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Physicists in Industry (9)

Switzerland Innovation: One Innovation Park at Five Sites

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Physicists in Industry (9)

Switzerland Innovation: One Innovation Park at Five Sites

The Switzerland Innovation Park is a network of technology centers equally distributed throughout the country, at which research institutes and industry closely cooperate. The purpose is to transform novel technologies with a certain degree of maturity into marketable products. The centers which are focussed on the regional strengths and competences should help mainly SMEs to adapt new technological concepts, but also to attract new companies to the region. The Swiss Government supports the network by providing land and loans of CHF 350 million. The program started in 2012, four sites were approved in 2014 and Biel was added as number five in 2015.

Another attempt is currently in preparation by the government of the canton St. Gallen addressing the field of 'Health Technology', whereby Empa, the university of applied science, the cantonal hospital and the HSG want to merge

their expertise with local companies.

The current centers are

- Park Network West / EPFL in Lausanne with connections to Geneva, Sion, Fribourg and Neuenburg
- Park Zürich in Dübendorf
- Park Basel Area in Allschwil
- Innovaare Park in Villingen
- Park Biel/Bienne in Biel

<https://www.switzerland-innovation.com/de/home>

In the following we describe how the Innovation Park "PARK INNOVAARE" in Villingen (AG) supports start-up companies in the field of accelerator technology.

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CERN know-how goes to the market

Benedikt Vogel

CERN in Geneva is the leading particle physics laboratory worldwide. Large particle accelerators based on the most innovative technologies are used there for fundamental research. One year ago, the innovation park "PARK INNOVAARE" in Villingen (AG) launched, together with CERN, the BIC of CERN program: it supports start-ups and high-tech micro-companies using CERN technologies for commercial applications. These days the second call for proposals has started.

In 2016, the foundation "Switzerland Innovation" launched innovation parks at five locations. Here, companies from Switzerland and abroad are asked to develop innovative products and services together with researchers. One of the locations is Villingen in the canton of Aargau. This is where the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI) is based, and it was beneficial to put one of the innovation parks near this important research institution of the ETH domain. In the middle of last year, PARK INNOVAARE launched a development program designed to encourage start-up companies to use CERN's accelerator technologies in commercial applications. "With this new initiative, the combined expertise of the Paul Scherrer Institute and CERN is accessible for companies at PARK INNOVAARE", says Dr. Francesco Colonna, member of the steering committee.

Founded in July 2018, the Business Incubation Centre (BIC) of CERN Technologies - the official name of the funding and incubation program - listed a number of technology fields that are considered accelerator technologies: for example big data / ICT, detectors, high performance electronics, cooling systems, magnets, sensors, control and monitoring systems or vacuum technology. These technologies are not only needed in the construction and operation of particle accelerators, they can also be used in medicine and biomed-

icine, in aerospace, in the environmental field and even in the preservation of monuments, as the promoters of the BIC of CERN Technologies emphasized at the time.



In November 2018, a jury included the Geneva-based company Securaxis in the funding program of the "Business Incubation Centre of CERN Technologies" in PARK INNOVAARE in Villingen (AG). From left to right: Glenn Meleder (CEO Securaxis), Benno Rechsteiner (CEO PARK INNOVAARE), and Aurélie Pezous (Knowledge Transfer Officer at CERN). Photo: Darya Bachevskaya

Geneva start-up develops a security-application

Meanwhile, a year has passed and the incubation program is proud to present a promising first incubatee: In November 2018, a jury has chosen a first company to benefit from the developing program, the start-up *Securaxis*. Securaxis was founded at the end of 2015 by Glenn Meleder, who had previously worked as an IT specialist at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva. The company is developing security solutions around acoustic sensors, whose data are processed by means of artificial intelligence.

When Real-Time Event Detectors (RTExD) are deployed in a city, they are able to detect explosions or fires in real-time and alert rescue services. According to the company, the detectors also help in traffic management. In addition, they are able to monitor bridges, dams or tunnels to preventively detect any imminent damage caused by material failure via acoustic signals.

The acoustic detectors require a powerful system for data collection and processing. For that purpose, Securaxis intends to use technologies that were specially developed at CERN to read out the very extensive data from the various particle physics experiments (C2MON). "Our technology has the decisive advantage over camera surveillance that no privacy problems arise," says company founder Glenn Meleder. "Further, we can help municipalities lower their costs with our early acoustic warning system."

New chance for high-tech start-ups

Securaxis's two-year program includes management coaching by the Institute of Management of the University

of Applied Sciences in Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW), a start-up capital of CHF 50,000, technical support from CERN and PSI expert technicians, and the possibility of facilitated access to complementary technologies of PSI and CERN at favorable conditions. The company keeps its seat in Geneva, where six persons are working. In its first incubation year, Securaxis is setting up a two-person office at PARK INNOVAARE.

The winner start-up Securaxis had been selected by a jury out of 31 proposals. On April 10, 2019, the second round of the funding program was launched. In this round, up to two start-ups can be included in the support program. Project ideas must be submitted by the end of May. A central requirement of any application: The company must use intellectual property or know-how of CERN in the field of accelerator technologies. In October 2019, the jury will decide.

Further information about the BIC of CERN program at: <https://www.parkinnovaare.ch/cern-bic>