

# Building the economy our planet needs, a profile of Planet A

*With #QVCS, Maddy Ness profiles different funds to give founders and entrepreneurs the information they need to choose the right investor. Today, we speak to Lena Thiede, cofounder and General Partner at Planet A Ventures.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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The environment, and understanding the systemic change we need to protect it, is a passion that has shaped my entire life. From saving whales in middle school to rescuing sea turtles in the Mediterranean on summer breaks, I've always been dedicated to protecting our planet. Later on, I worked in climate science and then sustainable finance for the German government, before launching *Planet A* in 2020 with my co-founders.

The journey to creating Planet A began when my co-founders and I united around a crucial question: "What will it take to accelerate climate and nature technologies more effectively?" We quickly realised that venture capital had a significant role to play, but only by finding solutions that really move the needle in addressing the climate and wider ecosystem crisis. So, we set out to establish a new kind of science-backed fund—one that truly evaluates how much better an innovative solution is compared to the status quo. Today, we are proud to support founders tackling the world's largest environmental problems and help them maximise their impact.

# Which industries are you currently working in?

The answers need to be as broad as the challenges. We are sector agnostic but especially curious about innovation in: manufacturing, energy, mobility, water&waste, construction and agritech/food.

Today we are more thesis-driven, striving for a deep understanding of subsectors and what makes them thrilling from an impact AND business perspective. E.g. storing energy, building a more flexible grid, making nature investable, tackling industrial heat and decarbonising hard-to-abate industries, CDR.

# What do you look for in a founder?

We discuss this regularly in the team. Personally I look for founders who:

- Are fully committed to their vision but also curious, open to learning and flexible in how they get there
- Have a sense of determination and resilience, often fuelled by a deep motivation and drive to prove themselves
- Have the ability to build a strong team - shown in a couple of key hires - leading with integrity, clarity and transparency

# Could you share insights into your current portfolio?

So far, we have invested in 24 (disclosed) European pre-seed - Series A companies across software and hardware.

Examples:

- C1 - developing an ultra-efficient catalysis to mass-produce green methanol, enabling the shipping and chemical industry to save gigatons of CO2
- Makersite - offers global manufacturers AI-powered product lifecycle intelligence for more sustainable product development
- Hived - 100% electric parcel delivery network, significantly decreasing delivery emissions
- 44.01 - Utilises carbon mineralization to remove CO2 from the atmosphere, permanently transforming it into rock

## What does the future look like for you?

We need to build an economy within the planetary boundaries, otherwise we are cooked. That requires two things: stop burning fossil fuels, and protect and restore nature. Legislation is crucial for both.

The EU's "Green Deal", combined with a strong industrial agenda in the new "Clean Industrial Deal" is an exciting blueprint for an economy that doesn't cost the earth. Plans to unlock more private capital are crucial to scaling green technologies successfully. The point is: this is about a new industrial revolution and global competitiveness as much as it is about stopping global warming. The objective: to capitalise on Europe's innovation potential. I am confident that we will keep on seeing ambitious policies as this agenda enjoys cross-party support.

## What sets Planet A Ventures apart from others in the industry?

At Planet A, science comes first. Always. We're the first European VC with an in-house science team that calculates full life cycle assessments (LCAs) quantifying the impact of a startup - before we invest. Our science team has the power to veto investments if there is no significant positive

impact.

This approach helps us identify the real winners of tomorrow who turn industry disrupting innovations into hugely successful companies. For mission-driven founders with impact at their core, our LCAs provide quantitative evidence to back their claims - a clear competitive edge in the age of greenwashing.

## What one piece of advice would you give to founders?

Surround yourself with investors that get you and your mission and understand your technology. You want to have partners that you can trust and who are in it for the long game.

*Lena Thiede is the cofounder and General Partner at Planet A Ventures.*



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