

Spin-off E-VITA wins Fraunhofer Founder Award 2021



The truck-based mobile system can treat 25 tons of seed per hour.
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The winners of the Fraunhofer Founders Award: André Weidauer, Christian Süß and Ceravis partner Maik Schwarz (from left to right)
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Safe harvests, healthy seeds — for the good of humanity and the environment Spin-off E-VITA wins Fraunhofer Founder Award 2021 The Fraunhofer spin-off E-VITA receives the Fraunhofer Founder Award 2021, which is endowed with 5000 euros. The spin-off managed to win over the jury, consisting of Fraunhofer Venture and High-Tech Gründerfonds, with its physical process for disinfecting seeds — an environmentally friendly alternative to treatment with fungicides. With its environmentally friendly, physical approach to disinfecting seeds, the Fraunhofer spin-off E-VITA GmbH, Dresden, won the Fraunhofer Founder Award 2021. The technology was developed at the Fraunhofer Institute for Organic Electronics, Electron Beam and Plasma Technology FEP. Contrary to conventional processes, which involve treatment with fungicides and similar substances, this process completely eliminates ecological follow-up costs caused by chemical emissions in agriculture. Moreover, in the medium term, E-VITA will pave the way for a significant cost reduction in grain treatment. Its physical disinfection process thus makes a significant contribution to achieving the goals of the EU Green Deal and the Farm2Fork strategy. The novel process is also expected to significantly reduce the demand for fertilizers with the treated seeds by adding microorganisms that stimulate the plants' nutrient uptake after germination.

Environmentally-friendly technology as a crucial factor for economic success

The physical process uses the germicidal effect of accelerated electrons. During sterilization, these penetrate just deep enough to have no effect on the inside of the seed. The low-emission and cost-saving technology was tested at Fraunhofer FEP over many years by independent federal and state institutions and, later, together with its industry partner Nordkorn Saaten GmbH (now Ceravis AG). The joint venture E-VITA GmbH, which was spun off in June 2021, now continues this successful partnership and combines the technology and research expertise of Fraunhofer FEP with the established sales strength and customer proximity of Ceravis AG. Today, E-VITA offers two variants of seed sterilization: mobile plants that can be rented by farmers for on-site application or sterilization in centrally located plants, which is performed by seed producers who treat the seeds before delivering them to growers. In the long term, the joint venture's physical sterilization process is expected to become the most important disinfection process on the market.

Cutting-edge technology as a driver of sustainable change

“Starting a business creates new perspectives for technologies and opens up previously untapped markets. Taking this step requires a great deal from everyone involved, from the employees of the young company as well as its business partners and shareholders. In addition to the necessary conviction that your start-up can be successful, a whole lot of courage is also required to leave the paths to which you have been accustomed up to that point. The support provided by experienced experts creates a feeling of security and trust and thus enables us to focus on the essentials,” says André Weidauer, managing director of E-VITA GmbH, about the steps they took to create their spin-off. “In our case, both shareholders, Fraunhofer and Ceravis, have always been approachable during the initial phase and now also during the first year of business, putting common goals above individual interests and thus enabling us to start what we hope will be a successful company,” Weidauer continues. Dr. Alex von Frankenberg, managing director of High-Tech Gründerfonds, adds: “EVITA is a perfect example of how cutting-edge technologies and entrepreneurship, in combination with established companies, can solve key challenges of our time.” In the jury's statement, Thomas Doppelberger, head of Fraunhofer Venture, particularly appreciated the fact that E-VITA's process not only opens up new perspectives for resource-conserving and sustainable agriculture, but also stands for a fruitful cooperation between research and industry: “E-VITA combines environmental protection and efficiency for the future of our food production while, with its promising new transfer path, also serving as a model for joint ventures from academia.”

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- [Fraunhofer Institute for Organic Electronics, Electron Beam and Plasma Technology \(FEP\)](#)
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