Press release

Apolarion receives CHF 150,000 from Venture Kick to protect seeds from pathogens with plasma

St.Gallen/Zurich/Lausanne, November 3, 2026 — The EPFL spin-off Apolarion has obtained CHF 150,000 from Venture Kick to advance a chemical-free seed treatment technology powered by plasma. Using only air and electricity, the cleantech startup aims to protect crops from harmful pathogens while reducing the environmental impact of agriculture.

Protecting seeds from disease is essential to ensuring healthy crops and reliable harvests. However, conventional seed treatments often rely on chemical coatings that can leave harmful residues in the soil, while alternatives using heat require considerable energy and are ineffective in some case. Both approaches present challenges for high-value seeds and the growing demand for sustainable, pesticide-free farming.

Apolarion is developing a modular device that uses cold atmospheric plasma to eliminate harmful microorganisms from seeds without chemicals. The technology generates highly reactive particles from air and electricity that neutralize pathogens while preserving the seeds' ability to germinate. Designed for low energy consumption and flexible application, the solution offers a more sustainable alternative to conventional seed treatments.

The initial focus is on the Swiss and EU seed treatment market, valued at approximately USD 250 million, within a global market estimated at USD 13 billion and growing at 9.5% annually. Apolarion will seek to provided added value for over 450 companies in the EU alone by increasing yields of harvests plagued by pathogens.

The CHF 150,000 from Venture Kick will enable Apolarion to deliver this technology to customers for the first time. It will be used to support the first series of field trials through paying for operational spaces, equipment and personnel necessary for running these pilot programs. This will ensure a successful market entry and provide a strong foundation for future growth of Apolarion.

The startup is co-founded by Jesus Poley and Luke Simons, two plasma physicists from EPFL's Swiss Plasma Center who combine scientific expertise with project management experience.

"The Venture Kick program has been so important in our journey. It introduced us to the startup network in Switzerland and gave us access to world-class training, coaching and advisors; helping achieve the early successes of Apolarion," stated CEO and founder Luke Simons. "We're incredibly grateful for the recognition, exposure and support we've gained in the program, and we look forward to continuing to take part in this vibrant community."



Co-Founders Luke Simons and Jesús Poley-Sanjuán

Apolarion's profile on Venture Kick

About Venture Kick

The Venture Kick philanthropic initiative provides more than 1 million in seed funding to Swiss startups and offers a well-structured entrepreneurial path toward building a winning business. Startups pitch to Venture Kick juries in three stages to obtain CHF 150,000, gain direct feedback, and access a network of 250 international investors. Winners of Venture Kick are eligible for an InnoBooster grant of CHF 150,000 and an additional CHF 850,000 investment from the Kickfund.

Since its launch in 2007, Venture Kick has supported 1,286 Swiss startup projects with CHF 103 million from private donors. Thanks to financial support, coaching, and networking with investors, this initiative has led to the emergence of 1,000+ thriving startup companies and the creation of 16,100+ jobs. Venture Kick alumni companies have attracted investments of CHF 10.2 billion and represent 66 companies ranked in the Top100 Swiss Startups in 2025 (https://www.top100startups.swiss).

Venture Kick is an initiative by the Kick Foundation, supported by a private consortium and operated by Venturelab. The supporting foundations and private philanthropic partners include Gebert Rüf Stiftung, Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Fondation ALCEA, Hauser-Stiftung, André Hoffmann, Hansjörg Wyss, Martin Haefner, Fondation ProTechno, ESA BIC Switzerland, Swisscom, Lichtsteiner Foundation, and Deep Tech Nation Switzerland Foundation.

Find more information on venturekick.ch, with all startup projects supported by Venture Kick, and follow the success stories of our startups on LinkedIn.

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