

Uncovering the impact of COVID-19 on energy and environmental startups

Of 126 Swiss Startups from the Swiss Energy and Environment sectors overall 34% survived the COVID-19 crisis without external help, whereas 56% received support through loans or partial unemployment.

Zürich 16.7.2021 In May 2021 the Swiss Environment and Energy Innovation Monitor carried out an online survey amongst 640 Swiss startups from the Energy and Environment sectors. 126 responded to questions focusing on issues in 2020 including COVID-19 effects, their work organisation, financing challenges and internationalization plans. The most relevant results have been published as a factsheet, also comparing the results to similar previous surveys, on the Innovation Monitor website.

While 58% of the startups experienced negative effects of the COVID-19 situation, only 15% were affected very negatively, 18% even saw positive effects. The Swiss support system seems to have worked well with 56% of the responding startups receiving support, mainly loans with no interest or partial unemployment coverage.

But regionally the picture is more diverse. In Tessin and Western Switzerland more startups felt a negative COVID-19 impact (67% and 61% respectively, compared to 58% overall) Also the satisfaction with the support differed, as not all startups felt sufficiently supported to manage the crisis. While in the German speaking part of Switzerland almost 60% of the startups felt well supported this was only the case for about 30% in the rest of Switzerland.

Access to customers was a challenge in 2020. Startups who target private individuals as customers appear less affected by COVID-19 compared to startups who target energy providers or public authorities. This may be due to the possibility to shift sales online in the case of private individuals, whereas energy providers were less easy to reach and public authorities were occupied with managing the crisis.

Two-thirds of the 126 responding startups are already internationalizing, however COVID-19 appears to have slowed down or stopped these steps for about one third of the startups. Startups reported that access to financing was affected by COVID-19, e.g. that investment discussions took longer or investors cancelled their planned investment. Despite persistent, as well as new COVID-19 related challenges about half of the startups that needed funding have been able to secure investments in the last three years, 20% even for three years in a row. Altogether the investments of the 51 successful startups in the survey are estimated to be more than 100 Million Swiss Francs.

DATA & CONTACT

See attached Document: Factsheet_Innovation-Monitor_2021_Survey.pdf

Dr. Christina Marchand, christina.marchand@zhaw.ch, 078 733 43 22

Christina Marchand has the project lead at the Swiss Environment and Energy [Innovation Monitor](#) which is an open online database with information about more than 600 Swiss Startups run by the [Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship](#) (ZHAW) and [eglosion](#).