

## Pressrelease

*Embargo period: Do not publish or contact finalists before Tuesday, May 7th at 21:00*

# Start-up Decentriq from Zurich wins the ZKB Pionierpreis Technopark 2024

*The start-up Decentriq from Zurich uses data protection technology and artificial intelligence to create completely new opportunities for collaboration between companies. The start-up won over the ZKB Pionierpreis Technopark jury with its “clean room for data” and can look forward to CHF 100,000 in prize money. The co-finalists Avelo and Stimit each receive CHF 10,000. The audience award goes to 4QT.*

**Zurich, May 7, 2024** - Decentriq wins the ZKB Pionierpreis Technopark 2024, endowed with CHF 100,000, at Technopark Zurich. The start-up offers a SaaS platform with data protection technologies and advanced AI solutions. It enables companies to work together on confidential data and create insightful statistics or AI models without ever sharing the raw data. To do so, Decentriq uses confidential computing, a new, highly secure chip and cloud technology, to process encrypted raw data.

“The most valuable data in a company is typically also the most sensitive, and it is governed by legal and regulatory requirements”, explains Michelle Tschumi, Head of Start-up Finance at ZKB, adding: “We as jury of the Pionierpreis are convinced, that Decentriq is setting a new standard by using AI tools to generate real added value from protected data sources. By breaking down data silos, new value-creating analyses are massively improved or enabled in the first place.”

The start-up was founded in 2019 by Maximilian Groth (CEO) and Stefan Deml (CTO). In addition to the young company's technically sophisticated solution, its success to date has also been impressive. Decentriq currently employs forty people and already serves a striking customer base, including hospitals, publishing houses and the Swiss Army. “At Decentriq, we are convinced that one cannot compromise on data protection when exploiting valuable data. We are enabling the collaborative use of sensitive data - protected and demonstrably inaccessible,” explains Maximilian Groth. The co-founder adds: “Winning the Pionierpreis is not only an honour for us, but also a validation of the journey we have taken.”

### Further prizes for Avelo, Stimit and 4QT (Audience Award)

The two runner-ups Avelo and Stimit will each receive CHF 10,000. Avelo from Schlieren was founded in 2020 by HSG graduate Melanie Aregger (CEO) and Tobias Broger (CTO). With AveloCollect, the Medtech start-up has developed a user-friendly, non-invasive breath collector to improve the diagnosis of tuberculosis and lower respiratory tract infections. Doctors can use AveloCollect to painlessly collect breath samples and analyse them quickly and precisely using a PCR test. This makes the breath collector a simple alternative to time-consuming sputum or lavage samples and reduces healthcare costs and the risk of infection. Production and marketing in Switzerland and Germany will begin this year.

Co-finalist Stimit, headquartered in Biel and operating a smaller site in Zurich, was founded by engineer Ronja Müller-Bruhn (CEO) and her husband Oliver Müller in 2018. The Medtech designed a non-invasive procedure to preserve the diaphragmatic muscles of ventilated patients. With the Stimit Activator, the start-up aims to launch an innovative product on the market, that uses a special headset to generate targeted electromagnetic fields, stimulating the diaphragm via the phrenic nerve to prevent tissue atrophy. Initial clinical data has already been collected in collaboration with the Swiss Paraplegic Center (SPZ) and the Charité in Berlin.

The inaugural Audience Award goes to 4QT from Zurich. The start-up was chosen by the attendees of the award ceremony and received CHF 2500 in prize money.

Corine Mauch (Mayor of the city of Zurich) opened the award ceremony with an impressive speech on Switzerland as a hub for innovation and technology followed by the two robotics luminaries Roland Siegwart and Marco Hutter (both ETH Zurich). They thrilled the crowd of around 350 guests with their keynote speech “AI in motion” - a motorized demonstration of the interplay between artificial intelligence and robot development.

### **About ZKB Pionierpreis Technopark**

The ZKB Pionierpreis Technopark has been awarded annually by Zürcher Kantonalbank (ZKB) and Technopark Zurich since 2001 and is one of the most important start-up awards in Switzerland. The Pionierpreis recognizes deep-tech projects whose innovative realization is about to enter the market. It particularly recognizes the founders' commitment and willingness to take risks. In addition to the winners, the Pionierpreis, which is endowed with CHF 100,000, also honours the runners-up with prize money of CHF 10,000 each. As one of the most important Swiss innovation awards, the Pionierpreis helps start-ups to raise further capital and offers winners and nominees a prestigious platform to present themselves to the public.

**Important note:** The application deadline for the ZKB Pionierpreis Technopark 2025 is September 23, 2024.

**More Information:** [www.pionierpreis.ch](http://www.pionierpreis.ch)

[www.avelolife.com/](http://www.avelolife.com/)

[www.decentriq.com](http://www.decentriq.com)

[www.stimit.com](http://www.stimit.com)

<https://www.4qt.ch/>

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