

2009's top 9 forward-looking cleantech investments

December 31, 2009 [Camille Ricketts](#)



It was a big year for cleantech. After a dismal start in the first quarter, things picked up, [leaving it in prime position to be one of the largest areas of investment in 2010](#). Overall, 2009 saw 356 deals totaling \$4.85 billion, [according to a new report released by Greentech Media](#). That's six more deals than in 2008, but almost \$3 billion less. Last year was a banner year for the sector, but this is also telling that investors leaned toward more smaller deals, mitigating risk while still placing their bets.

Solar took the cake this year, taking in more than \$1.4 billion across 84 deals. Biofuels came in second with \$976 million across 44. But it's not as interesting to look at the biggest and most publicized venture deals, as it is to look at the ones that may say something about future trends. So here, based on the full gamut of deals this year, is a list of the top 10 deals that seem to be prescient about the cleantech industry of tomorrow.



1. [Novomer](#) — In April, Novomer, a company that sequesters carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired plants and other sources in biodegradable plastic consumer products, [brought in \\$14 million from OVP Venture Partners, Physic Ventures, Flagship Ventures, and DSM Venturing](#). Relying on an extensive collection of patents, Novomer's technology has the opportunity to capture a vast amount of carbon that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere while cheaply making plastic products that don't require as much petroleum. It's basically greening two businesses at once.

As carbon capture becomes more popular, whether a cap-and-trade system is established in the U.S. or not, and emissions become too costly, companies like Novomer are prepared to reap the benefits. Most of the top-tier sequestration companies plan to bury the emissions underground, or dispose of it some other way. One company, CalStar Products, wants to funnel them into cheaper, greener bricks. But Novomer has one of the most innovative approaches in the mix. And now it has much of the money it needs to scale.

For more: <http://green.venturebeat.com/2009/12/31/2009s-top-9-forward-looking-cleantech-investments/>

