Editorial

**Michael Altorfer,
CEO Swiss Biotech Association**

NTN Swiss Biotech has compiled valuable information that demonstrates the power and potential of Swiss Biotech. To give the biotech industry more visibility, the Swiss Biotech Success Stories campaign was launched in May 2018 to demonstrate the merits and contributions of the Swiss biotech industry. It also highlights the key success factors to emphasize to the public and decision-makers what it takes for the industry to further grow and develop, retain its innovation power and remain globally competitive.

The Swiss Biotech Association honors major industry achievements with Swiss Biotech Success Stories

Swiss Biotech Success Stories illustrate the many accomplishments and honor those who have made important and sustainable contributions to the biotech industry in Switzerland. The recognition is awarded annually at the Swiss Biotech Day and reflects the diversity and variety of this industry sector.

Switzerland is one of the world's leading biotech hubs and attracts many foreign companies, specialists and investors. As a result, the local biotech industry has grown by more than 50 percent in the past 10 years and is now one of the most innovative and valuable industry sectors in Switzerland. It provides 50,000 jobs and, together with the pharmaceutical and chemical industries, contributes to more than 40 percent of the Swiss exports.

Reason to celebrate: The Swiss biotech industry is prospering

Biogen, Roche Glycart, Okairos, Selexis and Vifor Fresenius Medical Care Renal Pharma were honored for their great achievements with the newly launched Swiss Biotech Success Stories campaign at the Swiss Biotech Day 2018. They demonstrate the accomplishments of Swiss biotech sciences for society and reflect the diversity and variety of this economic sector, whose innovative strength makes an important contribution to health care and quality of life far beyond Switzerland's borders.

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To make the industry more visible, the Swiss Biotech Success Stories campaign was launched this year. Selected success stories are showcased to illustrate how Swiss biotech companies contribute to helping patients and improving health care worldwide - and thus also make a valuable contribution to the Swiss economy.

Laureates are individuals – or groups – who earned extraordinary merits. Success is broadly defined as scientific, translational, medical or commercial accomplishments and other aspects with a positive impact on biotech industry and society in Switzerland.

"It is essential to show the public the importance and success factors of biotech and that decision-makers understand what it takes for the industry to develop and remain competitive. At the same time, young talents should also be inspired and motivated to take a closer look at the career profiles in biotech. As a successful and booming economic sector, the biotech industry depends on many enthusiastic and well-trained up-and-coming talent," says Michael Altorfer, CEO of the Swiss Biotech Association.

With its new Swiss Biotech Success Stories campaign, the Swiss Biotech Association also invites the public to submit proposals for future laureates.

2018 laureates of Swiss Biotech Success Stories

Biogen for the many Swiss ingredients in its success story. Founded in Geneva in 1978, Biogen has been a key stimulus and model for the biotech industry in Switzerland and on a global level. Today's success contains many Swiss roots such as today's best-selling drug against multiple sclerosis or its latest Alzheimer's candidate currently in Phase III development. In 2004, Biogen returned to Switzerland establishing its international headquarters in Zug, and, more recently, announced new production facilities in Luterbach creating 600 new jobs.

Glycart (now Roche Glycart) for its role as pioneer in antibody engineering in cancer immunotherapy. The Schlieren-based company successfully engineers antibody glycosylation to increase immune-mediated cancer cell killing. A first drug based on this technology has been approved in 2013 to treat chronic lymphocytic leukemia. Since the takeover by Roche in 2005, the number of employees at Roche Glycart in Schlieren has increased from 29 to over 180.

Okairos for its innovative T-cell based vaccines for major infectious diseases such as malaria, hepatitis C, HIV, Ebola and others. Its novel replication-incompetent adenovirus vectors could open the door to the development of important new vaccines and offer immunizations against illnesses that lack vaccines. Okairos moved its headquarters to Basel to benefit from the innovation-friendly Swiss environment. In 2013, the company was acquired and integrated into GSK.

Selexis for its advanced technologies in protein expression particularly in novel and difficult-to-express proteins. With more than hundred partners worldwide, nearly hundred drug candidates in clinical development and three commercial products utilizing Selexis-generated cell lines, the technologies of the Plan-les-Ouates-based company allow biotech and pharmaceutical companies a rapid, stable, and cost-effective solution for the production of recombinant proteins.

Vifor Fresenius Medical Care Renal Pharma, a transformational joint venture, which provides Vifor Pharma direct access to dialysis patients facilitating the distribution of its products and recruitment for its clinical development. The success of the joint venture transformed Vifor Pharma into a global nephrology company in just 18 months. The vertical integration between a pharmaceutical and a medical device company could be a role model for the convergence of the two sectors.