

Five Dutch companies to further boost Artificial Intelligence in the Netherlands

Ahold Delhaize, ING, KLM, NS and Philips announce Kickstart AI, a combination of investments to fuel AI education, talent and innovation in the Netherlands.

Zaandam, October 10, 2019 – Five Dutch companies including Ahold Delhaize, ING, KLM, NS and Philips will further boost the AI ecosystem in the Netherlands through a series of concrete actions, designed to accelerate and promote development of AI technology and nurture AI talent in the country. These actions will add educational capacity, foster the development of the AI community in the Netherlands and reiterate the position of the Netherlands as a competitive and relevant global AI hub.

Kickstart AI acknowledges and seeks to bridge the AI gap between the Netherlands and other countries, like as the UK, the US and China, that have made notable progress in this area. In order to keep the country's position as the pioneers and inventors of technologies, the Dutch government, organizations and universities have ground to cover in terms of structural investments and availability of global AI talent. The five companies "kickstarting" AI are taking highly needed decisive action.

For consumers, AI has untapped potential to transform their daily lives by elevating their experience with personalized service, convenience and choices in many areas of life ranging from health, travel to food. The five companies initiating *Kickstart AI* call for the critical expansion of local knowledge and talent in order to ethically implement AI that is focused not only on what is technically possible but also what is socially *desirable* for the Dutch society.

Initiatives under Kickstart AI include:

- 1) **AI superchallenges:** Competitions aimed at raising the Netherlands' global profile by mobilizing global AI talent to address societal challenges in the areas of health, nutrition, mobility and urbanization.
- 2) **Joint appointments:** Investing in private-public collaboration through joint appointments of academic staff, providing access for the next generation of AI talent to education, training and leading academics. First commitment is to create 5 joint appointments to academic institutions in the Netherlands by each of the frontrunner companies in Kickstart AI, adding up to 25 positions in total.
- 3) **Dutch national course for AI:** As part of a wider effort to increase understanding and adoption of AI in the Netherlands, *Kickstart AI* companies will not only promote the national course for AI among the general public and their own workforces, but also offer

the course in English, therewith aiming to secure sign-ups from a total of 170,000 people in the Netherlands by 2020.

Introducing *Kickstart AI* at the World Summit AI today, Maarten de Rijke, Professor at the University of Amsterdam and Director of the Innovation Center for Artificial Intelligence, said: “The Netherlands has always been a technology pioneer and unsurprisingly, a frontrunner in AI development and innovation. The quality of our AI specialists is well-acknowledged worldwide. However, without a national AI strategy and swift action, severe shortage of AI talent in our country remains one of the biggest roadblocks to being able to utilize the full potential of AI talent and technology. Our joint efforts as part of *Kickstart AI* underlines the urgency in accelerating AI education and talent retention and signals our commitment to collaboration and investments needed to accelerate AI innovation in the Netherlands.”

Ahold Delhaize, ING, KLM, NS and Philips are connected to the daily lives of millions of people through food, travel, health and finances. As organizations that understand the potential for this game-changing technology in improving the daily lives of Dutch society, they place a call for action to their business and industry peers to boost collaboration in creating a thriving AI ecosystem in the Netherlands for the benefit of end-consumers’ daily lives. The Strategic Action Plan AI (SAPAI) and a National AI Coalition, also announced this week, are steps in the same direction and designed to collectively sustain the growth and competitiveness of the Dutch economy.

NOTES TO EDITORS

AI innovation projects currently underway at five partner companies

- **Ahold Delhaize – Customer interaction and conversational intelligence**
This position would address state of the art developments in the field of digital Customer Interaction, especially in the field of conversational technologies such as search, chatbots or multimodal interactions relying on federated search.
- **ING – AI for Financial Crime Analytics**
Protecting the consumers, business and the society against financial crime is at the core of ING’s business. Deploying smarter mechanisms by using advanced analytics techniques and AI is therefore of crucial importance.
- **KLM - Integrated Optimization of Airline Operations**

In an increasingly complex and busy environment, the reliability of an airline's operations is a growing competitive advantage. Advanced machine learning prediction tools will enable control on costs, operational performance, customer satisfaction and employee engagement.

- **NS – Predictive Maintenance**

Safe and reliable service of the railway network is increasingly important, in particular in a time where transportation is undergoing a paradigm shift to “zero emission.”

- **Philips – Adaptive Intelligence in Healthcare**

Adaptive intelligence combines the power of AI and other technologies with clinical and operational domain knowledge to address quadruple aim in healthcare. It enhances healthcare providers, adapts to the context and it is seamlessly integrated in their workflows.

Dutch AI facts and figures

- To date 15.000 people have taken the AI course
- A recent report indicates that 340 PhD AI researchers work in the Netherlands, with only 57 of them having presented at AI conferences versus the US with 9,010 researchers of which 3,017 are have presented (Source: Global AI Talent Pool Report 2018 (JF Gagne, <https://jfgagne.ai/talent/>)).
- In 2018, 309 Dutch AI startups received €102M in investments compared to 1,052 AI startups in the UK with €1.2Bn investments. Of these investments into Dutch startups, only 20% came from Dutch investors.

Media contacts

Links to each 5 company media contacts web pages