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## PRESS RELEASE

### **&ahead receives grant approval in the Innovation Programme for Business Models and Pioneering Solutions (IGP) from the German BWK (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Protection)**

**November 18th, 2021, Frankfurt, Germany:** &ahead, the Talent Network platform for mid-career transitions, today announced that it had recently been awarded an IGP grant within the prestigious German “Innovation Programme for Business Models and Pioneering Solutions” (IGP) from Germany’s **Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz (BMWK)** (formerly **Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie**), also known as the German Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Protection. In line with the requirements for obtaining the grant approval, &ahead delivered a strategic presentation on the feasibility and commercial impact of its Machine Learning/AI platform for career re-launchers, enabling them to better qualify personal career choices and skill needs. Once identified, career re-launchers can better implement personal growth changes and select new careers. Better matching roles that take into consideration developmental desires, and an improved work-life balance result in positive personal well-being and increasing long-term job adhesion.

Commenting on the recent development, Britta Mues-Walter, Co-founder and Co-Managing Director of &ahead said:

“It is truly a great honor to be selected amongst the few for the grant as part of the 3rd IGP round for start-up ideas in the area of education with an innovative approach and social impact. There is an enormous demand for qualified people in Germany and also globally, which will continue to increase in the long term. At the same time, many employees leave the workforce temporarily, for example, to start a family or care for relatives. This affects women in particular. In order to alleviate the shortage of skilled workers and also, for example, to support women entering STEM professions or management positions, it is very important to develop adequate offers for the target group. With this grant and the start of the project, we are excited and confident to reach the next step in our digitization process using machine learning to build a recommendation platform for our career relaunchers that fits both their specific needs and the talent needs of employers. And which will then be integrated into our marketplace to enhance our offering and make it accessible globally to achieve substantial growth.”

Carolina Yeo Co-founder and Co-Managing Director of &ahead adds:

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"There is a huge talent crunch globally as more and more individuals are resigning and changing jobs in the search for purposeful and impactful careers. This process is being

sped up during the pandemic as we move towards remote work. On the other hand, there are also more than 120 global companies who see this hidden talent pool of experienced, immediately available, and high potential individuals and are offering relaunch programs globally including Fitch Ratings, one of our corporate partners that we have partnered with to launch their program in Germany 2020. With the support to speed up the development of our recommendations platform, we are now closer to supporting our members to connect them to their next opportunity or next employer that matches their future interest; the need for work-life balance, and motivated to support their desired skills gap training."

Eugenio Grapa, co-founder and CTO, also stated:

"We are now gearing up towards delivering on our objectives to include career evaluations, upskilling recommendations, and job search support as part of receiving the next level of funding. On behalf of our co-founders, I take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the leaders of the IGP program, our partners for their faith in our service and development, and commit to continue the work on developing further innovations in career relaunching and development."

The goal of the project is the development of AI-based tools for the evaluation of career goals, skills, and job opportunities for career re-launchers. These new tools will be integrated into &ahead's CareerPaths platform. They are intended to recommend assistance and further training, offers, jobs, and projects to career reentrants and immigrants. We help make an untapped labor market segment available as quickly as possible to counteract the shortage of skilled workers and managers.

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## **About &ahead GmbH**

&ahead is a digital talent platform that supports experienced individuals with their career relaunch. We support and enable individuals who are returning to work after a career break from parental leave or sabbatical to reach their career potential as leaders in their fields.

## **About Britta**

Britta is the Co-founder and Chief Sales and Partnership Officer of &ahead. She brings with her almost three decades of experience as a Senior Executive Search Consultant and 18 years as a successful entrepreneur with her own Boutique Mues-Walter Executive Services. Her areas of expertise are mainly in financial services, real estate, and FMCG. She has an MBA from WWU Münster and has worked and lived in Frankfurt, London, and Paris. Britta returned to work twice after her children, now adults/teenagers of 20 and 17.

## **About Carolina**

Carolina is the Co-Founder and Head of Community and International Growth of &ahead. She has 2 decades of experience in driving future of work and talent management initiatives across Europe, Asia, US, Middle East and Africa in multinational companies. She graduated from Singapore Management University in Business Administration (majoring in Finance and Marketing) and speaks fluently English, Chinese Mandarin as well conversational German, and Portuguese. Carolina has worked and lived for extended periods of time in Singapore, China, US, Portugal, UAE, Libya, Liberia, Mozambique, Brazil, Belgium, Austria, Germany and traveled to dozens of other countries on both work and leisure.

## **About Eugenio**

Eugenio Grapa is the co-founder and CTO for &ahead. As an experienced intra- and entrepreneur, he's helped found several start-ups and focuses on technology - bringing impactful products and services to market, marketing, and early operational strategy. He has had a successful career in the life sciences industry and has several degrees in Biomedical Engineering from the Johns Hopkins University, Duke University, and the UTC, Compiègne, France. He's fluent in several languages and has 4 daughters.

## **For further information, please contact:**

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