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3 sustainable pioneers successfully through to the 2024 Green Business Award final

Three Swiss companies from diverse sectors have substantiated that sustainability and success go hand in hand: Algrano, which promotes direct coffee trading via its online marketplace for green coffee; New Roots, a producer of plant-based cheese and dairy alternatives; and Selfrag, which extracts valuable raw materials from the slag produced by waste-to-energy plants. These three companies have reached the final of the 2024 Green Business Award.

The Green Business Award will be awarded for the sixth time on 14 February 2025 and showcases Swiss solutions that combine ecological impact with economic success. 36 companies were nominated this year for the Green Business Award. The following three companies most impressed the prestigious jury, led by jury president and former federal councillor Doris Leuthard.

Algrano AG based in Zurich (ZH) – why direct coffee trading reduces the CO₂ footprint

Switzerland is a coffee country: over 50% of global coffee trade is transacted via Switzerland. Yet tracing the supply chain back to the coffee producers is difficult as trading encompasses a plethora of intermediate stages that are mostly governed by 'trade secrets'. The problem: two thirds of the coffee emissions are generated in the country of origin, but the producers cannot afford the cost of sustainable cultivation. CEO and founder Raphael Studer recognised this around ten years ago and promptly established Algrano. The company's platform facilitates direct contact between the roasters and the coffee producers. As a consequence, the producers earn 30-40% more and are able to invest in sustainable cultivation. Direct trade triples the proportion of fair trade and certified coffee. "We were very impressed by Algrano's overall package – the company makes a valuable contribution to the environment, but also combines social and economic sustainability", said Doris Leuthard, explaining the jury decision.

New Roots AG based in Oberdiessbach (BE) – cheese alternatives with up to 60% less CO₂ emissions than products using cow's milk.

The Swiss eat 23 kilos of cheese per capita every year. Animal products are amongst the foodstuffs that leave the biggest ecological footprint. Cheese from cow's milk is placed just behind beef. Yet many find it hard to give up the product – one reason being the lack of tasty alternatives. This was also what Alice Fauconnet and Freddy Hunziker found when Hunziker became a vegan after having an accident. So they started to tinker with plant-based alternatives. Since 2016, New Roots has been developing, producing and selling plant-based and protein-rich cheese and dairy alternatives. By emitting 60% less CO₂ and using 40% less water in comparison to cow's milk products, the company has reduced the ecological footprint considerably. New Roots relies on traditional Swiss production processes in order to preserve the craft of cheese-making and use existing infrastructures. Cédric Habermacher, director of Green Business Switzerland, is enthralled: "Most of us are aware that meat is pretty dire in terms of its life cycle assessment. Yet many also underestimate the negative environmental impact of cheese. New Roots is actively promoting a rethink and boldly moving forwards."



Selfrag AG based in Kerzers (FR) – circular economy through the transformation of waste into valuable raw materials

Around 800,000 tons of incineration residue from waste-to-energy plants accumulates in Switzerland every year. Applying its technology, Selfrag extracts valuable metals and minerals from the slag. The company extracts more copper from a ton of slag than is extracted from a ton of ore in the biggest copper mine in the world. Selfrag has a recovery rate of 50%, the highest in the sector. The company is consequently reducing CO₂ emissions and helping to close the gap to a fully realised circular economy. The company objective: to annually recycle half of the incineration residue in Switzerland within the recovery process using four to six facilities. This simultaneously solves the problem of a lack of slag disposal sites. “Selfrag impressively shows how a circular economy can create new value. This technology has enormous potential as it is scalable both internationally and in other areas”, declared Doris Leuthard.

The final of the Green Business Awards will take place on 14 February 2025 at Impact Gstaad’s Impact Circle event. Finalists will present their solutions to potential investors and have the opportunity to gain financing to promote growth. Ultimately, a real impact on the planet can only be made if Swiss solutions are internationally scalable.

[Press release with photo material](#)

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[Further information on ‘Green Business Award’](#)

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‘Green Business Award’

The Green Business Award has been awarded annually since 2019 to the most innovative Swiss companies that combine ecological impact with economic success. In the first phase of the selection process, around 20 national scouts from business and environmental organisations nominate the best solutions in their sector. An interdisciplinary expert jury distinguishes the five best solutions with the Green Business Excellence label. These five companies then present their pitch to the main jury chaired by former federal councillor Doris Leuthard. This jury also encompasses 14 other notable personalities including Reto Knutti (ETH professor in climate physics), Michèle Rodoni (CEO of Mobiliar), Roberto Cirillo (CEO of Swiss Post) and business journalist and entrepreneur Patrizia Laeri. Three of these five companies are then selected as Green Business Award finalists, one of which will come away with the prestigious award within the scope of Impact Gstaad’s Impact Circle event on 14 February 2025.

‘Green Business Switzerland’

Green Business Switzerland highlights the positive correlation between entrepreneurial success and sustainable action. Supporting the forward-looking cooperation of core protagonists from business and environmental organisations are, amongst others, Go for Impact, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, economiesuisse, the Swiss Business Council for Sustainable Development (öbu), Pusch, Schweizerische Umweltstiftung, Scienceindustries, Swissmem, Swiss Textiles and WWF Switzerland.

Partners

Swiss Post and Mobiliar support the Award both as partners and as pioneers of sustainability within their own sectors.