

Swiss High Tech Companies on the way to success

In this section ten Swiss High Tech companies on the way to success will be presented.

The criteria for selection were:

- closing of one or several financial rounds > CHF 1 Mio. and/or
- having paying customers or a product ready for the market entry (except in Biotech).

Of course there are many more Swiss High Tech companies that would qualify for this section.

However, one other interesting aspect of these companies is, that they took advantage of most Swiss support organizations and got involved with investors related to CTI Invest.



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ARKTIS RADIATION DETECTION

The end of nuclear smuggling

One radiation detector prototype has already been developed, close to going into production, by Arktis Radiation Detectors Ltd. Now the young enterprise is looking for 5 million Swiss francs for the market set-up.

Three young company founders starting an enterprise dealing with the multifaceted issue of radioactivity and additionally pocketing one founder-prize after another namely Rico Chandra, Giovanna Davatz and Mario Vögeli were of great interest to the media. But when the Arktis 2007 team also received an inquiry to appear on the TV programme Aeschbacher, the three decided to limit their appearances and to concentrate on the further development of their technology and the market-handling.

The CEO Chandra originally had the idea for the new radiation detector, which works considerably more selectively than the usual appliances, whilst working as a physicist at the Geneva based CERN. Meanwhile, the Arktis team-members, numbering seven, can already present a prototype close to going into production. „We were able to increase the lifespan considerably and at the same time lower the cost of the detector module as well as the necessary electronics by the factor 10“, explains Chandra.

Now the young enterprise is confronted with the next big step. In 2010 they intend to win the first paying customers. At the same time the founders are setting their sights on the next financing round in order to drive on the market set-up. „To accomplish this goal we are looking for approximately 5 million Swiss francs“, comments Mario Vögeli.


As Arktis has the solution to an acute problem the chances for financing and customer winning are good. „Uranium or Plutonium which is suitable for weapons radiates much less than the layman expects and is therefore very difficult to detect at customs“, says physicist Davatz. Nowadays, however, all containers in large ports are supposed to be controlled for radioactive radiation. But the applied equipment is often misled by natural radiation which is, for example, found in ceramics or granite. False alarms triggering considerable additional expenses are encountered all too frequently. The result being that radiation measurements are often relinquished completely. The Arktis detectors can now not only measure different radiation types but identify the source and therefore reliably differentiate dangerous contraband from naturally radiating goods.

At the moment the team is busy proving that the technology also works in everyday life. „We are examining our detectors thoroughly“, explains Mario Vögeli. This not only happens in the laboratory but also in the field, in a temporary store for radioactive waste. So far the results are promising. Rico Chandra is convinced: “We will have collected convincing data before approaching potential investors in the next weeks.” **STEFAN KYORA**



Photo: zvg

V.l.n.r.: **MARIO VÖGELI, GIOVANNA DAVATZ, RICO CHANDRA**

Arktis Radiation Detectors AG Zürich	
Foundation	2007
Employees	7
Financing	Zürich Kantonalbank and Business Angel
Generated capital	n.a.
Webaddress	www.arktis-detectors.com

CTI Start-up Coaching / Label	Yes
CTI Projects	Yes
CTI Entrepreneurship Courses (Venturelab)	Yes
Venture Leader	Yes
CTI Invest	Yes
Venture 2006 Prize Winner	Yes
De Vigier Prize Winner	Yes (2007)
Additional Awards	Top-5 European Security Startup 2008, Global Security Challenge; ZKB Pioneerprize Technopark 2007; Start-up grant from the Eidgenössische Stiftung zur Förderung der Volkswirtschaft
IMD Lausanne	Yes