



Focus on alternative proteins, fermented foods

Food industry of the future: Global Entrepreneurship Centre promotes sustainable foodstuff startups

Meerbusch (Germany), 20 October 2022 – World population eight billion: a threshold we will cross, according to calculations by the United Nations (UN), on 15 November 2022. And despite slower growth the world's population could, the UN says, reach 9.7 billion in 2050. People who will need to be fed, preferably without polluting the environment even more. The Global Entrepreneurship Centre (GEC) in Meerbusch, Germany is promoting in the GEC Scaling Factory and the GEC Catalyst Programme four startups each that are contributing with innovative food tech solutions toward sustainable, healthy and stable global nutrition.

“If we increase food production by conventional means, negative consequences are intensified in the form of, say, higher land usage, rising greenhouse gas emissions, increasing scarcity of water and loss of biodiversity,” says Friedrich Barth, founder and CEO of the Global Entrepreneurship Centre. “Protein alternatives to meat, milk and eggs and fermented foods, for example, can contribute toward more sustainable nutrition. More and more people would like to feed themselves in an environmentally compatible way. The agricultural sector and the food industry are sectors in which we see especially strong potential for social responsibility, generational justice and climate protection.”

Forty-four applicants, finalists from seven markets

In all the Global Entrepreneurship Centre's team screened 450 startups from around Europe. Forty-four startup entrepreneurs submitted entries to the GEC food call for solutions. An expert jury examined and assessed the entries for sustainability, degree of innovation, level of technological maturity, economic viability and partner ecosystem. A multi-stage in-house sustainability assessment then followed in the course of which the GEC team first chose the twelve semi-finalists and then the nine finalists for the startup promotion programmes GEC Scaling Factory (from TRL 6) and GEC Catalyst (TRL 4–5). The eight food startups that qualified come from six countries, including Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Romania, Estonia and the United Kingdom. Their selection will be officially announced at the GEC Forum – Scaling For Impact conference and they will be invited to take part in the GEC programmes.



GEC Scaling Factory

With its GEC Scaling Factory, the Global Entrepreneurship Centre will act as a microinvestor. A startup that takes part in this funding programme will receive up to 200,000 euros in in-kind services. Four food call finalists have qualified for an invitation to enter the GEC Scaling Factory for 15 to 18 months. There they will receive highly customised support. Common requirements include advice on funding, patent law or contracts, scaling of development and process organisation, IT infrastructure and digitalisation, arranging contacts with investors, access to laboratory space and production facilities, as well as assistance with market entry procedures or company settlement, and finding accommodation for employees. Invitations to take part in the GEC Scaling Factory programme will go to:

- **Holloid** [<https://www.holloid.com>] of Austria, which would like to revolutionise fermentation monitoring and the production of alternative proteins by means of holographic microscopy;
- **Better Nature** [<https://www.betternaturetempeh.co>] from the UK, which offers tempeh and other tasty, protein-rich vegan products made from fermented soya beans;
- **Alver** [<https://www.alver.ch>] of Switzerland, which manufactures in a resource-friendly protein-rich food from Golden Chlorella microalgae;
- **Protein Distillery** [<https://www.proteindistillery.com>] of Germany, which claims by means of fermentation to manufacture the most sustainable and at the same time “most meat-like” functional protein in its class.

GEC Catalyst

Further food startups will receive an invitation to take part in the ten-week lean launchpad curriculum of the GEC Catalyst Programme. GEC Catalyst experts from Silicon Valley use the lean launchpad method, complemented by industry experts in subject-related mentoring and master classes. In terms of their level of technological maturity GEC Catalyst startups are at a slightly earlier stage than GEC Scaling Factory startups. As a rule they are at technology readiness level 4–5 and look forward to assistance with the further development of their product and growth strategies. Invitations to take part in the GEC Catalyst programme will go to:

- **Bluana** [<https://bluana.me>] of Romania, which would like to replace seafood as food by healthy products consisting of purely plant-based ingredients;
- **Sophie’s BioNutrients** [<https://sophiesbionutrients.com>] from the Netherlands, which produces new, plant-based proteins from microalgae;



- **Advanced Biotics** [<https://advanced-biotics.com>] from the UK, which aims to make microbiome science and technology accessible to all by means of “microbiome-positive” foods;
- **Time Travelling Milkman** [<https://www.timetravellingmilkman.com>] from the Netherlands, which uses European seeds, water and a proprietary manufacturing process to produce ingredients that give an irresistible mouthfeel, taste and texture to dairy alternatives;
- **Raging Pig Co.** [<https://ragingpig.co>] of Germany and Sweden, which develops alternatives to pork in order to remove as many pigs as possible from the global food system.

The most promising graduates of the GEC Catalyst Programme may also be invited to join the GEC Scaling Factory.

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.hec-scaleup.com>

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