

10 female-founded startups to invest in in 2021

For the Female Founder Challenge, Vivatech and 50inTech (re)combine forces to put the spotlight on promising early stage startups founded by women. Here, discover the incredible the ten finalists.

As money floods in to French startups – who have raised almost €600M this last week alone – women are still under-represented. As we have reported before, based on information published in Atomico's annual report, more than 90% of capital raised in Europe in 2020 went to all male teams. Indeed, so far this year, no round of over \$50M has gone to an all female team. It's a sorry situation, but there are clear signs that key players in the ecosystem are pulling their sleeves up and shifting the needle around diversity and inclusion.

Spotlight on the founders of promising startups

One such player is the startup 50inTech, a platform matching female talent with tech businesses, which for the third year running has joined the event Vivatech to launch the Female Founder Challenge, partnered of course with Maddyness. The goal? To run a competition that unearths and promotes female founded startups, giving them increased visibility and better access to investment.

“With the Female Founders Challenge, our goal is to give the codes, the confidence and the investor network to founders,” says Caroline Ramade, project lead and CEO of 50inTech.

As well as giving female founders support, this initiative aims also to be a *call to action for the investor community*.

“Our approach is a response to all the VCs who have said that they don’t come across any women seeking investment... It’s just not true! We are presenting the ten female-led startups that they simply must invest in: there’s no argument,” continues Caroline.

Announced today, the ten finalists were selected by a number of VCs including Idinvest Partners, Korelya Capital, EQT Ventures and Kima Ventures, who have recognised these startups as being the most promising ones to watch in 2021. Maddyness is delighted to share exclusively this list of nuggets.

Marie Amigues, founder and CEO of *Alocali*, a German startup democratising video game localisation using Artificial Intelligence

Agnes Peng, COO de *GliaCloud*, a Taiwanese startup that uses AI to generate videos allowing editors and consumers to convert articles into videos automatically

Polina Mikhaylova, founder and CEO of *Knot*, a French startup that has developed 2-in-1 kiosks for unlocking and charging mopeds, bikes and scooters

Deborah Gael, founder and CEO of *Koolboks*, a French business offering eco-friendly coolboxes

Marjorie Darcet, cofounder and CEO of *Lixo*, a French AI technology company that detects and identifies household waste to improve recycling

Louiza Hacene, founder and CEO of *Malou*, a French service allowing restaurants to acquire new clients online

Clarisse Hagège, founder and CEO of *Xkey*, a French business that creates security infrastructures for digital asset financing

Agathe Machavoine, founder and CEO of *Ublo*, a French platform aimed at property professionals that automates various aspects of rental management

Lauren Dannay, cofounder and COO *Whoomies*, a French platform that helps students and young professionals to find flatshares

Sem Ponnambalam, cofounder and CEO of *Xahive*, a British startup that has developed an anonymous messaging platform that protects personal data

€10,000 and transformational mentoring

The winning startup will be revealed on June 17th at Vivatech by Cedric O, secretary of state for the digital sector of France. The winner of the Female Founder Challenge will also win €10,000 and mentorship from Claire Calmejane, director of innovation at Société Générale and Emilie Sidiqian, managing director at Salesforce France.

All the finalists will benefit from access to the key investors involved via the Open Innovation tour that will close the event, as well as meetings with managers and directors of innovation from the event partners including Axa, Clear Channel, Salesforce and Société Générale.

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