

Swiss Innovation Park - Switzerland Innovation

A «project of a generation» to strengthen Switzerland as a centre of research and innovation

The ETH Board's views:

1. Innovation Park strengthens Switzerland in the long term

Cutting-edge research and innovation play a decisive part in Switzerland's success. The Swiss Innovation Park will sustainably boost the country's innovative capacity. The ETH Domain wishes to make a significant contribution to its success.

2. Focus on networking and infrastructure

The Swiss Innovation Park significantly complements and enhances the innovation efforts of universities, research institutes and the private sector. At the same time, due account must be taken of the successful innovation-boosting

structures already in place. Particular attention needs to be paid to the provision of competencies and infrastructure, as well as to the close networking of innovation centres and participants.

3. Key role for the ETH Domain

ETH Zurich and EPFL, together with the research institutes PSI, WSL, Empa and Eawag, have proven research and innovation skills in the Swiss economy's areas of excellence. They are ideally positioned both regionally and nationally, enjoy a very good reputation worldwide and have a key role to play in the Innovation Park.

An innovation network for Switzerland

Exceptional achievements in research and innovation are decisive factors in Switzerland's success as a business location, as well as being of overarching national interest. It is for this reason that the Federal Council and the parliament launched the idea of a Swiss Innovation Park. This is intended to establish a national network with various innovation locations and to serve as a motor for competitiveness, the efficient use of resources and sustainable development. At the same time, it should complement and reinforce the existing and timetested national innovation system and its various regional sub-systems.

Focal centres of industrial research and development

The Swiss Innovation Park – Switzerland Innovation – is a "project of a generation" aimed at the long-term reinforcement of Switzerland as a competitive international location. It is jointly supported by the federal government, the cantons and the scientific and business communities. Leadership and responsibility in individual locations are delegated to separate supporting organisations. The aim is to provide the best possible innovation–friendly conditions for companies and researchers in Switzerland and to forge even better links between academia and the business world. Furthermore, Switzerland Innovation is intended to provide a home for

research and development units of internationally recognised, research–intensive and particularly efficient firms from home and abroad. Five locations have been selected for this purpose, namely Park Basel Area, PARK InnovAARE, Park Zurich, Park Network West EPFL and Park Biel/Bienne. At these locations, the infrastructure will be upgraded and forces will be pooled to create focal centres for industrial research and development.

ETH Domain: an innovation leader

Today, the six institutions of the ETH Domain form an established innovation network whose activities and significance extend far beyond Switzerland's borders. The two universities and four research institutes have a broadly based specialist orientation and outstanding research and innovation competencies, especially in the Swiss economy's areas of excellence. They are innovation drivers, optimally positioned nationally and regionally, and enjoy a very high reputation worldwide. In cooperation with the cantonal universities and universities of applied sciences, as well as with partners in industry, they quickly put innovations into practice. The ETH Domain therefore has a key role to play in the Swiss Innovation Park and makes an essential contribution to the locations' attraction.

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Institutions of the ETH Domain in various roles

Today, Switzerland Innovation consists of five legally independent locations, which are interlinked and complement each other on the basis of their individual strategic and technical orientation. French-speaking Switzerland and Germanspeaking Switzerland organise and structure their locations differently. Whereas in French-speaking Switzerland, the cantons have pooled forces in Park Network West EPFL, the four locations in German-speaking Switzerland are autonomous entities. However, both models are based on the conviction that it is only as a network that Switzerland Innovation is able to work successfully.

Park Zurich is operated by a foundation on behalf of the Canton of Zurich's Ministry of Economic Affairs. The site earmarked for the purpose in Dübendorf is part of the concept of urban development in Greater Zurich. ETH Zurich and Empa will participate with regard to specific fields and concrete projects.

Park Network West EPFL is an alliance between the Cantons of Vaud, Geneva, Valais, Neuchâtel and Fribourg and EPFL in five locations. EPFL is the academic partner and will establish scientific cooperation on site for each part of the network, but without any financial stake of its own. This differs from its own extramural locations (EPFL antennae) and the existing EPFL Innovation Park on its campus in Lausanne.

The contributions and roles of the institutions of the ETH Domain in further locations are flexible and vary, ranging from informal cooperation between individual institutes and professorial chairs to key contributions for a location.

Independent governance

The ETH Domain also takes its bearings from the ETH Act and its implementing provisions in connection with Switzerland Innovation. All institutional aspects of the Innovation Park, especially the Foundation as a national supporting organisation and the contracts between the Foundation and the locations, are subsidiary and complementary. If federal government real estate is affected by these contracts or other agreements, or if institutions of the ETH Domain are expected to be accommodated on third-party premises, the

rules on competence and approval in the Ordinance on Real Estate Management and Federal Logistics will apply.

The institutions of the ETH Domain participate in the Innovation Park using the ordinary resources available to them; no additional resources will be forthcoming. In the agreements they conclude with the cantons and other partners, the institutions of the ETH Domain will observe a clear timeframe and incur no or merely minor financial obligations. Instead, they seek to cooperate in thematic and scientific terms and will thus be able and willing to contribute to the long-term success of the Innovation Park mainly through their expertise and their achievements in research and teaching.

Active involvement of the ETH Domain in the national organising institution

The national organising institution, the Switzerland Innovation Foundation, supports the international positioning and marketing of the individual locations, thus complementing their own acquisition activities. In addition, the Foundation supports the locations with funding solutions. Also, it coordinates and interlinks the five locations, ensures efficient cooperation with a variety of actors and guarantees a coherent umbrella brand and compliance with uniform quality standards.

The ETH Domain is actively involved in the further conceptualisation and implementation of the strategy of Switzerland Innovation. It is therefore also prominently represented in the national organising institution: on the Foundation Board by the President of the ETH Board, the President of ETH Zurich, the Vice-President of EPFL and the Director of PSI. Owing to its broadly based national presence, the ETH Domain will make an essential contribution to interlinkage and cooperation in connection with Innovation Switzerland.

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