

Brussels, 31 January 2020

## Proximus challenges Belgium to collect 100,000 old mobile phones in 2020

### Don't Miss the Call!

More than 3 million old mobile phones are gathering dust in Belgian cupboards. Meanwhile, they contain valuable and increasingly scarce raw materials that could actually be reused. As part of its commitment to create a more sustainable future for our planet, Proximus – together with partner Umicore – is launching "Don't Miss the Call", an urban mining campaign aiming to collect at least 100,000 old mobile phones in one year. The collected mobile phones will either be prepared for reuse or recycled for the raw materials they contain. Through this action, Proximus and Umicore call for a sustainable alternative to the mining of natural resources. In addition, the "Don't miss the call" campaign will raise funds for EIGHT, a Belgian organization working to reduce poverty in African villages.

#### TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR THE PLANET

On [www.dontmissthecall.be](http://www.dontmissthecall.be) visitors get a call from the planet – both literally and figuratively speaking. During a virtual phone call, the planet explains the importance of *urban mining*, the practice of extracting raw materials from electronic waste. This way of working allows to recycle valuable raw materials such as gold, silver and copper, hereby offering a more sustainable alternative to artisanal mining, where natural resources continue to be extracted from the earth. Visitors to the platform can also find all the necessary information on how to easily *wipe* their mobile device before handing it in, in order to make sure their personal data and confidential information are removed.

The ultimate goal of "Don't Miss the Call" is to engage as many Belgians as possible to gather their old mobile phones and take them to one of the Proximus Shops or to the collection points that will be set up in schools and companies, aiming to collect a total of 100,000 old phones by the end of 2020.

People who hand in their old mobile phones to a Proximus Shop will receive a voucher with a minimum value of €5, and this sum may amount to about €350 based on residual value if their device can be re-used. Consumers may also choose to donate the entire amount of the voucher to EIGHT.

#### ALLEVIATING THE IMPACT OF OUR MOBILE PHONE ON THE PLANET

For many of us, the mobile phone is the most important device in our everyday lives. It offers great possibilities to improve our daily routines – both professionally and personally. The flipside is that our mobile phones put pressure on our planet's resources. *"At Proximus, we acknowledge that the mobile phone is pivotal in our business model"*, says Guillaume Boutin, Proximus CEO. As an operator, Proximus wants to make a difference by raising awareness and creating a societal impact. *"Today, less than 5% of all old mobile phones in Belgium are recycled. We can do much better. As one of the leading Belgian companies, we consider it our responsibility to make a positive contribution for our planet. It's our ambition to become a net positive and truly circular company by 2030. We have a clear commitment to actively contribute to a circular economy and help build a more sustainable society. The campaign is our first big initiative to prove that we are translating this ambition into action. In the same spirit, I am excited to announce that Fairphone will become part of our device portfolio as from March. Fairphone sets new standards for the entire industry, committing to responsible material sourcing and advocating for workers' welfare. As such they create a longer lasting phone, made with materials that are better for the planet, easily repairable and producing less waste"*, according to Guillaume Boutin, CEO of Proximus.

But this can only be done if everyone gets on the bandwagon. Several structural partners of Proximus such as the Royal Belgian Football Association, the Red Flames, the Belgian Paralympic Committee and certain summer festivals have already expressed their support, but Proximus is also calling upon companies and schools to get involved. Guillaume Boutin, Proximus CEO: *"We are striving for an initiative in which every Belgian eventually gets involved. "Don't Miss the Call" is not just for Proximus, but for everybody. That's why I also invite other companies to join in and collect old mobile phones. It's only by working together that we will make a meaningful difference for the planet."* Interested companies can register via [www.dontmissthecall.be](http://www.dontmissthecall.be). Proximus will take care of the collection

and provide a set of communication materials. Schools will get the opportunity to join as of February through GoodPlanet, also a partner in this campaign.

#### **PROXIMUS AND UMICORE JOINING FORCES FOR THE PLANET**

The "Don't Miss the Call" campaign results from a partnership between Proximus and Umicore. For its part, Proximus commits to raising awareness among as many Belgians as possible and ensuring the collection of the mobile phones. Umicore, as world leader in recycling essential metals, will put its recycling technology at the service of the project, treating the mobile phones that are no longer suitable for re-use on the second-hand market. After recycling, scarce raw materials can be re-used in the production process of laptops and mobile phones.

Umicore also stresses the need for a radical shift towards a circular economy. The company's business model is based on the principle that all new raw materials will be recovered and recycled so that they can be reused. *"In an increasingly digital world, e-waste is becoming the strongest growing waste stream globally. Urban mining is not only more efficient than classic mining, but it also enables us to recover metal-based materials rather than depleting the earth's resources "*, says Marc Grynberg, Umicore CEO.

Within Proximus, the "Don't Miss the Call" campaign fits into a long-term strategy. For years, Proximus has been collecting mobile phones with about 20,000 old mobiles phones being collected annually in its Proximus shops, as well as in schools through its partner GoodPlanet. With the "Don't Miss the Call" campaign, Proximus wants to sustain the momentum by showing that individual contributions can be brought together in a bigger impactful movement that can ultimately make *urban mining* become the new standard.

#### **URBAN MINING IN SOME KEY FIGURES**

100,000 collected handsets provide:  
9 kg of Silver, 2 kg of Gold, 37.5kg of lithium, 337.5kg of Cobalt

Compared to classic mining, the collection of raw materials contained in 100,000 mobile phones:  
-produces 42.500 tons less of CO2 and 12.750 tons less of toxic waste  
-requires 25,4 million liters less water

#### **SUPPORT FOR EIGHT**

But the mining of raw materials such as cobalt, coltan, silver and gold doesn't only have a negative impact on the environment. Local populations are affected too, as *artisanal mining* can be linked to various humanitarian issues.

With the "Don't Miss the Call" campaign, Proximus wants to close the circle by doing something meaningful for the people in these mining regions. Therefore, the company will work with EIGHT, a Belgian organization committed to eradicating poverty by sponsoring African villages. EIGHT dares to break conventions by allowing people living in poverty to decide autonomously on how to spend the funds they receive, hereby immediately empowering them to make their own choices. Proximus feels strongly connected to EIGHT's efforts, for which they won the "digital for development" prize in 2018. By working with EIGHT, Proximus aims to set up a support program for an entire village in the mining region of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

*"Through our project with unconditional cash transfers into a village in the Democratic Republic of Congo, we want to find out whether the people in the villages near a mine get more choices. For example, whether they send children to school more often, do more business, work together, become more mindful about their health. We expect positive change for the people who receive the cash transfers. But we are also not naive, we cannot solve all these problems with just our project."* says Maarten Goethals, co-founder of EIGHT. *"We want to share the insights gained after the pilot project with Proximus, Umicore, manufacturers, governments and other social players to investigate where adjustments can be made and especially to see whether we can generate a greater impact."*

**More information about the "Don't Miss the Call" campaign is available at [www.dontmissthecall.be](http://www.dontmissthecall.be).**

**For more information, contact the press service:**

[press@proximus.com](mailto:press@proximus.com)

**Fabrice Gansbeke**

+32 472 050 702

**Haroun Fenaux**

+32 476 600 333



#### **About Proximus**

Proximus Group is a telecommunication & ICT company operating in the Belgian and international markets, servicing residential, enterprise and public customers. Proximus aims to open up a world of digital opportunities so people live better and work smarter. The company is at the heart of the digital revolution, delivering communication and entertainment experiences for residential consumers and enabling digital transformation for enterprises. Through its best-quality integrated fixed and mobile networks, Proximus provides access anywhere and anytime to digital services and easy-to-use solutions and is a gateway to multimedia content. Proximus is a pioneer in ICT innovation, with integrated solutions that have a positive impact on society and the environment, based on Internet of Things (IoT), Data analytics, cloudification, and security. With 13,385 employees, all engaged to offer customers a superior experience, the Group realized an underlying Group revenue of EUR 5,804 million end-2018.

Proximus (Euronext Brussels: PROX) is also active in Luxembourg through its affiliate Proximus Luxembourg and in the Netherlands through Telindus Netherlands. BICS is a leading international communications enabler, one of the key global voice carriers and the leading provider of mobile data services worldwide.

For more information, visit [www.proximus.com](http://www.proximus.com) & [www.proximus.be](http://www.proximus.be)

#### **About Umicore**

Umicore is a global materials technology and recycling group. It focuses on application areas where its expertise in materials science, chemistry and metallurgy makes a real difference. Its activities are organized in three business groups: Catalysis, Energy & Surface Technologies and Recycling. Each business group is divided into market-focused business units offering materials and solutions that are at the cutting edge of new technological developments and essential to everyday life.

Umicore generates the majority of its revenues and dedicates most of its R&D efforts to clean mobility materials and recycling. Umicore's overriding goal of sustainable value creation is based on an ambition to develop, produce and recycle materials in a way that fulfills its mission: materials for a better life.

Umicore's industrial and commercial operations as well as R&D activities are located across the world to best serve its global customer base. The Group generated revenues (excluding metal) of €1.6 billion (turnover of €7.6 billion) in the first half of 2019 and currently (2019) employs 10,700 people.

For more information, visit <http://www.umicore.com/en>

#### **About EIGHT**

EIGHT is a Belgian non-profit organization working towards reducing poverty, more particularly in African villages. In order to eradicate poverty by 2030, radical and evidence-based recipes are needed. EIGHT gives money to people in extreme poverty without asking anything in return and this radical and counter-intuitive idea has proven impact. EIGHT showed in a pilot project from January 2017 to January 2019 that it's possible to give cash directly to people in extreme poverty without large institutions or million-dollar budgets. Basic cell phones, mobile money and the support of a small but convinced base of entrepreneurs and effective altruists did the trick.

EIGHT is ready to scale up to larger interventions and start a wave of meaningful change. With a larger scale, it is possible for us to generate more impact and research about the sustainability of the results.

For more information, visit [www.eight.world/En](http://www.eight.world/En)

#### **About GoodPlanet**

GoodPlanet inspires and encourages all generations to live sustainably. For a healthy planet, for everyone, for today and tomorrow. For a GoodPlanet. Through its projects, campaigns and animations, GoodPlanet spreads its knowledge and plants seeds of change. They stimulate, concretise and realise ideas that make sustainable development real and tangible. All this while always maintaining a positive and hopeful attitude. For GoodPlanet, education plays an essential role in the transition to a more sustainable society. That is why the organisation has been focusing on children and young people for more than 20 years. GoodPlanet is convinced that everyone, through small or large gestures, can make a difference. Based on this conviction, they also work with the general public and companies. GoodPlanet has thus become a privileged partner of organisations and companies that actively claim a committed societal role. Every year, the 80 employees and dozens of volunteers inspire and motivate more than 500,000 children, young people and adults throughout Belgium.

For more information, visit [www.goodplanet.be](http://www.goodplanet.be)

#### **About Fairphone**

Fairphone is a social enterprise that is building a movement for fairer electronics. By making a phone, we're opening up the supply chain and creating new relationships between people and their products. We're making a positive impact across the value chain in mining, design, manufacturing and life cycle, while expanding the market for products that put ethical values first. Together with our community, we're changing the way products are made.

For more information, visit [www.fairphone.com/en](http://www.fairphone.com/en)

