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ECOMACHINES VENTURES – FRIENDS FOR LIFE (OR, UNTIL THE EXIT)

City Editor Neil Martin talks to **Dr Ilian Iliev**,
Managing Director of EcoMachines Ventures,
a firm with very definite views



The team at EcoMachines Ventures has a simple message for companies looking for investment: if they have solved all their problems and all they need is finance, then they are probably not the right partner for them.

The firm looks for entrepreneurs and businesses who are building an exciting B2B hardware technology that has the potential to scale in large proven markets. And ones that need an experienced team behind them.

EcoMachines Ventures was founded by Dr. Ilian Iliev, and is backed by private investors with industrialist background.

As Dr. Iliev told GBI Magazine: "Last year we reviewed over 200 proposals from companies within our industrial high-tech scope. There are many others that we do not pursue because they are out of scope, or

simply not serious at first blush. We might only meet with or hold a call with 20% of these teams – like any investor, we have to be selective with how we spend our time and energy on due diligence, so vetting out businesses with red flags early is key."

Dr. Iliev added: "One of the nice things about investment in industrial high-tech start-ups, for investors at least, is that there simply aren't enough of us in the space to create a hyper-competitive atmosphere.

"On the contrary, it's actually a fairly cooperative and collaborative community, with various investment teams usually more than willing to share relevant deal flow and insights. We have had situations with VC, family offices, high-net worth angel investors and corporate VC funds all participating in the same deal."



The firm invests in promising technology companies and actively supports their growth into world class high-growth enterprises. Based in London Canary Wharf's Level 39 cluster of tech enterprises, with a pan-European focus in investments and a global reach in terms of investment and corporate networks, it currently manages, or has syndicated, roughly £30m of investments in its portfolio of companies.

The firm only invests in market segments where they see the potential for rapid growth. They are broadly focused on energy, transport, circular economy, smart city and industrial high-tech sectors. The team believes in the power of hardware innovation - often in combination with software - to revolutionise these sectors, providing long-term solutions that offer real bottom-line benefits. Within this they look for businesses committed to solving real problems,

rather than those developing innovations for innovation's sake.

At the heart of the firm's approach is to offer a high level of support to the companies in which they invest. Therefore, they never offer money alone. So whether a company is at the seed stage or a later level of investment, EMV is looking to back teams who will welcome active collaboration, hands-on help and co-development of the business plan.

Dr. Iliev, educated as an economist, explains his approach like this: "Our aim is to look beyond current investment trends and hype, to identify both undervalued/ready to grow opportunities as well as opportunities in relatively new areas such as robotics, and AI."

And that, in a nutshell, is the guiding principle by which EcoMachines Ventures operates.

