

One Nation, One Biotech Cluster

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Editorial



This NTN News Bulletin reports on the interaction between academia and industry in the world of biotechnology and in life sciences. The industry is acting global so it is important that Switzerland has the ambassadors to maintain good relationships within the whole ecosystem. We are building on the power of our brand Swiss Biotech™ and finding that stakeholders are interested in using this as a marque of 'Swiss Quality'.

Happy reading

Daniel Gygax, Dominik Escher

Cluster Information



Bioark in Monthey is a fine example of sustainable development between state and economy. The technology park started modestly in an existing building and nurtured companies wisely. The success led the stakeholders to develop the site with a second building. More information at www.bioark.ch



In Schlieren, Zurich, the Bio-Technopark is expanding rapidly. What started back in the late 1990s has developed into a true success-story for the area. A site where train wagons used to be produced (Wagi-Areal), it became victim of the deindustrialisation process in Switzerland. A far-sighted businessperson bought the land and supported the relocation of life sciences institutes and start-up companies. Initially supported by many individuals, teams and local authorities, the area developed fast; not least because the village of Schlieren is neighbouring the city limits of Zurich. Today, Schlieren is one of the national hotbeds for life sciences in our country.



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NTN partners:



Project partner:



Swiss Biotech™ – International and National

Swiss Biotech is a well-known brand, widely recognized, and powered by the national industry association, Swiss Biotech Association (SBA). Projects with the approval of SBA benefit from a better reach and enjoy the communication support of the channels used by SBA. Many organisers of events in Switzerland or abroad are interested in using our ecosystem. SBA offers companies an easy-to-use program offer for international events suited to the industry. On top of that, events held in Switzerland are a complimentary benefit for participating companies and institutions. To the right is a picture of BioEurope Spring 2015, held in Paris in the spring time. The same infrastructure was used in London during BioTrinity 2015. More events will follow in Scandinavia, Boston and Munich later this year.



Swiss Economic Forum Picks PIQUR as Best Start-up in Switzerland

PIQUR

TARGETED CANCER THERAPIES

Pharmaceutical company wins 2015 award in 'High-Tech/Biotech' category

PIQUR has been named the winner of the 2015 Swiss Economic Award in the "High-tech/Biotech" category. Switzerland's most prestigious prize for start-up enterprises was awarded in front of an audience of 1,350 representatives from the worlds of business, politics, science and the media at the 17th Swiss Economic Forum in Interlaken. More than 300 start-ups were competing for this year's Swiss Economic Award, which is subdivided into three categories: "High-tech/Biotech", "Services" and "Manufacturing/Trade". The three winning companies were chosen by a high-calibre jury in a three-stage judging process. What most impressed the jury about PIQUR is the speed in bringing together an interdisciplinary and very competent team of experts from industry and academia. Furthermore PIQUR attracted many renowned Swiss and International investors as the company succeeded in reaching key clinical milestones earlier than expected.

Vladimir Cmiljanovic, PIQUR's CEO, commented on his company's triumph: "We are delighted to win the Swiss Economic Award, as this is a great tribute to the whole team and everything we have achieved to date. This start-up prize also spurs us on to channel our commitment and energy into further developing our product pipeline. Our goal is to put ourselves in a position to offer another treatment option to as many cancer patients as possible soon." He then added some words of gratitude: "I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to our employees, investors and everyone else who has supported us in achieving our vision since our company was founded."

About the Swiss Economic Award

Overall around 300 start-ups from all over Switzerland put themselves in the running for this year's Swiss Economic Award. The preliminary jury analysed the dossiers submitted by the companies based on the criteria specified by the judging process, which is certified by the Swiss Association for Quality Management Systems (SQS). The jurors then short-listed 15 start-ups, which received an on-site visit from a group of 15 experts. The aim of the Swiss Economic Award is to foster an entrepreneurial spirit and help young entrepreneurs make their way in society. The competition is open to all companies that have been established for no more than six years and are based in Switzerland. The winners receive CHF 75,000 in prize money and a comprehensive package of rewards. Further information is available at www.swisseeconomic.ch/en/sef-2015.

Helping Patients to Survive Cancer

PIQUR aims to help patients to survive cancer. Two out of three people are now living at least five years after their cancer has been diagnosed. Despite of significant medical innovations in the treatment of cancer, there remains a high unmet medical need for therapies that prolong patients' survival and improve their quality of life. PIQUR targets both PI3K (phosphoinositide 3-kinase) and mTOR (mammalian target of rapamycin), two key signaling molecules that are vital to several essential biological processes involved in malignant disease, such as cell proliferation, survival and metastasis, making them attractive targets in cancer therapy.

New President of the SCTO

On 31 March 2015, the Steering Board of the Swiss Clinical Trial Organisation (SCTO) elected at its 6th General Assembly Prof Gregor Zünd, Director Research and Teaching at University Hospital Zurich, as new President of the SCTO. He accepted the appointment with immediate effect.

As new Vice-President, the Steering Board elected Prof Christiane Pauli-Magnus, Co-Head of the Clinical Research Department and Head of CTU at the University Hospital Basel. In this function, she replaces with immediate effect Prof Klaus Grätz (Collège des Doyens), who is retiring from the Steering Board by the end of June 2015. The Collège des Doyens will continue to be member of the SCTO Steering Board and we will communicate the new representative in due time.

Further newly elected board members are Prof Claudio L. Bassetti, Director of the University Clinic for Neurology of the Inselspital Bern, representing the Swiss Academies of Medical Sciences (SAMS) with immediate effect, Prof Arnaud Perrier, Medical Director of the University Hospital Geneva (HUG), and Dr iur. Vital Zehnder, Head General Secretariat University Hospital Zurich, who assumes the function of the Quaestor.

The Steering Board took the opportunity to thank Prof Peter Meier-Abt (SAMS), Prof Pierre Dayer (HUG) and Dr iur. Jürg Müller (USB/Quaestor) for their appreciated engagement and welcomed Prof Zünd, Prof Pauli-Magnus as well as the new members of the Steering Board. With this new composition, the Steering Board looked forward to a continued promising and successful future.

The SCTO (Swiss Clinical Trial Organisation) has elected a new president. Swiss Biotech™ works closely with this important network to secure the news flow between industry and clinical trials.

Former Swiss Biotech Association President Meets SolarImpulse Pioneer and Federal Economic Minister Johann Schneider-Amman

Dr. Reinhard Glück was president of the Swiss Biotech Association for more than 10 years. Through his research directorship at the former Berna Biotech, he got a lot of international exposure and this led to a further career in Italy and India. As a fan of the SBA Dr Glück met recently the adventurers of SolarImpulse during their stop in Aschmedabad, India and Swiss economic Minister Johann Schneider-Amman, while visiting India.



Swiss Ambassador to India, von Castelmur, and General Consul Balz of Bangalore. It was a super-event, organised through the Swiss Embassy of von Castelmur.

Finance Workshop

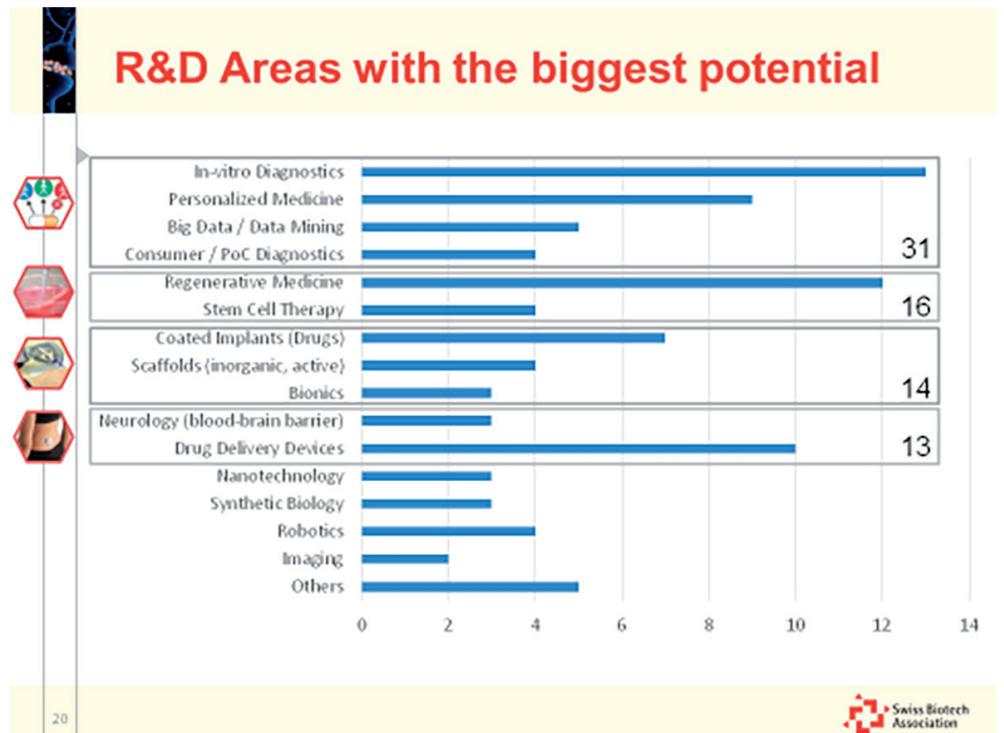
Financial framework and planning, development and regulatory costs, and human resource issues are just some of the topics that impact your company's budgets and not least, it's valuation. Organised by Andreas J. Schulze, Specialty Advisor CTI, MARSAs Corporate Finance GmbH and Swiss Biotech™, the Finance Workshop gave a practical overview of different issues with huge financial impact in company development. The event took place on 24 March, 2015 in the Bio-Technopark Zurich-Schlieren. A series of hands-on presentations by SBA members gave the audience a solid insight into the SME world.

Start-up companies valued the software tool called START FIN ©-Version 2.0e. It is an easy-to-use financial planning tool for young entrepreneurial companies. For SBA Members, the tool costs a mere CHF 249 and for single users CHF 449. Provider is Marsa Corporate Finance GmbH, a member of the SBA.

About the tool: START Fin© is designed for leaders of high-tech start-ups and entrepreneurs in need of a comprehensive overview of key financial indicators. It provides a detailed financial set-up for a company. Most aspects of huge financial impact on the company's prospects are provided for. Others are easily built in. For example, planning development costs, regulatory costs, certifications, accreditations or human resources – some of the key factors that influence a company's budget and valuation – are all catered for in START FIN C. that finally influence a company's budget and valuation.

Conversion is a Hot Topic in Life Sciences

The National Thematics Network commissioned a survey to verify potential areas of collaboration. The survey was presented at a workshop on June 1, in Olten. The results showed that the gap between these important and innovative industries is getting smaller. However, to create a better political voice in this highly regulated industry, further discussions are necessary.



Successful Projects between industry and academia, powered by resources from the Commission of Technology and Innovation (CTI)

Selected success stories were featured in CHIMIA, a business magazine published mainly for a scientific audience. However, industry is featured as well. Scientific writer, E. Heinzelmann, wrote Swiss Biotech TM case studies on behalf of the NTN (National Thematics Network). Below you will find short summaries and a link that takes interested readers to the whole article.

All articles by Heinzelmann

Recovering Valuable Phosphates: Chemical Biotechnology as a Problem Solver for the Environment

Abstract: Researchers from the HES-SO Valais/Wallis have demonstrated how to extract phosphate from sewage sludge on the laboratory scale using renewable energy sources from a microbial fuel cell. The mobilized phosphate barely contains heavy metals and can be used to produce fertilizer of marketable quality. The necessary energy comes from a sewage treatment plant and causes no additional costs.

Keywords: Microbial fuel cell · Phosphate recovery · Phosphate remobilization · Sewage sludge · Struvite fertilizer

Full story: www.swissbiotech.org/Php5/aa2/UserFiles/File/NTN/news/CHIMIA-Fabian_Fischer.pdf

Biotech Meets Chemistry: Roche Invests in Customized Training

Abstract: In response to current needs, Roche is offering its employees an intensive course in biotechnology under the auspices of biotechnet Switzerland. Lecturers from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) in Wädenswil give participants the benefit of their expertise in theory and laboratory practice. One valuable spin-off from this is that this extra-mural course will allow participants to create a permanent network.

Keywords: biotechnet Switzerland · Customized training

Full story: www.swissbiotech.org/Php5/aa2/UserFiles/File/NTN/news/CHIMIA-Roche_Kurs.pdf

Life Sciences HES-SO Valais/Wallis: Applied Research for Innovators

Abstract: The Institute of Life Technologies at the HES-SO Valais/Wallis in Sion focuses on the areas of peptide and protein technologies, life and bioresource technologies, food and natural products and diagnostic systems. With this network of complementary areas of expertise, the institute can offer industrial partners a broad spectrum of integrated solutions.

Keywords: EPFL · HES-SO Valais/Wallis · Life sciences

Full story: www.swissbiotech.org/Php5/aa2/UserFiles/File/NTN/news/Life_Sciences_HES-SO_Valais_CHIMIA_2014_68_Nr_6.pdf

In Vitro Models for Neurotoxicity Studies

Abstract: On 27 March 2014, experts met at the first TEDD Workshop 2014, held at the HES-SO Valais/Wallis in Sion, to present innovative cell models for industrial applications. This was the first time that a TEDD event had been organized in French speaking Switzerland and it offered local network partners an opportunity to showcase their research activities.

Keywords: Disease cell models · Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis · Molecular ageing profiles · Toxicological screening

Full story: www.swissbiotech.org/Php5/aa2/UserFiles/File/NTN/news/Conference_Report_TEDD_CHIMIA_2014_68_Nr_6.pdf

Preventing Antibiotic Resistance by Switching off its Activity

Abstract: In order to develop new approaches for effectively combating antimicrobial resistance, universities of applied sciences, teaching hospitals and biotechnet industrial partners are working together in a National Research Consortium supported by the Commission for Technology and Innovation, CTI.

Keywords: Antibiotic resistance · Mycobacterium tuberculosis · Nosocomial infections · Staphylococcal infections Investigating the Antioxidant

Full story: www.swissbiotech.org/Php5/aa2/UserFiles/File/NTN/news/CHIMIA-BioVersys.pdf

Capacity of Coffee!

Abstract: In the 1990s we began to understand that free radical damage is involved in artery-clogging atherosclerosis and health problems like vision loss, cancer or chronic diseases. Studies have shown that the damage especially affects people with a low consumption of antioxidant-rich fruits, vegetables...and coffee. Is this just a fairy tale promoted by the coffee industry? Scientists at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) in Wädenswil wanted to get to the bottom of this.

Keywords: Antioxidant potential · Coffee · Folin-Ciocalteu reagent (FCR) · Roasting conditions

Full story: www.swissbiotech.org/Php5/aa2/UserFiles/File/NTN/news/CHIMIA-biotechnetYeretzian.pdf

Life Sciences at FHNW MuttENZ:

An Innovative Network of Strong Partners

Abstract: The School of Life Sciences at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland FHNW in MuttENZ excels in molecular technology, bioanalytics and in vitro diagnostics – three very active areas of current biotech research. Cooperation with industry partners enables knowledge to be transferred to the education process and gives companies access to qualified individuals and markets.

Keywords: Calprotectin test · Cyclosporine and tacrolimus in blood · GHB in blood · Therapeutic monitoring device · Triterpenoids

Full story: www.swissbiotech.org/Php5/aa2/UserFiles/File/NTN/news/CHIMIA_HLS_2014.pdf

NTN Swiss Biotech – Competences across the Entire Value Chain

The National Thematic Networks (NTN) created and supported by the Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI) in 2013 are a step closer to a more efficient transfer of knowledge and technologies. The NTN Swiss Biotech provides a powerful link between research & development and technology transfer for the Swiss Biotech Association and for biotechnet Switzerland, serving as a basis to promote world-class innovation.

Full story: www.swissbiotech.org/Php5/aa2/UserFiles/File/NTN/LSP-NTN_Biotech.pdf

Simple and Cost-effective Diagnosis of Bowel Disease

Today, the examination of one's own stool for organic bowel disease is as simple as a pregnancy test or a glucose test for diabetes. During the KTI F&E project, sponsored within the framework of the special initiative 'Starker Franken 2011, a simpler and more cost-effective method for collecting and analyzing stools was developed; the newly developed stool extraction tube is also a success story because the whole value chain, from research through to project development, is made up of Swiss firms and institutions.

Full story: www.swissbiotech.org/Php5/aa2/UserFiles/File/CALEX_Success_CASE.pdf

Contact:

NTN-SwissBiotech

Editor D. Alexakis - info@swissbiotech.org

Advertising C. Kroll - kroll@swissbiotech.org

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Main Office, Zürich

Swiss Biotech Association

Wengistrasse 7,

8004 Zürich

Office Romandie

Swiss Biotech Association

Route de la Corniche 4,

1066 Epalinges