**Building Innovation at Innovation Labs 2.0**

**Bucharest, February 12.** Registrations are now open for Innovation Labs 2.0, the first pre-acceleration program in Romania organized by TechLounge with the support of Orange and Microsoft. Students and young professionals passionate about entrepreneurship and technology can register for the hackathons that open the program by completing the registration form available online at <http://2014.innovationlabs.ro/register>

Innovation Labs 2.0 is a pre-acceleration program targeting the youth that want to build their own technology startups. The program starts with two 24 hours hackathons that will take place in Bucharest on March 1st and in Cluj on March 8.

Each hackathon starts with a pitching sessions where the attendees have 1 minute to convince the audience. The teams are then formed around the most appreciated projects. For the next 24 hours the participants will work to develop their business concept and their minimum viable product. Their efforts will be supported by mentors: entrepreneurs, professionals and industry leaders. In the end the teams will pitch their projects in front of a jury and the best 26 projects (16 in Bucharest and 10 in Cluj) will enter the pre-acceleration program.

In between March 4 – May 15, the Innovation Labs 2.0 teams will continue to develop their own startups by working with well-known entrepreneurs, specialists and industry leaders. They will attend TechTalks, open discussions with experts in different areas, and they will participate in mentoring sessions aimed at helping them solve the problems they face and turn their ideas into viable startups.

During the program the participants will learn more about building innovative tech products, customer discovery and validation, marketing and communication for startups, business models and monetization, sales and financing. Their progress will be evaluated in April when they will pitch their products for the first time in front of the audience in order to receive feedback and further guidance from experts in the field.

Innovation Labs 2.0 ends in the month of May with a Demo Day where the startups developed during the program will validate their business concepts by pitching in front of a jury of investors, journalists and technology experts. The best projects will receive awards and will receive further support from the Innovation Labs team in order to launch their products on the market and to continue developing them.

*“The results of the first Innovation Labs edition showcase the quality of the program as well as the significant impact it has over the youth. We are proud that two of our alumni have been selected to attend How to Web Startup Spotlight, and a third one has raised an initial round of funding and is getting ready to launch its product on the market. In comparison with the previous edition, Innovation Labs 2.0 will take place in two university centres (Bucharest and Cluj) and it will lead to the development of 26 startups. We are convinced that many of these projects will be successful and will turn into viable businesses with concrete results on the long run!”*, said Andrei Pitiş, Co-Founder of TechLounge and investor.

Students and young professionals that want to build technology startups can register for the Innovation Labs hackathons until Wednesday, February 26, by completing the registration form available online at <http://2014.innovationlabs.ro/register>. The program welcomes both individuals and existing teams that either have a business idea or are looking for inspiration and co-founders to start a business.

Innovation Labs 2.0 is a project organized by TechLounge with the support of Orange and Microsoft. The partners of the program are IXIA, Intel, Mysis, Universitatea Politehnica Bucureşti, Asociaţia Patronală a Industriei de Software şi Servicii (ANIS), Akcees, Spherik Accelerator and ProvePR.

The visibility of the event is ensured by Adevărul, Cariere, Wall-Street.ro, Forbes România, Zelist Monitor, TPU.ro, România Liberă, Manager Express, EJobs, IQAds, Ziare.com, MarketWatch, Business Woman, Business Cover, Tech Cover, Business24, Gadget Trends, Computer World, PC World, Agora, Electronica Azi, Romanian Startups, Academic Link, Online Student, România Pozitivă, Studentul.info, Today Software Magazine şi Cluj Life.

We are proud to have the support of: Junior Achievement România, Startup Weekend, Business Days, Business Club, AIESEC, BOS România, ASCIG, Incubator107, Softbinator, SISC, DA Afaceri, Student din provincie, Inventeaza.ro, Inspire Business, Geek Meet şi Cluj Hub.