

Swiss Biotech Success Stories award winner 2026

Patrick Aebischer – scientist, leader, entrepreneur



The life principles which have guided Patrick Aebischer's exceptional success are: be curious, think outside the box, never give up, and be generous.

Patrick Aebischer is a prominent figure in the Swiss biotech landscape; his career is characterized by a convergence of cutting-edge research, institutional leadership, and entrepreneurial achievements.

As a scientist, his primary focus is on translational neuroscience and the development of cell and gene therapy for the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases, with a particular emphasis on Parkinson's disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). One of his key achievements is the development of an approved treatment for ALS patients suffering from SOD1 mutations.

Dr. Aebischer qualified as an MD and subsequently as a neuroscientist at the Universities of Geneva and Fribourg. He moved to Brown University in the US in 1984, where he remained for eight years, advancing from research scientist to associate professor and chairing the section on artificial organs, biomaterials, and cellular technology. He returned to Switzerland as professor of surgery and director of the Surgical Research Division and Gene Therapy Center at Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV).

From 2000 to 2016, he served as president of the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), transforming it into a top global research institution. Today EPFL is an open, interdisciplinary, innovation-focused research technical University ranked as one of the best institutes of technology worldwide. His mandate was also marked by the creation of a faculty of life sciences at EPFL.

Alongside his academic posts, Dr. Aebischer is the founder of four biotech companies: CytoTherapeutics, Modex, Amazentis (Timeline) and Vandria. He is currently a board member of Nestlé (since 2015) and Polypeptide (since 2020), and has previously served as board member of Lonza and Logitech. He is also managing partner at Limani Partners, and was previously senior partner at ND Capital and chairman of the Novartis Venture Fund.

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