



First Anniversary Conference: GEC Forum

Global Entrepreneurship Centre presents 25 international sustainability startups with solutions for the Rhenish region

Meerbusch (Germany), 21 October 2022 – *On the occasion of its first anniversary, Global Entrepreneurship Centre (GEC), a transformation hub for scaling startups with a proven focus on sustainability and climate protection, is holding its first annual conference “GEC Forum – Scaling For Impact” at its premises in Meerbusch, Germany from 20 to 21 October 2022. In four thematic areas Textiles, AgriPlastic & Food, Energy, and Building & Living approx. 25 startups are showcasing solutions that might soon be able to contribute toward structural change in the Rhenish region. The GEC aims to form a new category of small and medium-sized enterprises geared to new, sustainable technologies.*

A varied two-day programme will bring together sustainability startups and socio-political decision makers. Four prominent guest speakers will support the conference with keynote speeches and by taking part in panel discussions across the four subject areas: Thursday, 10/20, on Textiles and AgriPlastic & Food; Friday, 10/21, on Energy and Building & Living. The fundamental conviction of the GEC and the guest speakers is the need to accelerate implementation of the UN’s sustainable development goals and jointly take forward achievement of the Paris Agreement’s climate protection targets.

- Dr. Robert J. Reinhard, expert on sustainable business and strategy with the UN Environment Programme, will talk about sustainability and the circular economy in the textile value chain.
- Dr. Zitouni Ould-Dada of the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) will explain how the power of innovation can be used to transform agricultural and food systems.
- Under the heading “The Winter is Coming” Andreas Kuhlmann, CEO of the German Energy Agency (dena), will deal with current geopolitics and the role of innovation in strengthening energy resilience.
- Challenges and options in reshaping the built environment will be discussed by Marc Weissgerber, founder and partner of “Bauhaus Earth”, an international organisation based in Berlin.

For the regional administration Hans-Jürgen Petrauschke, district administrator of the Rhine County of Neuss, will open the proceedings on Thursday morning, 10/20. Christian Bommers, Mayor of Meerbusch, will take part in the final thematic debate on Building & Living on Friday afternoon, 22/10/21.

Friedrich Barth, CEO and founder of the Global Entrepreneurship Centre, says: “Together with a diverse team of about 20 people that I together with my co-



founder Sebastian Gronwald have built up over the past 12 months, a wide range of startups have been selected and invited to join our programmes. The innovations we are showcasing on the GEC Forum's conference days make us very proud of what we have already achieved. We feel confident that the Global Entrepreneurship Centre will continue to promote technology impulses and economically viable sustainable technology solutions in the future – for the best of our planet, society and employment in our region.”

The aim of the startups is to convince investors for the next round of funding

Over 20 brief presentations, also known in the startup scene as pitches, will be made to investors. Twelve of them are newcomers who will be invited to join the GEC Catalyst and GEC Scaling Factory programmes from November. A dozen startups that the GEC has looked after in recent months will also have an opportunity to hold one-to-one talks with investors.

The GEC House: Presenting a new innovation call for 2023

The GEC Forum conference brings on stage all subject areas rolled out at the Global Entrepreneurship Centre to date: Textiles, AgriPlastic & Food, and Energy. A new thematic focus area – Building & Living – for implementation in 2023, will be announced as a two-step call-for-solutions. As previously announced, GEC CEO Friedrich Barth is planning jointly with investors a sustainable new building for the Global Entrepreneurship Centre in the Meerbusch area, referred to as the 'GEC House'. Ideas and innovations from sustainable startups with a focus on climate protection are to be included in the planning. The GEC House concept also provides for the incorporation and implementation of selected innovations in the building concept.

The Global Entrepreneurship Centre was founded as a centre for scaling up sustainable technology innovations and promoting responsible entrepreneurship. After a very thorough planning and application phase in 2020 by the two GEC founders Friedrich Barth, CEO, and Sebastian Gronwald, CFO, the Global Entrepreneurship Centre was one of the first projects to qualify in 2021 for funding from the so-called STARK programme. STARK is the funding guideline for strengthening the transformation dynamics and awakening in the coal mining areas. Startups are promoted at the Global Entrepreneurship Centre in, for example, the two core programmes, the GEC Scaling Factory and the GEC Catalyst.

About Global Entrepreneurship Centre

Global Entrepreneurship Centre (GEC) is a transformation hub for scaling sustainable technology innovation and entrepreneurship. It addresses the scaling challenges of promising sustechs – deep-tech start-ups with a clear sustainability and climate protection focus – from all over the world. The



selection process includes a proprietary sustainability assessment, diligently carried out internally by the GEC. Launched in 2021, the GEC will initially support up to 20 startups per year in the sectors building & living, textiles, mobility & transport and agriculture & nutrition with access to venture capital, business development, advisory services, production and lab capacity. The GEC is funded by the Rhineland region's STARK initiative for structural transition and the Rhine County of Neuss. The Global Entrepreneurship Centre is based in Meerbusch near Duesseldorf, Germany.

For more information, please go to our website <https://www.gec-scaleup.com>

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