](#): offers travellers the opportunity to fly over the hotel, explore its facilities, hyper-personalise a specific room and book it.
- [Unblock](#): an application that serves as a point of contact with the citizen and offers comprehensive access to city services in an easy and attractive way.

These startups will receive advice and guidance from industry experts, and they will also join Wayra's

innovative ecosystem and work directly with HBX Group teams to develop joint business opportunities. In addition, HBX Group may offer a grant of up to €40,000 to pilot and bring their proposal to life.

All four of the selected start-ups will be able to work with other like-minded entrepreneurs in Wayra's 7 spaces in Europe and Latin America, as well as in HBX Group's hubs in Mallorca and Madrid.

"Our alliance with HBX Group is an exciting adventure, we want to create innovative solutions through the most disruptive technologies that redefine the hotel and tourism sector. What better way to do it than by relying on the entrepreneurial ecosystem that we have been supporting for more than 15 years? Wayra would like to congratulate all the winners, as together we will seek to create a real impact on their business, and successfully face the new challenges of the market", explains **Andrés Saborido**, COO of Wayra.

José María Pestaña, Chief Innovation & Public Affairs Officer at HBX Group, stated: "Innovation is the cornerstone of our TravelTech Lab at HBX Group, and the collaboration with Wayra is key in connecting with start-ups that offer a differential value proposition. We are very pleased with the outcome of the second challenge and would like to congratulate all the selected start-ups. We firmly believe that the winning proposals can contribute to improving the efficiency of our partners. We are confident that together we can continue to facilitate the real transformation of the TravelTech space and improve the traveller experience."

About HBX Group

HBX Group is a leading B2B ecosystem player in the TravelTech space, connecting and empowering businesses in the ever-evolving world of travel. We drive growth for our clients & partners while removing friction from the end-to-end travel experience. Our cloud-based technology platforms offer fast and reliable access to a unique portfolio of travel products & services, while rich data and intelligence seamlessly connect supply and demand worldwide.

We have over 3,000 experts worldwide, including specialists on the ground who provide insights and support to boost trading even further, especially in the most hard-to-reach segments. This unique blend of technology, data, and passionate people, serves as a catalyst for all businesses aiming to unlock their full potential in the travel arena.

More information available at www.hbxgroup.com

About Wayra

Wayra is Telefónica's Corporate Venture Capital and its Open Innovation platform. Wayra invests in startups with the capacity to attract innovation to Telefónica and provides innovation services to third parties, to help them take their Open Innovation initiatives to the next level.

With a global presence, it has seven hubs in Europe (Spain -Madrid and Barcelona-, United Kingdom and Germany) and Latin America (Brazil, Argentina and Colombia), and teams operating in nine countries. Through its funds, it is also present in Silicon Valley and Israel.

Since its creation more than 15 years ago, Wayra has invested €233M in +1,100 startups and currently has +530 startups in its portfolio, of which +190 work with Telefónica. We also have a network of more than 140 partners and customers, and two innovation platforms (Alaian and Open Future) open to third parties.

HBX Group

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