

CONCRETUM

When the going gets tough

In Switzerland the superconcrete of the Zurcher enterprise Concretum has proved successful in many pilot projects. Now the first big orders are coming in – also from abroad.

The founders of the company Concretum went an unusual way for a spin-off in the business of production. Their products were not developed as a result of research of their institute of technology, the ETH Zurich, but are proprietary developments. Both construction engineers Martin Bäuml and Stefan Meier and material designer Giovanni Martinola first had a go as building material consultants. "At some point we realized that we were selling our know-how bit by bit" said CEO Martin Bäuml. So in 2004, three years after founding the company, they began developing additives for concrete. The result: one concrete hardens in two hours (instead of one or two days), the other is almost resistant to self-forming cracks.

The new, fast hardening concrete, for example, is mainly used in the overhaul of taxiways and in bridge building. These are niche applications because the price of this superconcrete is five times as high as that of a conventional one. All the same, the European market is estimated to be worth 500 million Swiss Francs. Concretum would like to conquer this market as soon as possible. In German speaking countries a 14 member Concretum team is making intensive contacts with building contractors and actual property developers. The aim is to work with partners in other foreign countries. They already proved lucky with the recruitment of the first seller in Spain. Within the first few months of having the superconcrete in his portfolio he received a large-scale order for the overhaul of the taxiways in Barcelona airport.

Concretum AG	
Zurich	
	
Foundation	2001
Employees	14 (9 full-time staff)
Financing	Core Capital Partners
Generated capital	undisclosed
Web address	www.concretum.com

CTI Project	Yes
CTI Entrepreneurship Courses	Yes
CTI Start-up Coaching / Label	Yes
CTI Invest	Yes
Venture Leader	Yes
Venture (ETH Zürich, McKinsey & Co.)	Yes (2006, 3 rd)
Additional Awards	Swiss Equity magazine: Top 10-Start-up

There seems to be no lack of funding for the fast development of the distribution network. Without mentioning numbers, Bäuml stated that for the time being there was no further form of funding scheduled so the Swiss private-equity firm Core Capital Partners must have made a substantial financial contribution.

The young enterprise takes profound care to protect itself from being imitated. Not only are the additives patent-registered, but they also contain additional additives to cover tracks and to complicate analysis considerably – of course this is no guarantee against re-engineering. "After all we don't want to be restricted to our existing products" said Bäuml. New developments are already in the pipeline such as earthquake-proof concrete which will come on the market in 2010. "By then we will also have doubled the number of employees", explained the 33 year old Martin Bäuml. **EUGEN ALBISSER** □

DR. MARTIN BÄUML

CEO of Concretum

