

Meet eAgronom, the agritech transforming the voluntary carbon offset market

As part of our quick fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Robin Saluoks, cofounder and CEO of eAgronom about putting sustainability at the heart of your business and the global shift towards net-zero by making carbon-neutral farming profitable.

The beginnings of eAgronom were quite accidental and came about when my father broke his computer. Today's farmers rely heavily on computers for the running of their businesses, but unfortunately, the software my father was using to manage his farm was connected to his physical computer and it was a costly mission to transfer the data to a new machine. At that point I came into the story. Since I was still studying computer science at university I programmed the first version of a SaaS-based farm management software for my father's exclusive use. However, other farmers got wind of it and wanted to start using it too. Recognising my own limitations, I engaged Stenver's help who assisted me in developing a scalable product and eAgronom was born!

Tell me about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

eAgronom helps to accelerate the global shift towards net-zero by making carbon-neutral farming profitable. To do this we enable agribusiness stakeholders to bring climate movement benefits to farmers. What this means in practice is that we work with a network of organisations, including agribusiness dealers, banks, and food companies to make climate-positive food production profitable for farmers. From the field side, our farm management software, AI, and remote sensing technologies allow farmers to get pre-paid for creating carbon credits and access lower interest rates.

Our core customers are farmers and we believe that they play a crucial role in society. Food production is the biggest industry in the world. Currently, eAgronom users provide food for over 3 million people. We have a strong consultancy arm, including a team of agronomical advisers who keep in direct contact with our farmers. The farmers might be using our technology, but the communication with our customers is very much built on reliable and consistent human interaction. The agricultural world is held together by personal relationships and our industry partners work according to the same principles of trust.

How has the business evolved since its launch? When was this?

We started in 2016 as a farm management software provider to help farmers plan, manage, and analyse their activities and experienced rapid growth from the word go. While our core vision of supporting sustainable agriculture and providing better livelihoods to farmers has not changed, over the years we realised we needed to branch out to make this vision a reality. This is why we are building an entire ecosystem of partners to support and finance farmers' commitment to regenerative agriculture with the help of our carbon program that offers pre-payment for carbon credits, something we have been pushing full steam ahead with over the last year.

How are you funded?

We went through a Series A round at the beginning of 2022 and have so far raised a total of €10.2M from investors including Trind Ventures, ZGI Capital, Yolo Investments, as well as a grant from the European Union. We raised our first €500,000 from our 50 first customers back in the day, which was an incredibly humbling experience and gave us the confirmation we needed that we were onto something good.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

The farming industry is a major polluter. However, it has got immense potential not only to clean up its act, but also be a positive contributor to our natural environment. Soils are the largest carbon sink outside oceans. Sequestering carbon into agricultural soil via photosynthesis is a key natural means to fight climate change. A large-scale adoption of sustainable farming practices is required, such as crop rotation, reduced fuel usage, agroforestry, improved till and fertilization, among others. Building a comprehensive framework that supports farmers with this business transformation has been challenging, but seeing our farmers experience success has been very rewarding. eAgronom's farm management software, AI, and remote sensing technologies allow farmers to become more sustainable and get paid for creating fully measurable, transparent, and high-quality carbon credits.

How does eAgronom answer an unmet need?

eAgronom has answered an unmet need to finance the sustainable transition of farmers by providing pre-payments for carbon credits. High quality carbon offset projects take on average 5 years to become verified. However, they require sizable upfront investments from farmers as well as unknown risk on whether their project will qualify. Pre-payments issued at the onset of carbon farming projects benefit farmers' immediate financial needs that also serve to ease the transition to regenerative farming.

What's in store for the future?

We are working on strengthening our sustainable agriculture ecosystems by collaborating with key stakeholders in running agribusinesses, including

financial services and landlords. We also have some exciting agroforestry trials running in Africa and Europe, and are working to get our carbon programme projects accredited by Verra, the leading certification body for carbon emissions. Ours will be one of the first to receive certification in this area.

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Put sustainability at the heart of your business from the very beginning, whatever industry, whatever product or service you are offering. We, as business owners, have a responsibility to help fight the climate crisis and ensure the survival of our planet. Not only that, as ESG moves up the priority list for investors, policy makers and partners, building a business around a sustainable core will be crucial for future success.

Robin Saluoks is cofounder and CEO of [eAgronom](#).

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