

Drug safety, cruelty-free testings and mushrooms in this week's MaddyMoney

Every week, Maddyness brings you the latest investment news from the UK startup ecosystem. Here's a recap of this week's investments.

Temps de lecture : minute

16 February 2024

Total

£20.8M

Number of deals

6

Sable Bio raises £1.5M pre-seed round to transform drug discovery safety assessments.

Sable Bio, an innovative B2B software startup changing how biotech and pharma companies evaluate drug target safety for effective decision-making, today announced the successful closure of an oversubscribed £1.5M pre-seed funding round, Episode 1 Ventures supported by Seedcamp, and ex-Deepmind, now Finster AI CEO Siddhant Jayakumar.

Founded in 2023 and headquartered in London, Sable helps scientists identify and mitigate potential safety risks for drugs in development or about to enter the clinic, using a suite of state of the art techniques.

The funding will enable building out a stellar team of scientists and engineers, enabling the refinement and enhancement of their core technological infrastructure, providing a solid and expansive foundation for their data capabilities

"We are really excited, this investment will help Sable Bio redefine drug safety assessment and change the ways actionable biomedical insights are generated. Working with with leading investors Episode 1 and Seedcamp is enabling us to build an exceptional team and a platform to accelerate safer drug development for patients in need" says Josh Almond-Thynne, Co-founder of Sable Bio

Biotech raises further £2.35M for lab models that help avoid animal testing

Newcells Biotech - whose laboratory models are used in drug development and reduce reliance on animal testing - has raised a further £2.35M to boost its growth and help establish itself as a global leader in its field. The Newcastle-based company has secured funding from existing investors including the North East Venture Fund, supported by the European Regional Development Fund and managed by Mercia Ventures,

Mercia's own funds and Northstar Ventures. It brings the total raised by the company to date to over £12M.

Newcells' 3D models mimic processes within the body and are used by pharmaceutical companies worldwide to test the impact of their drugs, including their efficacy and safety. They provide robust data to support critical decisions, such as whether to continue development and commence human trials. The use of non-animal testing methods is likely to increase as a result of recent changes to the FDA guidance which recognise that they can be suitable replacements for animal testing.

Newcells currently offers models of the retina, kidney and lung and also provides specialist services to run customised tests. Customers include pharmaceutical companies which use its products for applications ranging from gene therapy efficacy to toxicity screening, and a major research consortium.

“The support from our investors has allowed us to grow the business to the point where we now work with over 100 customers internationally including large pharma and biotech companies. This latest investment will further enhance our technology and underpin our ability to continue our rapid growth.” says Dr Mike Nicholds, CEO of Newcells Biotech

Spacegoods raises £2.5M to become

Europe's leading functional mushroom brand

Spacegoods, a next-generation wellness brand specialising in functional mushrooms and nootropics, has raised a £2.5M seed round. The investment was led by FoodTech specialist venture capital firm Five Seasons Ventures, with participation from Redrice Ventures, Slingshot Ventures, and G-FUND.

Launched in April 2022 by seasoned e-commerce entrepreneur Matthew Kelly, Spacegoods embraces the power of functional mushrooms and adaptogens to help with focus, energy and overall wellness.

The investment will enable Spacegoods to solidify its position as the leading mushroom-based wellness brand in Europe through market expansion, team growth, and the development of new products. Spacegoods previously raised a £500K pre-seed round from angel investors.

“The functional mushroom space is relatively untapped in Europe - with this investment and the support of our investors, Spacegoods has a huge opportunity to be the European market leader.”
says Matthew Kelly, Founder of Spacegoods

PPE leads £4M investment into alcohol-free brand, Lucky Saint

Lucky Saint, the UK's number one dedicated alcohol-free beer brand has raised £4M in a series A extension round to invest in growth and drive global expansion.

The B-Corp certified company voted 'Marketing Society Brand of the Year 2023' has recently expanded its offering by launching the Superior Hazy IPA, which joins the award-winning Alcohol-Free Superior Unfiltered Lager as their first new beer since launch in 2018.

The non-alcoholic drinks market is set to increase by a third by 2026 with the market surpassing £8.7B in value in 2022. Lucky Saint is currently stocked in over 6000 venues across the UK and delivered via all major wholesalers and distributors. It is sold in major supermarkets including Waitrose, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Marks & Spencer. Previous investors include Beringea, the consumer and technology growth investor and JamJar Investments (headed up by Innocent Drinks founders).

"We're really excited to be backing Luke, Emma and the wider team in this significant stage of growth for the business as demand for non and low alcoholic drinks continues to rise. The brand has been razor focused in building a strong reputation for its lager product, but with the recent launch of the Superior Hazy IPA the growth opportunities in both the UK and globally are significant." says Ben Leslie, Investment Director at Puma Private Equity

#BIOTECH

Sable Bio

£1.5M

#INSURTECH

Artificial
£3.95M

#GREENTECH

Synaptec
£6.5M

#BIOTECH

Newcells Biotech
£2.35M

#WELLNESS

Spacegoods
£2.5M

#DRINKS

Lucky Saint
£4M

In other international investment news

High performance cloud storage software startup, Simplyblock, raises £2.18M seed round.

Simplyblock, the Berlin-based high performance cloud storage startup, has today announced a £2.18M seed funding round. The round was led by *42CAP*, the pan-European seed stage VC firm alongside *Antler*, the most active early-stage investor in Europe and *Begin Capital*, an international VC firm based in London. High profile angel investors include *Johan Svensson*, the founder of Neo4j, the leading graph database company.

Simplyblock builds low-latency, high performance cloud storage. In this deep-tech industry traditionally dominated by cloud providers in the US and Israeli startups, Simplyblock is the only startup from Europe building in this space. The company is initially targeting database users of any kind (SQL, NoSQL, Vector or Graph) as first customers. With the first release simplyblock will be available for AWS users worldwide.

The German startup rides on the latest technology advancements in SSD drives (NVMe technology) to provide predictable, ultra-low latency software thereby realising the full potential of the underlying hardware for users. Its tech, written mostly in C/C++ to leverage the capabilities of low-level Linux features, provides the ability to perform millions of operations per second (IOPS) with sub-millisecond latency. This means that software is up to 10x faster with a 50x better cost-to-performance ratio than legacy solutions in the enterprise as well as existing cloud storage.

New York climate AI startup Pathways raises

£2M to decarbonise building materials

Pathways, an AI-driven sustainability platform which enables manufacturers to measure and reduce building material emissions, has raised £2M in a pre-seed funding round led by *Pi Labs* and *Zacua Ventures*. Other investors included *Blue Lion Global*, *Positive Ventures*, *Jetstream*, *Refashiond*, *Great Wave Ventures* and *Anglet*.

Pathways has built an AI-enabled platform to automate the creation of real-time LCAs and EPDs for material manufacturers.

Currently, LCAs and EPDs are still manually created which is costly, complex, imprecise, and slow, taking around 6-12 months. Pathways is solving these issues, enabling EPDs to be automatically generated by ingesting data from a customer's IT infrastructure around raw materials inputs, transportation to site and manufacturing processes. By maintaining data integrations, Pathways makes it easy to identify emissions hotspots and track reduction progress, furthering Pathways' wider mission to help decarbonize the manufacturing process.

Fever Raises £7.97M from General Catalyst to Expand Its Platform for Virtual Power Plants

Fever, the Swedish powertech company building an API-centric platform for virtual power plants, raised £7.97M in a seed funding round led by *General Catalyst*, with participation from previous investors, including *La Famiglia* and *Norrskan VC*. The funding will accelerate Fever's expansion plans, deepen product development, and expand collaborations across Europe.

Fever is a power technology company with a mission to transform energy assets and the power grid with software. By bringing the most advanced technology and machine learning capabilities to the power industry, Fever is changing how energy assets are utilised, powered, secured and monetised

Fever's innovative API-centric platform further empowers energy asset installers and operators, including leading utility companies, EV fleets, and Battery Energy Storage Operators, to run and monetise their own virtual power plants by unlocking the full potential of market participation, capacity modelling, orchestration, reporting and settlements.

In other investment news

Signal AI sharpens reputation and risk capabilities with acquisition of social 360

Signal AI, a global leader in Reputation and Risk Intelligence, announces the acquisition of *Social 360*, an advanced reputation intelligence monitoring company currently serving an international client base in the USA, EMEA, and APAC.

Signal AI is a global leader in AI-driven reputation and risk insights. The company serves over 40% of Fortune 500 companies, analysing external data across 226 markets and 75 languages to navigate industry trends, manage reputational shifts, and mitigate risks.

Together, the two companies' capabilities will provide a single source of relevant data, allowing clients to cut through the noise, navigate complex risks and opportunities, and elevate their reputation effectively. Similar to Signal AI, Social 360 partners with many of the world's largest companies on risk mitigation and reputation analysis, as well as providing support in

major crises. Complementing Signal AI's leading premium media data, Social 360 has built the largest premium source list of online voices that can directly impact the reputation of any organisation. This delivers more than 2.3 million articles of reputational relevance from over 185,000 individual sources per month.

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