

Venture Capital/Analysis/

17 German greentech startups to watch, according to top VCs

From reducing plastic in the oceans to developing an ESG data platform, VCs are eyeing these 17 German greentech startups.

BY CECILE BUSSY 17 JUNE 2021

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Germany has become fertile ground for European greentech.

Home to the **most climate techs in Europe**, the country has already birthed two mobility unicorn companies (Tier and Flixbus), one of the **leading vertical farming players** Infarm and electric flying vehicle Lilium — which listed **in March 2021**.

The country has also produced a significant chunk of Europe's sustainability-focused funds, including Future Energy Ventures, Smart Infrastructure Ventures, Mobility Fund, Planet A Ventures, Nucleus Capital and Revent.

As the competition to find the next greentech giants is ramping up, we asked six top VC investors which companies they were most excited about. There was only one rule: they could not plug the companies in their own portfolios.

From reducing plastic in the oceans to ESG data platforms, here are the 17 greentech startups to keep an eye on.

Ines Streimelweger — Berlin-based investment manager at Creandum

Creandum is an early stage VC firm based in Stockholm, San Francisco, and Berlin.



cirplus

What's the tech? A marketplace for plastics

What problem is it trying to solve?

"Cirplus enables the circular economy with recyclates and plastics. The team paves the way for much needed and more sustainable ways of doing business at industrial scale through their plastics marketplace. We're excited about the space, as the circular economy and sustainable packaging will inevitably help on the journey to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions across Europe by 2050."

Founded: 2018

HQ: Hamburg

Total funding raised: €750k in pre-seed private funding and €400k in public funding from the German government and EIC Climate Tech Accelerator

one five

What's the tech? A biotech platform for applied material science

What problem is it trying to solve?

"The founders Claire Gusko and Martin Weber — both ex-Infarm — are building a large-scale (physical) applied biotech campus outside of Hamburg to transform material science inventions into packaging products for conscious consumers. They are turning lab-proven work of

approach as they make room for much needed innovation in biotechnology to hit the ground running.”

Founded: 2020

HQ: Hamburg

Total funding raised: funding from Speedinvest and other VC and angel investors

Atlas Metrics

What's the tech? A platform to collect, manage, and report environmental, social and governance (ESG) data

What problem is it trying to solve?

“Atlas is building a platform for the single source of truth for ESG metrics within companies. The company's first step is to build a reporting platform for VC and PE fund managers, to define metrics and track portfolio companies' performance. The ESG Disclosure Regulation which applies to VC and PE fund managers came into play on 10 March 2021, so I think the time is ripe for players like Atlas!”

Founded: 2021

HQ: Berlin

Total funding raised: €1m

Viet Le of La Famiglia VC and Mey Cezairli of Project A Ventures also picked this startup.

Viet Le — early-stage investor at La Famiglia VC

La Famiglia VC is a German fund investing in early-stage startups in the future of work and sustainability.

Pina

What's the tech? Connect local forest owners to the carbon market

What problem is it trying to solve?

"In the last two years, we've seen companies finding ways to calculate their scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions, identify ways to reduce them and offset the remaining bits that can't be reduced. That's also where we've seen the first wave of new software startups pushing to digitise the carbon management process end-to-end — one of the reasons why we decided to invest in Sweep to accelerate that effort.

As carbon offsetting becomes more mainstream, afforestation and reforestation have become the most tangible approach to offset carbon emissions. Hence, carbon management solutions need to collaborate with external partners like Pina to verify, track and calculate the offset potential through forests automatically. Pina does that by analysing aerial imagery with machine learning and connecting local forest owners to the carbon market."

Founded: 2020

HQ: Munich

Total funding raised: a government grant (EXIST) and money from a hackathon by Microsoft and VW (10toGo)

What problem is it trying to solve?

“Arable soil is the basis of crop production and accounts for the majority of our food. Thus, farmers have always had the incentive to optimise their soil and in turn their yield, for instance by analysing soil to use the right amount of fertilisers. But the process can be time-consuming, imprecise and non-digital. That means farmers collect soil samples in a 3ha grid and send them to a lab, which can take up to eight weeks to get the results.

Stenon has developed a portable device that collects soil samples and provides soil insights to help farmers optimise the use of fertilisers — and therefore could lead to less groundwater pollution and degradation of arable land.”

Founded: 2018

HQ: Potsdam

Total funding raised: €6.1m

Lauren Lentz — general partner at Revent

Revent is an early-stage venture fund backing impact startups.

Bluu Biosciences

“One of the earliest European companies tackling the challenge of creating cell-based fish — a topic of growing importance as more people look to fish as a key protein source. If they’re able to do this cost-efficiently, this could be a real game changer.”

Founded: 2020

HQ: Berlin

Total funding raised: €7m

Cleanhub

What’s the tech? A platform that helps businesses reduce plastic in the oceans

What problem is it trying to solve?

“This Berlin-based company enables companies to have a positive impact on the ocean through their everyday business. With a 1-1 principle, they remove verified quantities of ocean plastic for every product their customers sell.”

Founded: 2020

HQ: Berlin

Total funding raised: almost €4m

Planblue

What’s the tech? Underwater satellites

What problem is it trying to solve?

“We’re super intrigued by this company, which came out of the Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology. Using underwater satellites, they’re creating an interactive map of the seafloor. This has all sorts of interesting applications, from understanding pollution levels to clarifying the impact of construction projects and tourism.”

Founded: 2017

HQ: Bremen

Total funding raised: seed funding led by WestTech Ventures

Project A ventures is a VC firm based in Germany and the UK focusing on early-stage companies.

Klim

What's the tech? Help farmers implement carbon farming practices

What problem is it trying to solve?

"Carbonfarmed/Klim is at the forefront of including alternative farming practices in the effort of reducing carbon in our atmosphere. Klim thereby works closely with farmers to help them make the transition to regenerative farming while educating consumers about making environmentally friendly purchasing decisions. So far, societies have mostly seen agriculture as part of the environmental problem — Klim makes agriculture part of the solution."

Founded: 2020

HQ: Berlin

Total funding raised: seed funding led by Ananda Impact Ventures

Vaayu

What's the tech? Carbon tracking and offsetting software for online retailers

have seen quite a few companies focusing on monitoring carbon emissions in general. Vaayu's hypothesis is that a laser-focus on the retail industry and the resulting accuracy and comparability creates even more value in a growing market."

Founded: 2021

HQ: Berlin

Total funding raised: n/a

VlyFoods

What's the tech? Pea protein-based milk alternatives

What problem is it trying to solve?

"VlyFoods is a Berlin-based company, producing pea protein-based milk alternatives. Unlike the plant-based milk products we know, VlyFoods can provide vegan milk but with a much higher protein component. Already stocked in all the major grocery chains, VlyFoods represents one of the few Germany-based alternative food companies winning with both taste and branding."

Founded: 2018

HQ: Berlin

Total funding raised: \$6.1m

Maximilian Zoller — principal at HV Capital

HV Capital is a German VC firm backing early-stage and growth startups in Europe.

Dabbel

What's the tech? An autonomous system that reduces energy consumption and carbon emissions in commercial buildings

What problem is it trying to solve?

"Dabbel has built a self-learning building management software that works on top of existing software layers to optimise heating and cooling of (primarily commercial) buildings. Emissions reduction in buildings have not gotten the same attention as other sectors in the past years and Dabbel could be a low-effort entry point for many building managers."

Founded: 2018

HQ: Düsseldorf

Total funding raised: €3.6m

Voltaro

What's the tech? Help real estate and companies to power their buildings with solar energy

What problem is it trying to solve?

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and venture is tackling that gap by supporting real estate companies in the transition towards a sustainable commercial building stock. Their software-enabled processes allow hassle-free commercial on-site solar, while their flexible models take into account individual requirements of their customers in order to make commercial solar a no-brainer.”

Founded: 2020

HQ: Munich

Total funding raised: bootstrapped

Mushlabs

What’s the tech? Mushroom-based food products

What problem is it trying to solve?

“Mushlabs is using mushrooms to create the next generation of sustainable foods. Whereas the first generation of meat-replacements were about imitation, mushrooms could go both ways — imitate or create a new taste. At the same time, mushrooms are more sustainable and natural than chemical products and more familiar than insect-based ones. Excited for their products to hit the shelves (hopefully) soon!”

Founded: 2018

HQ: Berlin

Total funding raised: \$20m

Lena Thiede — cofounder and partner at Planet A Ventures

Planet A Ventures is a German VC firm that supports founders tackling environmental problems.

Tomorrow

What's the tech? Mobile banking app that offset users' carbon footprint

What problem is it trying to solve?

"Tomorrow is a mobile bank with a focus on environmental sustainability. It is the first bank that lets you track and offset your carbon footprint. In our view sustainable mobile banking will become a 'mass wave', with Tomorrow setting a new industry standard."

Founded: 2017

HQ: Hamburg

Total funding raised: €3m

HawaDawa

What's the tech? Air quality monitoring systems

What problem is it trying to solve?

"HawaDawa offers a new standard for air quality management. The startup pushes environmental data into the mainstream of decision-making to unlock unlimited clean air for

Founded: 2016

HQ: Munich

Total funding raised: €50k

Madebymade

What's the tech? Insect-food to feed animals

What problem is it trying to solve?

“Industrial insect breeding for the production of animal proteins as feed. Based on a modular shipping container system (container upcycling). Sustainable protein feed for aquaculture and farming is a massively growing market. The scalable, decentralised, solution that is location independent will give them a competitive advantage.”

Founded: 2017

Headquartered: Pegau

Total funding raised: €10k after **winning** the “Best EU backed sustainability start-up — Dealflow’s Rising Star Award” and funding **from Free State of Saxony**

Cecile Bussy is Sifted’s social media journalist. She tweets the latest data on European tech and climatetech news from [@CecileBussy](#)

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