

Selecting the Right Investors for your Materials Startup with Jakob Röskamp from Traceless Materials

Key Learnings

Customer Traction Drives Capital Access

The more you can convince customers that a product solves a real pain point, the easier it becomes to make the investment case. Whether through early adoption or off-take agreements, **proof of customer traction is one of the most important drivers of funding as it reduces risk** for both equity and debt providers.

How Asset-Heavy Startups Fund Scale: Capital Mix

Scaling physical infrastructure takes more than equity. Circular startups with **asset-heavy models might benefit from a blended capital stack, combining equity, grants, and debt to finance CapEx-intensive growth**. Grants help reduce dilution, debt lowers the overall cost of capital, and equity brings strategic support through investor expertise.

Look for Investors Bringing Expertise, Not Just Capital

The best partners are **investors who bring relevant expertise, such as operational insight, sector know-how, or network access**. For asset-heavy or scale-intensive models, experience with industrial ramp-up, regulatory processes, or capital expenditure planning **can be particularly valuable in enabling success**.

LCAs as a Strategic Asset for Building Credibility with Stakeholders

Lifecycle assessments are crucial for circular startups, as stakeholders expect more than a compelling story. **Investors, regulators, and customers are increasingly requesting the data that supports environmental claims**. Meeting these expectations requires treating LCA as a core capability: being able to apply different methodologies for diverse audiences, while ensuring the underlying data is consistent and reliable.

Listen to the full episode here:

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