

RNA detection, BaaS and hydrogen generator 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

15 March 2024

Total

£167.95M

Number of deals

10

Spin-out raises £8.5M to reveal the 'unseen world of RNA'

Wobble Genomics - a University of Edinburgh spin-out whose novel approach to RNA sequencing could revolutionise many fields in biotechnology - has raised £8.5M to help commercialise its technology. The funding round was led by Mercia Ventures and BGF and backed by IQ Capital, EOS Advisors and Old College Capital, the university's venture fund.

Wobble, which is currently operating in stealth mode, has found a way to detect previously invisible 'full length' ribonucleic acid (RNA). The technology could have wide-ranging applications, from drug development and research to agriculture and ecology.

Historically it has been difficult to use RNA sequencing for many applications due to the inherent instability of RNA, its complex molecular structure and the abundance of molecules. In addition, current techniques known as 'short-read sequencing' can only measure small fragments of RNA which does not capture important information. Wobble's novel approach overcomes these challenges and enables long-read sequencing, allowing for optimal detection of full length RNA.

“ We are pleased to receive backing from some of the UK's leading life science investors, which highlights its potential. The funding will help us to pursue our mission to reveal the unseen world of RNA and unlock exciting new applications.” says Dr Richard Kuo, CEO of Wobble Genomics

Griffin secures £19M in funding and launches as a fully operational UK bank

Griffin, the full-stack Banking as a Service (BaaS) platform, announces that it has received approval from the UK's financial services regulators, the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) and Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), to lift restrictions, allowing Griffin to exit mobilisation and launch as a fully operational bank. Griffin's launch follows a successful mobilisation - period, and is supported by a £19M funding round led by MassMutual

Ventures, NordicNinja and Breega, with participation from existing investors Notion Capital and EQT Ventures.

Griffin offers a full-stack platform for technology-driven firms looking to offer banking, payments, and wealth solutions to their customers. Griffin's automated compliance technology and integrated ledger enable its customers to streamline their financial operations while continuing to deliver high-quality service to their customers.

Griffin is poised for accelerated growth and is committed to scaling responsibly as pilot customers go live. The bank will also take on new customers via its early access programme, Foundations. Griffin will work closely with Foundations participants to help them enhance their offering with seamless, contextual finance embedded directly into their customer experience.

Hydrogen generator firm raises £3M to boost uptake of green energy

Suiso - a Rotherham company developing an innovative hydrogen generator that could boost uptake of green energy - has raised £3M from NPIF - Mercia Equity Finance, which is managed by Mercia Ventures and part of the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund, and Mercia's EIS funds.

The company plans to create generators the size of shipping containers that could be placed on site to power factories, hospitals, and warehouses or at filling stations to fuel hydrogen-powered vehicles.

Suiso's process produces low-cost, low-carbon or zero-carbon energy. It uses a novel microwave technology to extract hydrogen from natural gas or biogas, while capturing the carbon in the form of carbon black, a

valuable byproduct that can be used to make tyres, batteries and inks. As existing methods of carbon black production create high levels of emissions, Suiso's technology can help decarbonise these industries too.

“This technology could make hydrogen a viable option for many businesses and drive rapid uptake. With growing global demand for clean energy, we are confident that Suiso will have many opportunities ahead.” says Ashwin Kumaraswamy, Investment Director with Mercia Ventures

Supply chain technology provider Finboot announces latest funding round

Finboot announces the completion of the first close of its latest funding round to accelerate the next phase of its growth strategy – with a particular focus on enabling companies and their net-zero transition through technology. This latest funding round has been led by a strategic investor together with Wealth Club.

Finboot helps its customers and partners accelerate their digital transformation, and by doing so helps them realise value and build trust through leading edge blockchain technology.

Finboot's solution, MARCO, enables companies to incorporate blockchain within their value and supply chains, bringing traceability, transparency and compliance which, in turn, helps them meet sustainability and environmental, track carbon emissions and social and governance (ESG) requirements while also increasing operational efficiency.



Tech-enabled courier Packfleet celebrates £7.8M investment from leading US VC funds

Packfleet, a tech-enabled carbon-neutral courier, announced that it has raised £7.8M in Series A funding. The round was co-led by *General Catalyst*, an early Packfleet investor and *Voyager Ventures*, a leading early-stage climate fund. All of Packfleet's existing investors participated in the funding round, a roster that includes *Creandum*, *Entree Capital* and *Founder Collective*.

Around 500 million parcels are delivered in London each year and after experiencing poor service when parcels arrived broken or went missing the founders had the idea for Packfleet aiming to use tech to make sending and receiving a parcel as easy as ordering a takeaway for 10 million Londoners.

The newly acquired funds will bolster Packfleet's established presence in the London delivery market, where the company achieved 5x growth throughout 2023, and support the expansion of its increasing roster of merchants. The funds will also support the development of Pathfinder, the proprietary routing software that has been instrumental in the company's meteoric rise.

“We’ve proven that our model works, and with the backing of General Catalyst and Voyager, we look forward to continuing to change the logistics sector for good.” says Tristan Thomas, CEO and founder of Packfleet



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Ready for a courier service that customers can love? Meet

Elbow Beach Capital and existing investors lead government funded investment aimed at delivering a step change in battery manufacturing technology

Elbow Beach Capital, the decarbonisation, sustainability and social impact investor, announces its further investment support of battery technology company *Anaphite*. The overall funding of £1.6M consists of £685K grant funding via the *Investor Partnerships Future Economy programme* and more than £880K committed by private investors. In partnership with *UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) Faraday Battery Challenge*, delivered by *Innovate UK*, the grant will enable Anaphite to accelerate the development of its dry-coating technology to reduce the cost of EV battery manufacturing.

Anaphite's unique chemistry-based approach produces fully formulated 'Dry Coating Precursor powders' (DCP®) that enable the dry coating process. These powders are tailor-formulated to customer specifications enabling the best battery formulations to be made using dry processes safely, without compromising product performance. Anaphite's technology unlocks the benefits of the dry coating process, which will reduce the cost of the battery cell manufacturing process by up to 40%, directly improving the accessibility of EVs and accelerating their widespread adoption.

The purpose of the project is to demonstrate that Anaphite's dry coated cathode matches the performance of state-of-the-art energy and cost intensive wet coating. This project will enable Anaphite to scale its dry electrode production process to the next phase, demonstrating the

performance that battery cell-makers need on industrially viable equipment, as well as build and consolidate relationships with global organisations specialising in dry coating technologies.

SURI secures £6M in Series A funding to fuel growth, expand its product offering and bolster its international team

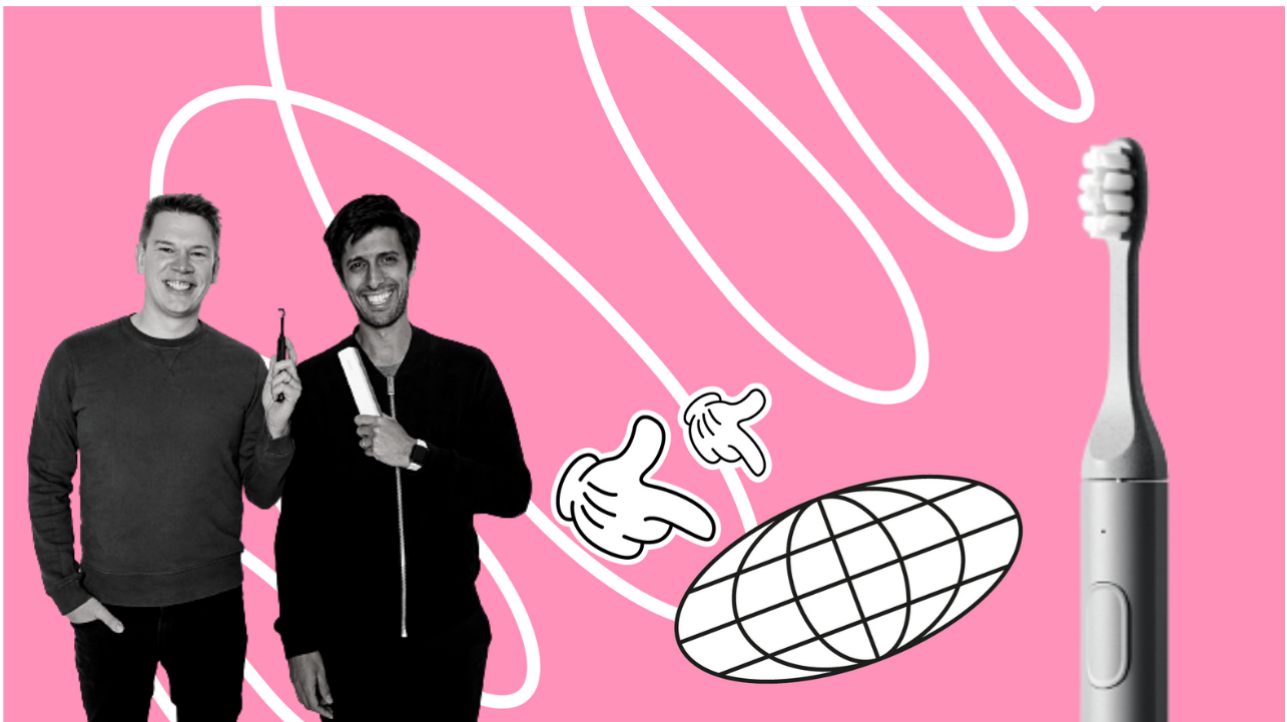
Today, *SURI*, the personal care brand that is revolutionising daily routines, announces a raise of £6M, in its Series A funding round. The round was co-led by *JamJar*, *V3 Ventures* with participation by *dmg ventures* and further investment from seed backer, *Hambro Perks*.

SURI, short for Sustainable Rituals, is on a mission to create oral and personal care products that help people live more sustainably, without compromising on quality, performance or design. SURI's Co-Founders, *Mark Rushmore* and *Gyve Safavi*, bring fifteen years of shared experience from multinational personal care and hygiene conglomerate *Procter & Gamble*.

Since launching in May 2022, SURI has become the fastest-growing electric toothbrush brand in the UK, with sales of over £10M in 2023, whilst simultaneously expanding its customer base in key international markets. Awarded the prestigious B-Corp certification in May 2023, SURI takes full responsibility for the lifecycle of its products to ensure that none of its brushes end up in landfills or oceans.

“We started SURI with one main aim; to create sustainable, beautiful and convenient alternatives to everyday personal care products. We’re proud

of how far we've come in under two years, and are grateful to the amazing people who have helped us get here. We're just getting started, and remain focused on creating delightful experiences for our customers." says Gyve Safavi, Co-Founder and CEO of SURI



Read also

SURI or the Elegant Revolution: An interview with Mark Rushmore and Gyve Safavi

#BIOTECH

Wobble Genomics
£8.5M

#FINTECH

Griffin
£19M

#GREENTECH

Suiso
£3M

#PLATFORM

Flagstone
£108M

#PLATFORM

Finboot
N/A

#LOGISTICS

Packfleet
£7.8M

#HEALTHTECH

SURI
£6M

#HR

Happl

£2.35M

#GREENTECH

Anaphite
£1.6M

#DEEPTECH

Kaedim
£11.7M



In other investment news

Ada Ventures closes oversubscribed £63M second fund from leading institutional LPs to continue backing “Inclusive Alpha” founders

Ada Ventures, the inclusive VC firm backing breakthrough ideas, announces the final close of a £63M fund to back a truly diverse cohort of early-stage founders. A range of prestigious institutional investors have backed this fund - the second from the firm - including the British Business Bank, The University Of Edinburgh, Big Society Capital, Legal & General Capital, Atomico, the The Export and Investment Fund of Denmark (EIFO) and Molten Ventures. They have been joined by a number of founder investors, including Taavet Hinrikus, founder of Wise, and Illusian, family office founded by Ilkka Paananen, co-founder and CEO of Supercell.

Launched in 2019, Ada Ventures has backed a range of success stories, including Huboo, Boundless, Bubble SideQuest, Spill, Materials Nexus, Greenworkx, Micrographia, Gizmo, and Tooth Fairy. Ada Ventures Fund I is a top quartile performing fund and the current portfolio is on track to generate in excess of £100M net revenue over the coming year. Ada Ventures portfolio companies have attracted co-investment and follow-on funding from leading firms including GV, NFX, DCVC and Index Ventures.

With this capital, the team will be making investments of between £250K and £1.5M in pre-seed and seed stage startups, with a significant amount allocated for follow-ons. With 12 investments already made from the second fund, the Ada Ventures team plans to make between 10 and 12 investments per year in companies building breakthrough ideas across climate equity, economic empowerment and healthy ageing.



Read also

Launching a new fund and tackling societal challenges: Meet Ada Ventures' Check Warner



In other international investment news

Dutch startups Vini Mini secured Seed funding to prevent babies from getting food allergies

Vini Mini, the preventive child healthcare startup, announces a seed funding round of £427.6K. The closing of the current round comes three months after Vini Mini has been crowned as the winner of the FEM-START Up Awards 2023, hereby securing a £85.5K investment from *Antler*, one of the world's most active early-stage investors. The round also includes *Irene Groenink* (Vrederijk Investments), an experienced healthcare entrepreneur & investor, the *Donor Impact Investment Fund*, which backs impact-led businesses in the Netherlands, business angels from The Angel Initiative and the Dutch bank *Rabobank*.

Vini Mini is developing nutritional products and supplements that can be given to babies to expose them to allergens in a healthy, simple and safe manner. Addressing one of the fastest growing health challenges in the world - food allergies in children, Vini Mini is aiming to become a leading player in preventive child healthcare.

One in four children in Europe have a food allergy, costing an estimated £34.2B in direct and indirect costs across Europe. This number is set to increase by 2050, when more than half of the population is expected to have some form of food allergy. However, research shows that 80% of food allergies can be prevented by offering babies allergens early and often. Vini Mini is creating easy, healthy and safe products that can be given to the five million babies born every year in Europe, helping them avoid a lifetime of food allergies.

Software reliability platform Steadybit announces £4.7M funding led by Paladin; launches innovative 'Advice' feature

Steadybit, a leader in chaos engineering, announces that it has successfully raised £4.7M in Series A funding led by *Paladin Capital Group*, marking a significant milestone in the company's international growth.

Steadybit's mission is to improve software reliability through chaos engineering, a vital practice that ensures systems are robust and resilient against unpredictable online environments. By simulating disturbances and potential failures, Steadybit aids organisations in preempting and mitigating system vulnerabilities, enhancing overall performance and user experience. Companies such as *Salesforce*, *ManoMano*, *REWE Digital* and *StackState* already rely on Steadybit's chaos engineering platform to protect their customers from disruption.

In tandem with the funding news, Steadybit is excited to introduce a groundbreaking feature to its platform - 'Reliability Advice'. The feature constantly monitors all information collected about the system under observation to discover potential reliability gaps. Users are given instructions on how to fix errors and offered experiments that validate the effectiveness of those interventions, creating their own libraries of good engineering practices.



ROAR Games raises £1.17M from The Games Fund to develop "Tenet of the Spark"

ROAR Games, a new independent games studio focused on original game development, today announces it has secured £1.17M from *The Games Fund*, a specialist early-stage VC fund that invests in cutting-edge video game developers, studios and GameTech companies.

Launched in 2023, ROAR Games is the brainchild of the founders of *ZHEESHEE*, an established CGI production studio with a track record of working with My.Games, Nexters, PUBG and Dota 2. It has a 30-strong global team across the US, a major hub in Tbilisi, Georgia, and bases in Europe and Asia. The inspiration for Tenet of the Spark was a short animated movie created by the ZHEESHEE team, 'The Spark', which achieved viral attention. This was followed by the release of a gameplay concept in March 2023 which has received tens of millions of views across *X (Twitter)* and *TikTok*.

The investment will fuel ROAR Games' development of its first title, *Tenet of the Spark*, which will bring its vibrant art style and third-person action to PC and console. *Tenet of the Spark* tells the story of a heroic young boxer who gains an incredible ability to perceive the world through the powers of his ancestors, helping him battle through a criminal underworld. At the heart of the game is a unique world-switching mechanic which empowers players to seamlessly jump between immersive settings inspired by Ancient South American and Viking civilisations. Each environment comes with its own striking visuals and sounds, and instantly alters the mechanics of melee combat and NPC behavior.



Read also

Gaming focused venture funding with a human approach, a profile of The Games Fund

Nanonets Raises £22.66M from Accel to create Autonomous AI Agent for back office operations

Nanonets, a leading AI-based workflow automation platform, raised £22.66M in a Series B funding round led by *Accel*. The funding round also saw participation from existing investors *Elevation Capital*, *YCombinator* and others. This takes the total funding raised till date to £32.8M.

Over the last 2 years, Nanonets has seen extensive growth in their customer base, with over 34% of the Global Fortune 500 companies having used their AI-based workflow automation platform across Finance, Accounting, Operations and several other business use-cases. Their user base has grown 4x in the last 12 months.

Nanonets' primary innovation is their ability to guarantee Straight Through Processing (STP), the percentage of data processed without any manual intervention. Other Generative LLMs tend to struggle with STP due to data hallucinations, hindering the large-scale adoption of Autonomous Agents for end-to-end tasks. The Turing test has evolved from humans being unable to differentiate an AI in conversation to humans being unable to differentiate an AI in performing tasks. Nanonets' Autonomous agents excel at performing tasks end-to-end. Additionally, their models, unlike other LLMs, learn instantly from new information, eliminating the need for complex training. Processing millions of documents monthly, Nanonets delivers over 90% STP rate, leading to significant productivity and cost savings.

