

**Press release****Technische Universität München****Klaus Becker**

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<http://idw-online.de/en/news836149>Contests / awards, Transfer of Science or Research  
Energy, Environment / ecology, Mechanical engineering, Nutrition / healthcare / nursing  
transregional, national**Presidential Award goes to energy start-up**

**For the development of its high-efficiency power plant, the start-up Reverion has received the TUM Presidential Entrepreneurship Award. In addition to generating electric power with biogas, the plant can also produce hydrogen from surplus energy. Finalists for the award included Planet A Foods, with a sustainable alternative to chocolate, and RobCo, with a robotics system for small and midsize enterprises. The TUM Entrepreneurship Day brought together attendees from the large and diverse Munich innovation ecosystem.**

Financial Times London recently cited the potent entrepreneurship network surrounding the Technical University of Munich (TUM) when naming UnternehmerTUM as Europe's best start-up hub. Yesterday more than 3000 visitors were on hand for the TUM Entrepreneurship Day to strengthen this network, learn from one another and exchange ideas on innovation trends. More than 100 start-ups came together with students, researchers, investors and industry representatives for pitches, workshops and discussion rounds.

Scheduled events included a matchmaking session for start-ups in search of co-founders and a strategy game for the circular economy. Prospective entrepreneurs learned about the support programs offered by TUM, UnternehmerTUM and TUM Venture Labs. At booths in the extensive fair zone, representatives of start-ups were on hand to take questions and explain their business ideas. Visitors also had a chance to learn how the spin-off Celonis achieved a 10 billion dollar "decacorn" valuation.

The TUM Presidential Entrepreneurship Award was presented to a highly promising spin-off. The award honors business ideas that are primarily rooted in research, show strong growth potential and have successfully garnered initial funding. It comes with a EUR 10,000 cash prize donated by the Friends of TUM.

Winner: Reverion

The Reverion team has developed a gas-fired power station with numerous advantages as compared to earlier plants: It is more efficient, can sequester CO<sub>2</sub> and, in addition to generating electric power, can use surplus power.

Reverion currently focuses on highly efficient biogas plants, for which it boasts an 80% efficiency rating. When there is surplus power in the grid, for example from wind or solar energy providers, the system can rapidly switch from power production to power utilization. It then produces hydrogen or methane to store energy and stabilize the networks. The power plants are operated in standardized and scalable container units.

The start-up, founded in 2022, emerged from a research project at the Chair of Energy Systems. It was supported in the TUM Venture Lab ChemSPACE, the XPRENEURS incubator program and the TechFounders Accelerator program at UnternehmerTUM. Reverion is now successfully working in the market with more than 100 employees.

## Finalist: Planet A Foods

Planet A Foods reached the final of the Presidential Entrepreneurship Award. The team has developed a process for making a cocoa-free alternative to chocolate using domestically grown plants. With oats, sunflower seeds and other ingredients, the start-up makes a product that tastes like chocolate and can be used in the same way for further processing. The advantage over cocoa beans: less water consumption, no risk of deforestation, and a big reduction in 'food miles'. The company has calculated that this can reduce the carbon footprint by around 90%.

The start-up team completed doctorates or studied at the Chair of Food Chemistry and Molecular Sensory Science or at the Department of Mechanical Engineering. It received support in the TUM Venture Lab Food Agro Biotech. Established in 2021, Planet A Foods already has many large confectionary producers as customers.

## Finalist: RobCo

Despite labor shortages and the struggle to remain competitive, many small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) are slow to acquire robots due to the high costs and potential complexity. For these companies, RobCo has developed a plug-and-play robotic system that is easy to install and intuitive to operate. The software can also be used without specialized skills. Thanks to their modular structure, the robots are suitable for versatile uses in a wide range of applications, including in the Internet of Things. The start-up also offers leasing arrangements.

Four years after its launch, RobCo is already successful at the international level. The technology is based on research at the TUM Chair of Robotics, Artificial Intelligence and Real-time Systems. Support for the founders came from the XPRENEURS incubator and the Center for Digital Technology and Management (CDTM), among other sources.

## Mentor of Excellence Award: Prof. Alexander Pretschner

Alexander Pretschner was also honored. The professor of software and systems engineering received the TUM Start-up Mentor of Excellence Award. The award, which comes with 5000 euros in funding for the research chair, honors professors for outstanding and successful work in supporting start-up teams. Many researchers support teams that receive EXIST scholarships. This mentoring is a prerequisite when applying for these coveted federal scholarships. Alexander Pretschner has supported seven start-up teams. He has also served on the Board of Directors of the Center for Digital Technology and Management (CDTM) for many years. The CDTM offers a supplementary degree program in which students work in interdisciplinary teams to design new technologies, turn them into real products and prepare to launch a start-up.

## Further information:

Every year, more than 70 technology-oriented companies are founded at TUM. TUM and UnternehmerTUM support start-ups with programs that are precisely tailored to the individual phases of founding - from the conception of a business model to management training, from market entry to a possible IPO. The TUM Venture Labs offer start-up teams from major technology fields an entire ecosystem in direct connection with research. Up to 30 teams can use the TUM Incubator to prepare for the launch of their company. UnternehmerTUM invests in promising technology companies with its own venture capital fund and offers the MakerSpace, a 1,500 square meter high-tech workshop for prototyping.

URL for press release: <http://www.tum.de/en/innovation/entrepreneurship> Entrepreneurship at TUM