

Press release

ALTANA AG honors a team of students from Oppenheim with the Special Prize in Chemistry at the 2022 JUGEND GRÜNDET national finals

The four students Milan von dem Bussche, Simon Kolb, Noel Lieder, and Claas Vietor were awarded the ALTANA Special Prize in Chemistry at the JUGEND GRÜNDET 2022 national finals. On June 21-22, 2022, the ten best teams of the 2021-22 competition year competed in Stuttgart for the overall victory in the nationwide student competition. The student team from St. Katharinen Gymnasium in Oppenheim, Rhineland-Palatinate, impressed with their machine ecosystem for recycling plastic waste into 3D printing filament and thus finished in 2nd place in the overall rankings.

“Waste is not an end product” is the credo of Milan von dem Bussche, Simon Kolb, Noel Lieder, and Claas Vietor. With their business idea, the so-called JARVIS ecosystem, the four entered the JUGEND GRÜNDET national finals in Stuttgart 2022 on June 21 and 22 as one of the ten best teams in Germany competing for the overall victory and were awarded the ALTANA Special Prize in Chemistry. A company they have already founded, QiTech Industries GmbH, develops and builds machines that can be used to produce high-quality 3D printing filament from plastic waste. The machine ecosystem covers all recycling steps and is characterized by cloud-based machine control. In the overall ranking of the nationwide student competition for more start-up spirit, the team “QiTech Industries” achieved a great 2nd place. The QiTech Industries team was supported by their supervisor Johanna Lienerth.

QiTech Industries demonstrates the great innovative potential of 3D printing

“3D printing, with its additive manufacturing capabilities, is a key technology for boosting productivity and efficiency in industry. In the field of plastic 3D printing, sustainable and recyclable materials are particularly in demand. The innovative strength, professionalism, and entrepreneurial flair the student team has shown in taking on this important future topic is impressive,” said Dr. Petra Severit, Chief Technology Officer of ALTANA AG, explaining the decision of the Special Prize jury. The specialty chemicals group recently launched innovative printing materials for industrial inkjet 3D printing.

The ALTANA Special Prize in Chemistry, honoring innovative business ideas in the field of chemistry, has been awarded at the JUGEND GRÜNDET national finals since 2014. As the winner of the special prize in 2022, the QiTech Industries team can look forward to a trip to Wallingford (USA) to visit one of ALTANA AG’s largest research sites, as well as extensive sightseeing and an overnight stay in New York City.

The QiTech Industries team also took home another special prize: Milan, Simon, Noel, and Claas were honored by REWIMET e.V. with the Special Prize in Circular Economy.

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Contact

Corporate Communications

Andrea Neumann (Management)

Tel +49 281 670-10300

Tobias Entrup

Tel +49 281 670-10308

Heike Dimkos

Tel +49 281 670-10302

Birte Ölzner

Tel +49 281 670-10249

Hannah Ziehm

Tel +49 281 670-10306

Fax +49 281 670-10999

press@altana.com

www.altana.com/presse

ALTANA AG

Abelstrasse 43

46483 Wesel

Germany

Tel +49 281 670-8

Fax +49 281 65735

info@altana.com

www.altana.com

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National finals in Stuttgart: Highlight of the competition year

Innovative business ideas like these have been sought in the national student competition JUGEND GRÜNDET for 19 years. In 2021-22, a total of 4,106 students and trainees from all over Germany took up the challenge, with 729 innovative business ideas submitted. The best teams in the business plan phase were allowed to present their ideas at pitch events in the spring before competing in the business game phase until mid-May for a spot in the JUGEND GRÜNDET national finals. There, at the Future Ideas Fair, the finals teams' innovative and persuasive powers were put to use one last time to convince the JUGEND GRÜNDET national jury of the merits of their business ideas and their team qualities. In addition, the finalists could look forward to an exciting and varied supporting program, networking opportunities, and exclusive insights into the host company Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche AG, the main sponsor of JUGEND GRÜNDET.

Finding new paths in areas where there is not a good solution yet

"In the coming years, many things will have to change fundamentally. But one of the biggest problems is that it's often not clear how! In many cases, a good solution has not been found yet. So people are needed who are willing to look for new paths, question the status quo, and develop visions for the future. That's exactly what the teams at JUGEND GRÜNDET are doing. I hope you enjoy having a look at the future at the JUGEND GRÜNDET national finals in 2022!" said Franziska Metzbaur, project manager of JUGEND GRÜNDET, during the welcoming speech.

Strong finals teams from all over Germany

The ten finals teams were strong enough to fight their way to the top over the course of the JUGEND GRÜNDET competition year. In the business plan phase (first semester of school), the students and trainees took on the role of innovators, developing innovative business ideas and a concept for implementation, the so-called business plan. In the business game phase (second half of the school year), the participants assumed the role of managers, steering a virtual company through the ups and downs of the economy with their strategic decisions in the business game Startup Simulator. At the national finals, the top-class jury ultimately decided which team would win the main prize, a guided trip to Silicon Valley (USA) with exciting visits to startups as well as tourist destinations. The ten finals teams for 2021-22 came from across Germany, with six different German states represented: three teams came from Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, respectively, and one from Bavaria, Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Schleswig-Holstein.

In the 2021/22 competition year, Mario Schweikert from Leibniz-Gymnasium in Neustadt an der Weinstraße won the national prize as the "INFORMAtic Teens" team with his AI app "Vine Leaf Disease and AI" for detecting grapevine diseases.

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Sponsors and supporters

JUGEND GRÜNDET is a nationwide online competition that has been sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research since 2003. It is supported by a number of well-known sponsors, who publicize the competition, the prizes, and the events. The main sponsor is Porsche AG. Prize sponsors for the 2022 national finals include the Steinbeis Foundation (first prize: a trip to Silicon Valley/USA), ALTANA AG (Special Prize in Chemistry), CK-Holding (Special Prize in Artificial Intelligence), Volkswagen AG (Special Prize in Social Startups and Special Prize in Business Games, Porsche (Special Prize in Digital Future), Hightech Gründerfonds (Special Prize in High Tech), and REWIMET e.V. (Special Prize in Circular Economy).

Detailed information on the national competition can be found at <http://www.jugend-gruendet.de>

Information on the national finals can also be found directly at: <https://www.jugend-gruendet.de/finale2022>.

Your contacts for questions:

Dorothee Riegner
JUGEND GRÜNDET im SIZ, Blücherstr. 32, 75177 Pforzheim,
Germany
Tel: +49 7231-42446-14, riegner@szue.de

Andrea Neumann
ALTANA AG, Abelstrasse 43, 46483 Wesel, Germany
Tel +49 281 670-10300, press@altana.com
www.altana.com

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www.jugend-gruendet.de

E-mail: info@jugend-gruendet.de

Information hotline: +49 7231 42446-27

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About ALTANA:

ALTANA is a global leader in true specialty chemicals. The Group offers innovative, environmentally compatible solutions for coating manufacturers, paint and plastics processors, the printing and packaging industries, the cosmetics sector, and the electrical and electronics industry. The product range includes additives, specialty coatings and adhesives, effect pigments, sealants and compounds, impregnating resins and varnishes, and testing and measuring instruments. ALTANA's four divisions, BYK, ECKART, ELANTAS, and ACTEGA, all occupy a leading position in their target markets with respect to quality, product solution expertise, innovation, and service.

Headquartered in Wesel, Germany, the ALTANA Group has 48 production facilities and 65 service and research laboratories worldwide. Throughout the Group, more than 6,700 people work to ensure the worldwide success of ALTANA. In 2021, ALTANA achieved sales of around € 2.7 billion. About 7 percent of the total sales is invested in research and development each year. Its high earning power and high growth rate make ALTANA one of the world's most innovative, fastest growing, and most profitable chemical companies.

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