



Press Release

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Find your best match with KBC Vindr – the first online matchmaker for entrepreneurs

KBC commissioned the market research firm Profacts to survey over 700 Belgian entrepreneurs to identify their wishes and needs. The study revealed that:

- 75% of them need a sounding board and would appreciate a business platform
- 79% want to keep up with the latest trends through contact with other entrepreneurs
- 78% find it useful to run their decisions past fellow entrepreneurs
- 75% think the example of other entrepreneurs could help them simplify their administration
- 67% are looking for contacts that could inspire their business
- 78% of Belgian entrepreneurs network yearly
- 58% are interested in a digital platform that can help them network more and better.

Businesses were surveyed nationally, but very little difference was found in regional terms and responses coming from entrepreneurs in Brussels, Wallonia or Flanders where almost similar.

All sorts of networking initiatives exist already, but a platform was lacking where all this can occur in an efficient and targeted way. That's why KBC has developed KBC Vindr – a platform on which entrepreneurs and the self-employed can register and find matches based on an algorithm. This algorithm takes account of the relevant sector, like-mindedness and the experience and personal interests of the entrepreneur.

KBC Vindr is only available in Dutch at this point, but is accessible to both customers and non-customers throughout Belgium. It has been possible to register on KBC Vindr since the beginning of March 2019, with over 3 000 entrepreneurs having signed up to date.

This isn't the first time KBC has ventured into the field of platforms. It has previously developed:

- Start it @KBC for start-ups
- KBC Match'it for business acquisitions
- KBC Trade Club for businesses that operate internationally
- and takes part in FarmCafé for farmers and horticulturalists

Daniel Falque, CEO of KBC's Belgium Business Unit: *'It's in our DNA at KBC to think along with our customers and we're always keen to maximise our role as a facilitator. KBC Vindr, the platform on which entrepreneurs can find like-minded businesspeople is a great example. For KBC, the platform is an opportunity to bring entrepreneurs into contact with each other. We already have lots of*

experience and success in creating and facilitating platforms like KBC Trade Club, FarmCafé, Match'it and Start it @KBC, and our customers really appreciate that.'

Dirk Ector, General Manager of KBC's Businesses Division: *'KBC wants to build a long-term relationship with its entrepreneurs. Banking and insurance are our business and we're well aware of what's going on in the world of the entrepreneur. But we also know from experience that entrepreneurs like to talk with like-minded people from their own sector. I'm convinced that KBC Vindr is the first step towards finding that match. We can also facilitate those contacts as a bank-insurer by bringing entrepreneurs together in person.'*

Entrepreneurs seek a sounding board

KBC recently commissioned Profacts to carry out a phone and online survey of 700 entrepreneurs from Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels. It found that the vast majority of them are looking for a sounding board, either to talk through important decisions, or to exchange experiences and advice. But they also want to keep abreast of fresh trends that might impact the way they do business and, in particular, to make use of trends so they can reach and serve customers better, such as in the case of digitalisation.

KBC has developed **KBC Vindr**, an online meeting place where the self-employed and entrepreneurs can get together with like-minded businesspeople. Non-KBC customers can register with KBC Vindr too.

An algorithm uses four criteria to generate matches with other businesses registered on the platform:

1. **Sector match:** what affinity is there between two sectors?
2. **Like-mindedness:** what values are important to the entrepreneur and their potential matches?
3. **Experience:** which business themes does the entrepreneur have experience with and/or would like to learn more about?
4. **Personal:** what interests does the entrepreneur have in common with other businesspeople?

KBC Vindr isn't the first platform KBC has launched:

- A year ago, for instance, KBC offered its business customers access to **KBC Trade Club**, an online community for **international business** tailored to their needs. It's a platform that not only brings entrepreneurs into contact with reliable business partners, it also provides them with a valuable library containing all the information they need to do business internationally. **The Trade Club now consists of 13 banks with 19 000 entrepreneurs, 500 of them KBC customers.**
- **Start it @KBC** was created for starter businesses in 2014 as a partnership between Accenture, Cronos Groep, Flanders DC, imec, joyn, KBC, Mobile Vikings, Telenet and local academic partners. It has since developed into **Belgium's largest start-up community, with offshoots in Hungary and the United States.**
New businesses receive a three-month, tailored rapid acceleration programme at Start it @KBC and can count on receiving mentorship, expertise, an extensive network and co-working space for a year and a half. Start it @KBC continually optimises its offering with the help of the start-ups themselves. It encourages national and international cross-fertilisation among **more than 650 start-ups and scale-ups**, as well as with investors, experienced mentors, experts in a wide variety of fields (including technology, sales, legal, marketing and communication) and other accelerators and incubators worldwide. The community plays a pioneering role in promoting diversity and female entrepreneurship.
- **FarmCafe** is a digital platform created by KBC in 2015 to inspire professional farmers and horticulturalists in Flanders to grow their business. It also connects them with experts so they can develop ideas together. Farmers and horticulturalists can turn to this community to find information

on the challenges facing agriculture, such as regulation (Agricultural Holdings Act, Flemish Agricultural Investment Fund, Ecological Focus Areas, planning rules, etc.), transfer between generations, economic developments and, of course, innovation.

FarmCafe is a KBC initiative run in collaboration with over 20 other sector specialists, including SBB, Innovatiesteunpunt, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Agropolis Kinrooi. The platform attracts **some 4 000–5 000 unique visitors every month** and is free to join.

- Thanks to the launch of **KBC Match'it** two years ago, KBC has managed to bring **dozens of entrepreneurs** together with a view to a possible takeover. The platform offers a closed and secure environment for this. **Some 50 sales files have so far been published on KBC Match'it, accessible to 700 investors.**

For the time being only Belgian companies were sold, but very soon the tool will also be available in the Central European countries where KBC is active: this year in Slovakia and the Czech Republic and next year in Bulgaria and Hungary.

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