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## Press release

For Immediate release

### Winner of Hong Kong's Flagship Global Elevator Pitch Competition Crowned

*Circular economy battery startup tozero GmbH walks away with the title of overall champion of the EPiC 2024*

- tozero GmbH crowned as EPiC 2024 champion claiming the top cash prize of US\$90,000, 1,100,000 Asia Miles, as well as invaluable investor exposure and partnership opportunities
- The EPiC 2024 competition breaks new ground as the Grand Finale caps off the first-ever four-city semi-final series across the U.S., Europe and Asia
- EPiC 2024 attracted a total of 603 contestants from 47 economies solidifying Hong Kong's unique position as a leading global innovation hub and ideal launchpad for startups on a mission to grow in Asia and go global

**(Hong Kong, 26 April 2024)** - Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP) today successfully held its flagship Elevator Pitch Competition (EPiC) 2024, with judges selecting tozero GmbH as the overall champion, beating over 70 startups from around the world. tozero GmbH from Germany is a circular economy start-up with plans to establish Europe's leading lithium-ion battery recycling plant.

The HKSTP signature event held four semi-finals around the world in Hong Kong, Silicon Valley, Stuttgart and Singapore. The Grand Finale featured over 70 companies, representing 16 economies, making this contest the most international iteration of the global pitching event to date. This broadened the net to attract outstanding startups from abroad.

The winners excelled from among 603 startups in the first round of applications in January to the semi-finals, to today's Grand Finale – all with their sights set on the to-be-arranged US\$45 million investment<sup>1</sup> including up to US\$5 million from the HKSTP Corporate Venture Fund (CVF), as well as US\$240,000 in cash prizes, plus partnership opportunities. The Grand Finale saw all semi-finalists being propelled up to the sky100 venue at the top of the International Commerce Centre in West Kowloon, re-creating a real-life 60-second elevator pitch experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Target to arrange USD45 Million investment: Investors (including funds managed by HKSTP CVF, Beyond Ventures, BitRock Capital, Gaw Capital, HKX, InnoAngel, Jafco Asia, Mindworks Capital and Radiant Tech Ventures) will consider investing in applicants (subject to terms and conditions to be agreed between the parties)



Paul Chan, Financial Secretary of Hong Kong SAR, said, "Last year, Hong Kong's start-ups exceeded 4 200 - up more than one third over just four years ago. About a quarter of them are from outside Hong Kong."

The Government believes in innovation and technology. We continue to accelerate our I&T development, fostering the commercialisation of R&D (research and development) outcomes and expediting new industrialisation with staunch government support. We actively attract strategic enterprises engaged in artificial intelligence, life and health technology, fintech, and new energy and materials.

We're also expediting our collaboration with sister cities in the Greater Bay Area. The joint innovation and technology park that we're developing close to the boundary with Shenzhen is a best case in point."

Dr Sunny Chai, Chairman, HKSTP, said, "EpiC 2024 has firmly established the annual pitching competition as Hong Kong's mega startup event, drawing the best of the best in tech startups from around the world as they seek to leverage Hong Kong as a launchpad to global success. The Grand Finale caps a truly epic journey for the winners and finalists, competing across the four-city semi-final series around the world, with the final stop in Hong Kong. The city provides unmatched growth opportunities for startups plugging into the HKSTP innovation ecosystem and primes them for seamless expansion from Hong Kong to the GBA, China and beyond."

Competitors were split across three categories: FinTech, PropTech and MobilityTech, with Bizbaz Pte. Ltd. from Singapore being named as the FinTech category winner, while Roboticplus.AI from Mainland China named the PropTech winner and tozero GmbH from Germany crowned the MobilityTech winner. (Full list of winners and prizes below).

The event was also sponsored by world leading corporations and industry innovators, Cathay, HSBC and MTR Lab. Ahead of the EpiC final pitching contest, the semi-finalists also took part in an immersive three-day "Market Discovery Programme", between 22-24 April. Participants explored ways to unlock growth opportunities through a programme of business matching, hands-on seminars and networking with leading corporate partners and investors in the HKSTP ecosystem. They also visited the Hong Kong Science Park Shenzhen Branch and introduced to the fast-emerging innovation and entrepreneurship opportunities in the Greater Bay Area and mainland China.

Sarah Fleischer, CEO and co-founder of overall champion and MobilityTech category winner, tozero GmbH, said, "Winning EpiC is a recognition of the hard work of our entire company. It is truly an amazing achievement. Hong Kong is a great place to be as it attracts top talent. At tozero, we're building a battery recycling machine so we need to hire the best AI guys out there and Hong Kong could be a nice place to do that. Through the EpiC programme, we also visited Shenzhen, as well as met with some of Hong Kong's most powerful and recognised people."



Vincent Choy, Co-founder of FinTech category winner, Bizbaz Pte. Ltd., said, “EPiC is one of the most organised FinTech competitions that I have been in. The elevator pitch concept is genius as it forces us to compress the entirety of what we are about and distil our vision into a minute. I hope EPiC lets more companies know what we do and help with recognition in the region. We see Hong Kong as a key area when it comes to business opportunities, and we will be coming back to establish more roots here.”

Hyde Meng, Co-Founder and CEO of PropTech category winner, Roboticplus.AI, said, “EPiC was an amazing experience. It was a great opportunity to learn about what technology companies around the world are working on, and to make new acquaintances in a such a short amount of time. With Hong Kong as a connector, we can bring Mainland China’s technology to Europe, the Middle East, and overseas.”

**Winners List and Prizes:**

Overall Champion: tozero GmbH	US\$60,000 cash prize and 1,100,000 Asia Miles
FinTech Winner: Bizbaz Pte. Ltd.	US\$20,000 cash prize
PropTech Winner: Roboticplus.AI	US\$20,000 cash prize
MobilityTech Winner: tozero GmbH	US\$20,000 cash prize

**Top 12 Overall Finalists (each received US\$10,000 cash prize):**

FinTech Category:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bizbaz Pte. Ltd.</li> <li>• imBee</li> <li>• Rey</li> <li>• Tanbii</li> </ul>
PropTech Category:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Independence</li> <li>• Hyele Limited</li> <li>• Kodify Limited</li> <li>• Roboticplus.AI</li> </ul>
MobilityTech Category:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certivity</li> <li>• Novac</li> <li>• tozero GmbH</li> <li>• wheel.me</li> </ul>

**Semi-Finalists Breakdown:**

Category	No. of contestants
FinTech	21 (30%)
PropTech	23 (32%)
MobilityTech	27 (38%)

Region	No. of contestants
Europe	17 (24%)



North America	14 (20%)
APAC	13 (18%)
Mainland China	12 (17%)
Hong Kong	15 (21%)

For more information on EPiC 2024, please visit: <https://epic.hkstp.org/>



**Photo 1:** In his speech, Paul Chan, Financial Secretary of Hong Kong SAR, said the government is committed to accelerating the city’s I&T development and fostering the commercialisation of R&D outcomes.



**Photo 2:** Paul Chan, Financial Secretary of Hong Kong SAR (9th from right), Dr Sunny Chai, Chairman at HKSTP (8th from left), the top 12 finalists together with the competition’s panel of judges and distinguished guests.



**Photo 3:** In his opening remarks, Dr Sunny Chi, Chairman at HKSTP, remarked that this year’s EPIC competition has drawn top startups from around the world, truly establishing the flagship event as a mega event for Hong Kong.



**Photos 4 and 5:** Mr Albert Wong, CEO of HKSTP (Front), alongside EPiC 2024 top 12 overall finalists.



**Photos 5 to 7:** Ms. Sarah Fleischer from tozero GmbH, overall champion and MobilityTech winner at EPiC 2024.



**Photo 8:** Mr. Vincent Choy from Bizbaz Pte. Ltd., FinTech winner at EPiC 2024.



**Photo 9:** Mr Hao Meng from Roboticplus.AI , Proptech winner at EPiC 2024.



**Photo 10:** This year's EPiC featured over 70 companies, representing 16 economies at the Grand Finale, making this contest the most international iteration of the global pitching event to date.



## Appendix – Winning Company Descriptions

### **Category: FinTech**

#### **Bizbaz Pte. Ltd.**

Economy: Singapore

Company Description: BizBaz is a leading technology company specializing in advanced AI, data analytics, and behavioural science solutions. With a deep commitment to social impact and innovation, we have successfully transformed industries by leveraging cutting-edge technology to unlock valuable insights and intelligence. Our mission is to empower businesses and individuals with the tools they need to make informed decisions and drive positive change.

### **Category: Mobility Tech**

#### **Tozero GmbH**

Economy: Germany

Company Description: tozero is a Munich-based startup co-founded by Sarah Fleischer and Dr. Ksenija Milicevic Neumann. The company's mission is to establish Europe's leading lithium-ion battery recycling plant, focused on recovering critical materials such as lithium, nickel, cobalt, and graphite in a sustainable way. By reintroducing these materials into the supply chain, tozero aims to support the creation of new batteries while promoting a circular economy. To achieve these ambitious goals, tozero is investing advanced technologies and processes that enable efficient and cost-effective recovery of valuable materials from battery waste.

### **Category: PropTech**

#### **Roboticplus.AI**

Economy: Mainland China

Company Description: RoboticPlus.AI is a leading intelligent robotic system company in China. It creates a new generation of robotic solutions adaptable to flexible manufacturing through its self-developed industrial software platform, RoBIM. The company possesses a multidisciplinary team of masters and PhDs in research and development, as well as technical experts from the graphics and automation fields. It is deeply involved in the core technologies of robotics, including control, algorithms, and human-machine interaction, and is committed to applying better robotic systems to the global construction and manufacturing industries.

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### **About Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation**

Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP) was established in 2001 to create a thriving I&T ecosystem grooming 12 unicorns, more than 14,000 research professionals and over 1,700 technology companies from 27 countries and regions focused on developing healthtech, AI and robotics, fintech and smart city technologies, etc.

Our growing innovation ecosystem offers comprehensive support to attract and nurture talent, accelerate and commercialise innovation for technology ventures, with the I&T journey built around our key locations of Hong Kong Science Park in Shatin, InnoCentre in Kowloon Tong and three modern InnoParks in Tai Po, Tseung Kwan O and Yuen Long realising a vision of new industrialisation for Hong Kong, where sectors including advanced manufacturing, micro-electronics and biotechnology are being reimagined.

Hong Kong Science Park Shenzhen Branch in Futian, Shenzhen plays positive roles in connecting the world and the mainland with our proximity, strengthening cross-border exchange to bring advantages in attracting global talent and allowing possibilities for the development of technology companies in seven key areas: Medtech, big data and AI, robotics, new materials, microelectronics, fintech and sustainability, with both dry and wet laboratories, co-working space, conference and exhibition facilities, and more.

Through our R&D infrastructure, startup support and enterprise services, commercialisation and investment expertise, partnership networks and talent traction, HKSTP continues contribute in establishing I&T as a pillar of growth for Hong Kong.

More information about HKSTP is available at [www.hkstp.org](http://www.hkstp.org).

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