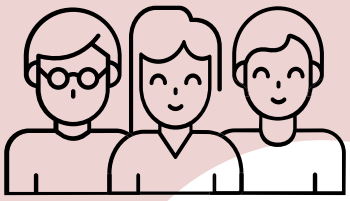
ETH BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ETH BOARD ON THE ETH DOMAIN 2025

ETH DOMAIN

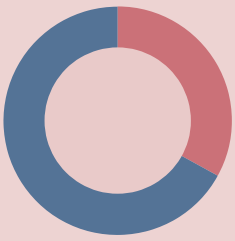
FACTS & FIGURES 2025

Students and doctoral students



40,627

students and doctoral students



33.1%

proportion of women

Employees

with employment contracts

14,861 scientific personnel

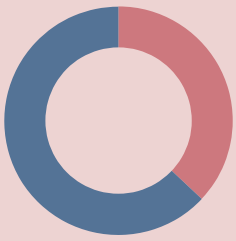
4,384 technical personnel

4,292 administrative personnel

24,910

employees

including professors, doctoral students and apprentices



37.4%

proportion of women

466

apprentices

Professors

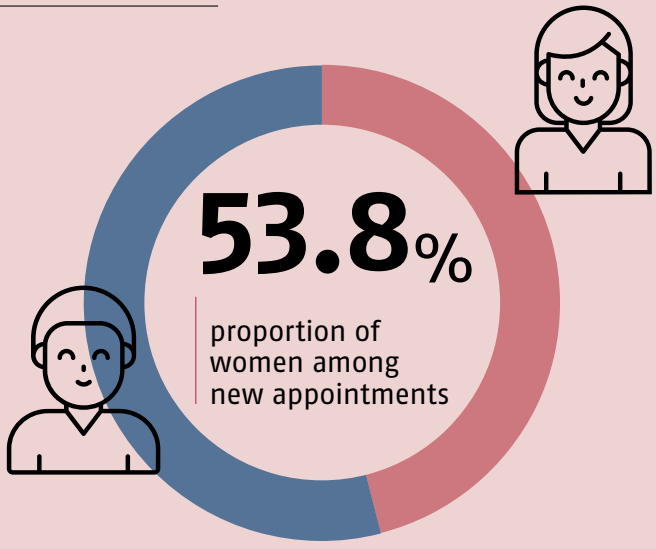
907

of which:

80 appointments

52 newly appointed persons

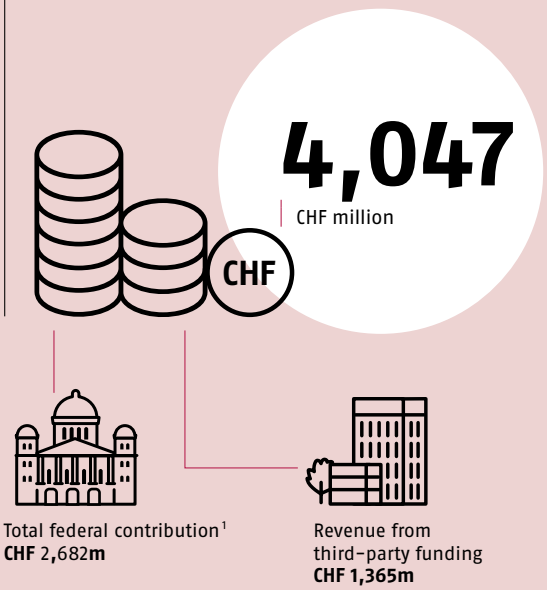
28 promotions



53.8%

proportion of women among new appointments

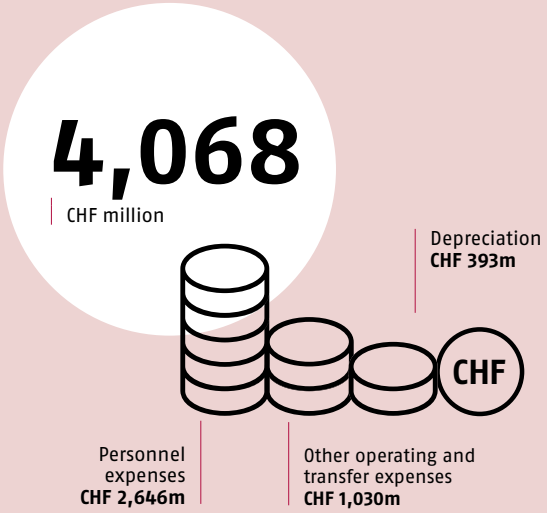
Total revenue



Total federal contribution[1]
CHF 2,682m

Revenue from
third-party funding
CHF 1,365m

Expenses



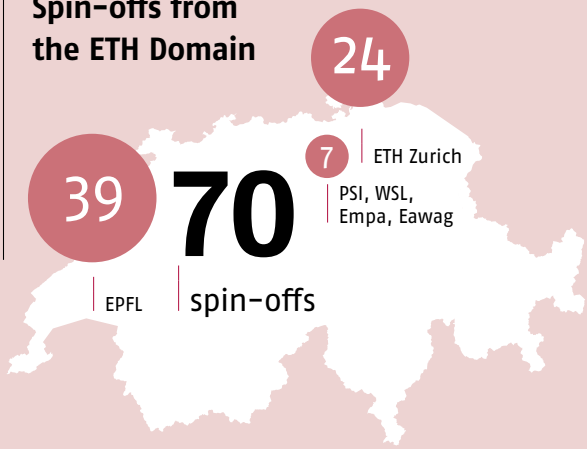
Personnel
expenses
CHF 2,646m

Other operating and
transfer expenses
CHF 1,030m

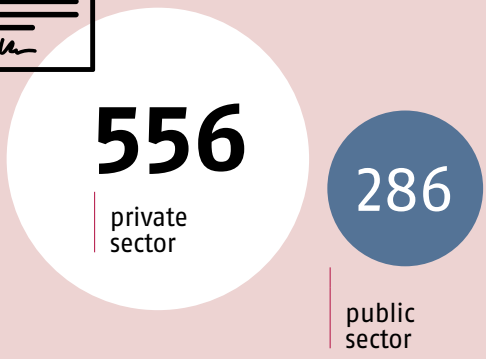
Knowledge and technology transfer

318	invention disclosure
31	software notifications
205	patents
92	licences
70	spin-offs

Spin-offs from the ETH Domain



Number of cooperation agreements[2]



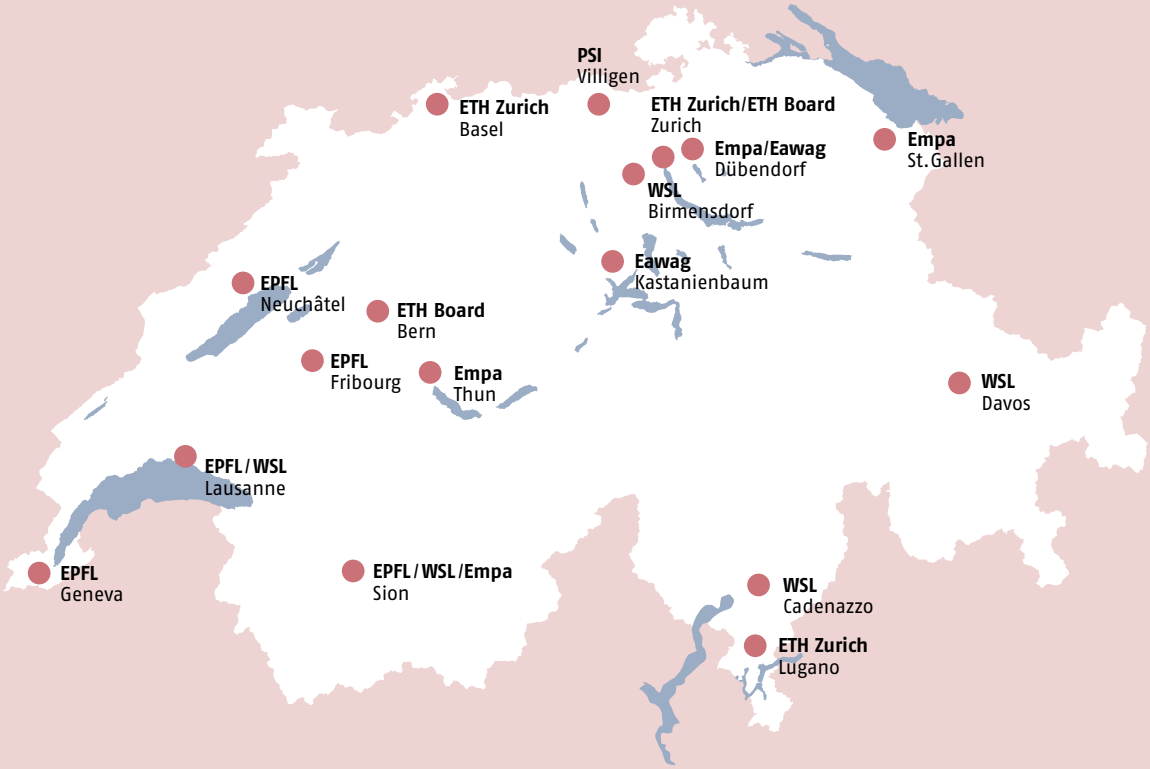
University rankings

THE World Ranking	THE Europe Ranking	QS World Ranking	QS Europe Ranking
ETH Zurich			
11	4	7	4
EPFL			
35	9	22	5

[1] Total federal contribution as per the consolidated financial statements for the ETH Domain.
[2] With a volume of at least CHF 50,000 each.

VISION

The ETH Domain strengthens Switzerland's prosperity and competitiveness and contributes to the sustainable development of society through excellence in teaching and research, as well as through scientific knowledge and technology transfer.



The ETH Domain and its institutions
Higher education, research and innovation at the highest level: the ETH Domain provides these services with around 25,000 employees, 40,000 students and doctoral students, and a pool of more than 900 professors.

The ETH Domain consists of the two Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology ETH Zurich and EPFL and the four federal research institutes PSI, WSL, Empa and Eawag. The strategic leadership and supervisory body of the ETH Domain is the ETH Board.
www.ethdomain.ch I www.ethboard.ch

Annual Report of the ETH Board on the ETH Domain 2025

Financial report:
www.ethboard.ch/financialreport2025

Contents

PSI: Nuclear technologies and long-term safety

Research for eternity

Andreas Pautz and Maria Marques (right) are working on the present and future of nuclear energy. That means that they are operating in a hotly debated subject area. Safety is a key issue here.

WSL: Area monitoring by Swiss Forest Protection

The "tree doctor" who protects forest health

Valentin Queloz heads the Swiss Forest Protection group at WSL and is responsible for "area monitoring" – a nationwide early-warning system designed to protect Swiss forests from harmful invasive organisms.

Empa: PFAS – the forever chemicals

A fluorine-free future

PFAS are a growing problem because they are barely degradable. Manfred Heuberger explains how Empa is rising to the challenge with precise analytics, new removal methods and alternatives suitable for industrial use.

Eawag: Blue-green infrastructure

How Eawag wants to make cities climate resilient

Heavy rain and heat are increasingly causing problems, even in Switzerland, potentially leading to devastating floods and excess mortality. To counteract these effects, Lauren Cook is researching sponge cities as a solution for adapting to climate change.

FOREWORD

President of the ETH Board:
Michael O. Hengartner

Dear Readers

2025 is the first year of the new ERI period. The Federal Council's strategic objectives for the ETH Domain for 2025–2028 emphasise the central role that the ETH Domain plays in the Swiss education, research and innovation system.

The ETH Domain is aware of its role and responsibility and has set itself the goal of serving Switzerland to the best of its abilities.

It fulfils this task in an increasingly demanding environment. The geopolitical situation, global crises and the pressure on public finances also pose major challenges for the ETH Domain. It is important to prioritise even more, to make sacrifices and to make further use of synergies both inside and outside the ETH Domain. In doing so, our aim is to guarantee the long-term efficiency of our institutions and thus the benefits for the economy and society. In this context, the ETH Board has launched an organisational development project designed to adapt the structure of the ETH Domain to the challenges of tomorrow. Cooperation between the institutions of the ETH Domain is to be strengthened, synergies harnessed and administrative obstacles avoided. The ETH Board will initiate a corresponding consultation in the ETH Domain in 2026.

International networking of Swiss research also remains crucial. Stable, structured relations with the EU are essential in order to maintain scientific excellence, promote innovation and improve Switzerland's international competitiveness even more. The ETH Board therefore supports the Federal Council's goal of continuing to pursue the bilateral path via the Switzerland-EU package that has recently been negotiated.

The ETH Board will work consistently with the institutions of the ETH Domain to implement the Federal Council's strategic objectives and ensure the future viability of the ETH Domain. I would like to thank all those who work so hard every day to accomplish our shared tasks. Their contribution is vital for safeguarding the ETH Domain as a driving force for knowledge, innovation and prosperity, even in times of uncertainty.

Zurich/Bern, January 2026

Michael O. Hengartner
President of the ETH Board

START OF THE NEW ERI PERIOD:

GREAT RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FACE OF GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Following the start of the new ERI period 2025–2028, the institutions of the ETH Domain focused more closely on the Strategic Areas defined by the ETH Board. Research and communication relating to a responsible digital transformation and a forward-looking approach to research and knowledge security also played an important role in the reporting year. An even stronger emphasis was placed on engaging in dialogue with society and providing scientific advisory services for authorities and policymakers in the light of the current global challenges.

Teaching: quality of teaching and tuition fees
Maintaining the quality of teaching is a top priority, despite rising cost-cutting pressure. Consequently, a change was introduced in the 2025 autumn semester. For the time being, up to and including the 2028 autumn semester, foreign students with foreign educational qualifications will be admitted to Bachelor's programmes at EPFL only until the total number of 3,000 places for Bachelor's students in the first year of study is reached. This restriction on the total number of places in the first year has led to a significant drop in the number of new foreign students. Since the autumn semester of 2025, tuition fees for foreign Bachelor's and Master's students who move to Switzerland to study at ETH Zurich or EPFL have also tripled. However, it is still too early to assess the impact of this measure on the number of foreign students.

Research: Strategic Areas
The new strategic objectives set by the Federal Council for the ETH Domain for the years 2025–2028 are based on the core tasks of the institutions of the ETH Domain – teaching, research and knowledge and technology transfer (KTT). By establishing these objectives, the Federal Council is ensuring continuity while at the same time incorporating new developments and topics. Objective 2, "Research", for example, refers to the five Strategic Areas defined byXthe ETH Board in its Strategic Plan for the ERI period 2025–2028 with a view to pressing global challenges: "Human Health", "Energy, Climate and Environmental Sustainability", "Responsible Digital Transformation", "Advanced Materials and Key Technologies" and "Engagement and Dialogue with Society". Researchers from the ETH Domain discussed these Strategic Areas and their further development at the first ETH Domain Conference held in December 2025.

This is what the education campus in Heilbronn will look like one day.
Image: Pesch Partner Architektur Stadtplanung GmbH Topotek 1

The Strategic Areas stand for successful cooperation – not only within the ETH Domain and with other Swiss ERI stakeholders, but also with the public sector, industry and hospitals.

This multifaceted collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders in Switzerland is supplemented by international scientific cooperation. Participation in the European Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation is fundamental in order to compete at the highest level worldwide and attract the best talent. As part of the conclusion of negotiations on the Switzerland-EU package at the end of 2024 and with a view to the signing of the EU Programmes Agreement (EUPA) in 2025, Switzerland was admitted to almost all the calls for tenders for Horizon Europe, Digital Europe and the Euratom programme issued in 2025. The ETH Board and the institutions of the ETH Domain fully support the Federal Council's goal of pursuing the bilateral path and see the Switzerland–EU package as a harmonised legal framework that is extremely valuable for academic cooperation, talent mobility and investment in cross-border research.

Responsible digital transformation

Several of the Federal Council's strategic objectives place responsibility on the ETH Domain for incorporating current developments in digitalisation and artificial intelligence and focussing its research activities on disruptive technologies and related societal challenges. In late summer 2025, the Swiss National AI Institute, which was jointly founded by ETH Zurich and EPFL in 2024 and is supported by the ETH Board as part of the Swiss AI Initiative, launched "Apertus", the first fully open Large Language Model for generative AI in Switzerland. The model is based on values such as trustworthiness, open source and transparency, thereby strengthening Switzerland's digital sovereignty, and can be tailored to the specific needs of Swiss reference groups.

The education campus in Heilbronn, where ETH Zurich is currently establishing a centre thanks to a generous donation, is also geared towards achieving a responsible digital transformation. 15 professorships are to be gradually established at the ETH Zurich Campus Heilbronn, where ETH researchers will teach and conduct research in areas such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. The institutions of the ETH Domain also make important contributions to Switzerland's sovereignty and security with their energy science research and work on data science, which involves close cooperation with the Federal Statistical Office (FSO).

These research and innovation areas are facing new challenges in a global situation marked by geopolitical tensions. It is crucial to adopt a forward-looking approach to research and knowledge security, particularly with regard to cooperation with international and industrial partners. As in other countries, Swiss ERI stakeholders must take appropriate security

precautions to protect scientific assets, sensitive knowledge, data and technologies. The ETH Domain is also involved in the ongoing work of the Swiss University Council on national coordination in relation to knowledge security.

Dialogue with society

One of the key tasks of the institutions of the ETH Domain is to engage in direct dialogue with the public on research topics that are relevant to society. This includes providing scientific advisory services for public authorities and political decision-makers on current issues. In autumn 2025, the institutions of the Swiss ERI sector jointly launched the **National Science Advice Network** on behalf of the Confederation, which is tasked with quickly mobilising independent, interdisciplinary scientific expertise in order to advise policymakers and authorities on managing crises, as well as on preparing for crisis situations. The network aims to foster continuous close dialogue between science and politics, and is currently working on four thematic clusters that are considered to be of the highest strategic importance for Switzerland's security and resilience: Public Health, Cybersecurity, Disinformation and International Challenges.

National network for scientific advice

In this context, it is of particular interest to find out what the Swiss people think about science, how they obtain information and whether they trust science and scientists. These questions are the focus of the long-term project **Science Barometer Switzerland**. The fourth regular survey wave, co-financed by the ETH Board, was conducted in Switzerland in 2025.

Science Barometer Switzerland

One of the most important findings is that the Swiss population's trust in science is relatively high and stable. Many people consider research to be necessary, are in favour of state funding and believe that political decisions should be based on scientific findings. From the combined results for interest, attitude and trust, it emerges that around a third of respondents are either extremely well informed and very interested in science, or at least have a critical interest in scientific issues, while almost half the Swiss population is less informed but still passively supportive of science. A certain polarisation can be seen – the numbers of both supporters and sceptics who are completely opposed to science (17%) have increased slightly.

Organisational development in the ETH Domain

The ETH Domain is committed to making its own organisation effective and flexible to make sure it is properly equipped for the challenges mentioned above and those that lie ahead. Over the course of the reporting year, the ETH Board and the institutions of the ETH Domain worked intensively on the "FIT for the Future" organisational development project. The plan is to create an ETH Domain with three strong strategic pillars: ETH Zurich, EPFL and the four federal research institutes. The ETH Board is expected to launch an internal consultation on this matter in spring 2026.

FASCINATION ETH DOMAIN

Image: Synature, the intelligent microphone system, has multiple microphones, captures animal sounds in real time and distinguishes between around 15,000 animal species.

ETH Domain

UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE AND TAKING THE RIGHT MEASURES

The geopolitical situation has even put climate research under pressure. Researchers from the ETH Domain are working hard to investigate the consequences we are heading for if comprehensive and efficient climate protection measures are not taken quickly, and to establish how to mitigate the impacts of global warming.

The glaciers are disappearing faster than ever, heavy rainfall is causing floods and mudslides, heat waves and droughts and devastating landslides are occurring more and more often: the consequences of rising global temperatures are becoming increasingly visible – and are set to escalate in the future. Switzerland is particularly affected by global climate change. Since the pre-industrial period, it has already become 2.9 degrees warmer in this country – while the global average is 1.4 degrees. And temperatures will continue to rise. According to the "Climate Scenarios CH2025" published by MeteoSwiss and ETH Zurich in November 2025, temperatures in Switzerland will rise more sharply – by around 4.9°C – than the global average of 3°C if no effective climate protection measures are taken worldwide.

This prompts various questions: what will happen if we fail to rapidly implement effective climate protection measures? Where and when could the next major landslide take place due to thawing permafrost? How will ecosystems change as temperatures continue to rise? Which measures are most effective in stopping the emission of gases that are harmful to the climate? Staff working at the institutions of the ETH Domain have been working hard for decades to answer these and similar questions relating to climate research and extreme weather.

The role of vegetation in droughts

At ETH Zurich, the team led by Professor Sonia Seneviratne, Head of the Institute for Atmospheric and Climate Science in the Department of Environmental Systems Science, analyses extreme weather events and their consequences for agriculture and food security, as well as the interaction between land and climate. Her team has been able to show that heatwaves, droughts and long periods of intense rainfall will increase worldwide – and the more the climate warms up, the more frequently such events will take place. "In Switzerland, we are simultaneously experiencing an increase in heatwaves, heavy precipitation and dry periods," says Seneviratne.

Extreme weather events also affect the major breadbaskets, i.e. the areas of the world where staple foods such as wheat, maize, rice and soya are grown on a large scale. Even with global warming of 1.5°C – as envisaged by the Paris Climate Agreement – 50% of agricultural land worldwide will be affected every year. And with a temperature increase of plus four degrees, it is 90% per year. Since extreme events often occur simultaneously in several places, this could lead to massive, global crop failures – and famine – in the future. "If there is major global instability, Switzerland will be affected as well," says Seneviratne.

Seneviratne's team also recently made an important discovery about the connection between drought and CO_2 emissions. They realised that areas or continents affected by droughts emit additional CO_2 – regardless of the emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels. This is because vegetation

In spring 2024, Julia Schmale's team used a tethered balloon to measure aerosol-cloud interactions at the Villum research station in northern Greenland (82°N).
Picture: Lionel Favre

is able to absorb less CO_2 when it is dry, and plants can even die if they receive too little water or suffer the impacts of fire. "This connection is globally relevant," says Seneviratne. "But it is underestimated or not yet properly represented at all in climate models."

Fewer avalanches, unstable rock masses
Climate models and climate data also play an important role in the work of an interdisciplinary team at WSL. As part of the CCAMM (Climate Change Impacts on Alpine Mass Movements) research programme, researchers enhanced climate, weather and snowpack models to better extrapolate future trends for mudslides, rockfalls and avalanches under different climate scenarios.

The team led by programme manager Michael Bründl from the SLF in Davos linked the measurement data from MeteoSwiss stations with data from over 180 Alpine stations belonging to the IMIS network (Intercantonal Measurement and Information System), achieving better temporal and spatial resolution as a result. In addition, the researchers have adapted existing topographical and weather models so that they can model local snowpack processes with a resolution of just 50 metres – compared to the previous two kilometres.

All the climate scenarios tested showed that there will be fewer days with avalanches in the future. This is mainly due to the fact that the snow line will rise and more rain than snow will fall. "The number of dry avalanches in particular will tend to decrease," says Bründl, referring to snow slabs or powder clouds. Slow-moving wet snow avalanches, on the other hand, may occur more often in the future, even at the peak of winter. Another important finding is that deadwood can stop or slow down avalanches (and rockfalls).

It is still unclear how the frequency of huge landslides – like those in Blatten or Pizzo Cengalo – will be affected. "We can't just look deep inside the mountains," says Bründl. What is certain is that the thawing permafrost can lead to destabilisation of rock masses as water penetrates into the fissures. "This can then result in rockfalls," says Bründl.

Warm rivers stress fish
Climate change not only affects mass movements in the Alps, but also influences ecosystems such as watercourses. As part of the SwissFuRiTe (Future river temperatures in Switzerland under climate change) project, a team of researchers from Eawag and the University of Basel used modelling to calculate the extent to which watercourses will warm up as temperatures rise. If no effective climate measures are taken, the average temperature of watercourses will rise by more than three degrees by 2100; with effective measures, however, the warming will be less than one degree. Alpine watercourses and those downstream of lakes are most affected, where warming could increase by up to 3.5°C in a "business-as-usual" scenario.

"A rise in temperature of this kind is extremely destabilising both for human use of water and for nature," says Professor Oliver Schilling, the research group leader and co-study leader at Eawag and the University of Basel. On the one hand, the river water would then be too warm to be used as cooling water in nuclear power stations on several days of the year, for example. On the other hand, higher temperatures mean great stress for heat-sensitive organisms such as brown trout.

The researchers also suggest implementing measures to curb the rise in temperature. This would involve planting shade-giving trees on the riverbanks, enriching the groundwater in a targeted manner via near-natural precipitation retention in the landscape, and discharging excess river water by means of infiltration basins in the winter months when runoff volumes are high. This water does not evaporate

and can feed dried-up riverbeds with relatively cool water months later in the summer. "During droughts, the rivers consist of 100 percent groundwater," says Schilling. The first tests of this strategy are already under way in the Basel and Lucerne areas.

How aerosols are warming the Arctic climate

The current global climate models are reliable in many respects, but they still have weaknesses. To date, neither the contribution of clouds nor that of aerosols can be mapped to a satisfactory extent. Julia Schmale, Professor at the Institute of Environmental Engineering at EPFL in Sion, is researching the role of suspended particles in the polar climate. This task is extremely complex because "aerosols are extremely heterogeneous," says the head of the Extreme Environment Research Laboratory.

Aerosols contain particles as diverse as sea salt crystals and soot, pollen, bacteria, fungal spores, mineral dust and organic and inorganic gases that condense into particles in the atmosphere. Some are of natural origin, others are man-made, some like soot generally have a warming effect, while others like sulphate aerosols, for example from the combustion of coal, have a cooling effect. Depending on the particle, they also play different roles in cloud formation, as condensation nuclei for droplets and ice crystals, in precipitation and in the reflection of sunlight. And different particles are dominant depending on the season and the region.

Julia Schmale's team has now been able to demonstrate that sea salt crystals from whirled-up snow are the most important nuclei for cloud formation above the sea ice in the Arctic winter. Until now, it was assumed that this role was played by aerosols from the combustion of fossil fuels, which are transported to the Arctic from civilisations in the northern latitudes. Due to the formation of clouds, the sea salt crystals have a warming effect in the Arctic. Winter warming in the Arctic is four to five times the global average. "This is an important finding, because this natural process has not previously been included in any climate models," says Schmale.

Accelerating climate-positive solutions

One thing is certain: achieving the net-zero target by 2050 will require more than just a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to mitigation measures, adaptation solutions are also needed to mitigate the effects of climate change. There are already many potential solutions, says Christian Binz from Eawag. However, there is insufficient implementation and broad scaling. That is why Binz founded the Climate Solutions Hub (CSH) with Peter Richner from Empa. This joint Empa and Eawag platform is intended to investigate how to accelerate the implementation of innovative methods to mitigate climate change – taking into account technological aspects, political framework conditions and economic viability.

In a pilot phase from 2026 to 2029, the CSH is clearly focusing on climate-positive infrastructure solutions. The first pilot project planned is a cycle path over a length of several kilometres in Zug, which will be built with CO_2-negative asphalt. This technology is being developed at Empa. The idea is to extract CO_2 from the air and to convert it into hydrogen and carbon using a process called pyrolysis. The carbon is then used in building materials such as concrete or asphalt. "The aim of the project is to end up with a 'cookbook' that other municipalities can use when implementing similar projects," says Richner.

Other innovative infrastructure solutions have great scaling potential. For example, researchers at Eawag have developed a method for producing a high-quality fertiliser from human urine. According to Binz, if the solution were scaled up, a large proportion of the artificial fertiliser used in Switzerland could be replaced. "This has a huge impact on CO_2 emissions," says Binz. "However, demand from the agricultural sector is still relatively low." The task now is to find new partnerships with industry and agriculture in order to further standardise the production of urine fertiliser and scale up the market.

What are the most effective climate protection policies?

This question was investigated by a PSI team led by Evangelos Panos, head of the Energy Economics Group in the Laboratory for Energy Systems Analysis in partnership with the Technoeconomics of the Energy Systems Laboratory of the University of Piraeus. As part of the POLIZERO project funded by the Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE), the researchers used models and simulations to explore which measures – subsidies, taxes, harmonisation with neighbouring countries, bans, etc. – are most suitable for achieving the goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in Switzerland by 2050.

The team identified three phases on the Switzerland's patch to climate neutrality. According to Panos, the next ten years up to 2035 are critical. It is important to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels towards renewable energies and to replace outdated heating systems or combustion engines with clean alternatives. "Subsidies are an important policy instrument," says Panos. "They can accelerate decarbonisation. But additional measures are needed."

According to Panos, electricity generation from renewable energies that can provide electricity in winter, such as wind or bioenergy, will need to be stepped up from 2035, as will the production of synthetic fuels for aviation. From 2040, it will also be essential to capture additional CO_2 from waste incineration plants (*Kehrrichtverwertungsanlage*, KVA) and industrial processes to achieve the net-zero target. In this phase, bans and obligations will be needed as well, for example on fossil-based combustion engines or heating systems, says Panos. But Polizero has also shown that the most effective measures are those that are harmonised with or adopted by the EU. Switzerland is unlikely to benefit from going it alone in climate policy. A solo effort would imply imposing high CO_2 levies, without offering sufficient planning security in view of the high costs of emission reductions or reliably achieving the necessary far-reaching emission reductions.

ETH ZURICH

ROBOTICS FOR THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

In Zurich-Oerlikon, a dog-like robot from the ETH Zurich spin-off Rivr delivers food, while ANYmal inspects refineries and chemical plants and reports leaks or irregularities to the control centre. The research behind these developments comes from the Center for Robotics at ETH Zurich, led by Marco Hutter. And the robotics researcher is thinking further – into space.

Dull, dirty and dangerous: jobs of this kind will be done by machines instead of people in the future – at least if Marco Hutter has his way. The mechanical engineer heads the Center for Robotics at ETH Zurich (ETH RobotX) and has been working with moving machines for a long time. For his Master's thesis in 2009, he built a small robot that could jump. It was later joined by a four-legged friend, who initially ran "more badly than well", as he recalls. That's all in the past: the robots from the RobotX innovation centre have long been climbing over obstacles. They are as agile and manoeuvrable as their animal role models.

"Robotics is ultimately the continuation of automation, except that today, the systems are not tied to the factory floor," says Hutter, professor at ETH Zurich. His robots can see, hear and react independently. ANYmal, probably the best-known model, checks valves, measures temperatures and detects anomalies in power plants, mines or chemical facilities. "At ETH Zurich, we show what is technically possible," he emphasises. "The rest is up to industry or our start-ups." He speaks as a researcher who has the practical applications in mind, but above all wants to tackle unsolved problems. "We do basic research that is designed to bring direct benefits." This is precisely the concept behind RobotX, a centre that brings together mechanics, electronics and computer science – and integrates architecture, medicine or environmental sciences as required. "The more skills robots have, the more disciplines are interested in them. These developments also respond to a major social need," says the head of RobotX.

But there is also scepticism in society: people are afraid of a world in which machines make their own decisions. "New technologies have always triggered fear," says Hutter. "And yet humans have adapted every time." At the moment, it is probably artificial intelligence that requires the most adjustments. Even in the early days, Hutter used machine learning to programme the robots. But a great deal has happened since then. Today, the robots are controlled by neural networks. A robot that learns how to move over complex obstacles in a virtual simulation can then do the same in the real world. Autonomy has also improved significantly: the robots can now download a map, interpret the terrain and work out for themselves how to navigate through the world. Large-language and large-vision models that have been trained with vast amounts of text and video data from the Internet are increasingly being used. "Our world is very complex, so we can't manually programme the robot's behaviour for every possible situation."

Advances in AI and hardware have also greatly accelerated the development of robotics. In Switzerland, we can sometimes barely keep up with the pace of putting high-tech inventions into practice and scaling them up. "The world is evolving very fast," says the researcher. While huge robotics centres are being set up in China in a very short space of time, and billions are being invested in robotics start-ups in the USA, it often takes a little longer here, and you have to think on a smaller scale. The new RobotX test hall at ETH Zurich took around ten years from planning to occupation, for example.

Nevertheless, the professor believes in Zurich as a location for robotics. RobotX is a magnet for talent, and Switzerland is a place where long-term thinking is possible. "ETH Zurich gives us freedom and trust, which are among the most important prerequisites for successful research groups," he says. Research, especially into hardware, takes time. "If we'd had to stop after three years, robots like ANYmal or start-ups like ANYbotics wouldn't exist today," says Hutter. And he has clear ideas about the development of robotics: machines are becoming more versatile and intelligent – and are penetrating new areas, such as medicine, agriculture and space. "We are currently building a quadruped to climb into a lava tube on the moon," he says. "It's not a gimmick. It's about making new scientific discoveries and creating the conditions to enable us to potentially live on other planets one day."

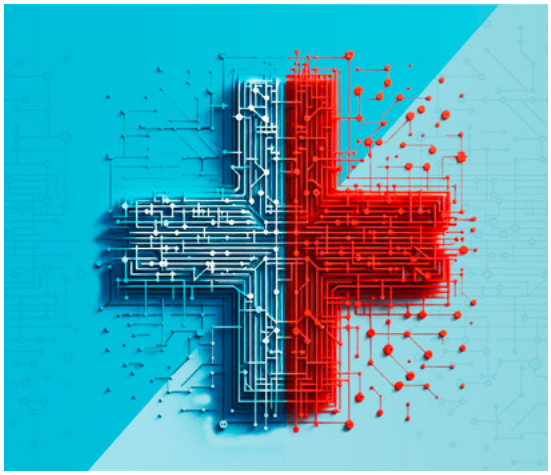
> "ETH Zurich gives us freedom and trust – and that is precisely what makes Switzerland a place where long-term thinking and sustainable innovation are possible".

His dream is to see a robot conducting autonomous research on the moon in ten years' time. This vision is also quite an optimistic one. There are always fears that machines will replace people. But his approach is different: "They can take over activities that nobody wants to do anymore." This leaves him and his team free to concentrate on solving problems that may not emerge until tomorrow.

In the picture: professor Marco Hutter, Head of the Center for Robotics RobotX with ANYmal in the newly inaugurated machine hall at ETH Zurich.

Fully open language model launched

Read more.



The Apertus language model is a technology that others can build on.
Image: EPFL, ETH Zurich, CSCS/ Molinari Design

ETH Zurich, EPFL and the CSCS of ETH Zurich released the language model Apertus on 2 September 2025. Its name – Latin for "open" – stands for complete transparency: the entire development process, including its architecture, model weights, and training data and recipes, is openly accessible and fully documented. Apertus supports many previously underrepresented languages, such as Swiss German and Romansh. It is one of the largest models of its kind and is available via Swisscom, Hugging Face and Public AI Inference Utility under a permissive open-source licence. As a foundational technology, Apertus enables innovation and strengthens AI expertise across research, society and industry.

The world's tallest 3D-printed tower inaugurated in the Alps

"Tor Alva" was inaugurated in Mulegns on 20 May 2025 – at 30 metres, it is the world's tallest 3D-printed tower. The project is an initiative of the Nova Fundaziun Origen cultural foundation in collaboration with ETH Zurich, and is designed to serve as a cultural hub and to breathe life into a village threatened by depopulation. The delicate, white structure is reminiscent of an ornate layered cake and the emigration history of confectioners from Graubünden. Tor Alva showcases how digital construction techniques can be used to build load-bearing structures without formwork: two industrial robots applied a specially developed concrete layer by layer into free-form elements. Tor Alva will remain in place for around five years and can later be dismantled and re-erected elsewhere.

Read more about Tor Alva.

The white tower is effectively illuminated at dusk.
Image: Benjamin Hofer/Nova Fundaziun Origen

Transport 2045: prioritisation for maximum impact

Following the rejection of the expansion programme for Switzerland's national highways and the financial difficulties in the 2035 rail expansion service concept, ETH Zurich has prioritised around 500 planned projects for road, rail and urban transport on behalf of the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC). The report for the period from 2025 to 2045 is intended as a tool to aid political decision-making. It shows that the transport system can be expanded and made fit for the future with the funds available by focusing on high-impact projects, dispensing with some projects, rescaling or postponing others and ensuring better coordination between transport systems. The benefits – such as journey times, capacity, security, redundancy, energy consumption and connecting up peripheral regions – were compared with the costs. Investments are prioritised in the growth regions of greater Zurich and Lake Geneva. Implementation requires significant staffing capacities and investment in the training of experts – a major challenge and key task for ETH Zurich and other education institutions.

Read the interview with Ulrich Weidmann, Professor of Transport Systems.

Glacier collapse above Blatten: an analysis by ETH Zurich and WSL researchers

On 28 May 2025, the Birch Glacier in the Canton of Valais collapsed under the weight of rock and debris from rockfalls on the Kleine Nesthorn. Several rockfalls and the sliding of an entire slope section increased the pressure on the glacier ice, contributing to its destabilisation as meltwater formed both at the base and inside the glacier. The collapse buried the village of Blatten. The volume and extent of the damage is unprecedented for the Swiss Alps. The exact causes are not yet fully understood; a field inspection by ETH Zurich and WSL researchers in June provided new insights, which have been included in an updated fact sheet summarising new information on the behaviour of the glacier, the role of permafrost and possible links to climate.

Read more.

The bulging Birch Glacier. The photo was taken five days before the glacier collapsed.
Image: Jean-Christophe Bott/ Keystone

Early detection in everyday life: how a sanitary towel detects diseases

Researchers at ETH Zurich have developed a simple, non-invasive and cost-effective method that can recognise biomarkers in menstrual blood directly in sanitary towels: MenstruAI. The electronic-free sensor technology does not rely on a laboratory and could facilitate the early detection of diseases – especially in regions with poor healthcare provision. The application is very simple: wear the sanitary towel with the integrated sensor, take a picture and use the app to analyse it. Menstrual blood contains hundreds of proteins, making it comparable to venous blood. Three biomarkers are used in the prototype: CRP (inflammation), CEA (tumour marker) and CA-125 (endometriosis / ovarian cancer). The method makes use of paper-based rapid test strips comparable to Covid self-tests: if a biomarker in the blood comes into contact with a specific antibody on the test strip, a coloured indicator appears. The higher the concentration of the protein, the darker the colour. Following an initial feasibility study, a larger field study is now planned.

Read more about MenstruAI.

CHF 100 million for Earth observation centre

ETH Zurich will receive 10 million Swiss francs a year from the Jörg G. Bucherer-Foundation for the next ten years to establish the ETH Swiss GeoLab in the Canton of Lucerne – a competence centre for Earth observation with global appeal. The Canton of Lucerne is contributing 2.8 million Swiss francs to the infrastructure costs. The GeoLab intends to use data from space, from the air and on the ground as well as AI-supported analysis methods to overcome specific challenges facing society. The spectrum of research topics extends from the early detection of natural disasters, such as landslides, floods or forest fires, to predicting agricultural yields to help farmers with their planning. The GeoLab will be headed up by Professor Thomas Zurbuchen with Professor Verena Griess as Vice Director, both from ETH Zurich. By 2030, the centre will employ around 100 people and integrate start-ups and industry partners.

EPFL

"WE WANT TO BE A LEADER IN THE INTERPRETATION OF ANIMAL COMMUNICATION"

An EPFL start-up is making animal communication easier to understand: Synature develops intelligent microphones that recognise and analyse animal sounds – in nature, agriculture and aquaculture. The team led by founders Olivier Stähli and Noah Schmid wants to use this animal monitoring system to record biodiversity, and also to simply hear how animals are doing.

Olivier Stähli, how did the idea for Synature come about? I've been passionate about wild animals ever since I was a child. I started photographing animals when I was eleven. First deer and chamois, and later lynx and wolves. During my computer science studies at the University of Bern, I wanted to combine this fascination with technology. For my Bachelor's thesis, I developed a microphone that automatically recognised wolf howls. It worked surprisingly well and became the starting point for a larger project that I was able to pursue at EPFL. That's where Synature was created in association with Noah Schmid from ETH Zurich.

What exactly does Synature do? We develop intelligent microphone systems that record and analyse animal sounds in real time. Each device has several microphones and transmits the recordings directly to the cloud, where an AI system recognises species based on their acoustic signature. We can now distinguish around 15,000 animal species – from birds and frogs to insects and large mammals. The method allows us to make a precise, automatic record of biodiversity.

How does this acoustic detection work in detail? We convert sound recordings into something called spectrograms, which are visual representations of the sound. Artificial neural networks learn to recognise patterns that are typical for a certain animal sound. The more data we have, the more accurate the system becomes. We also work with unsupervised machine learning, which is when AI independently creates new sound groups. This allows us to also classify rare or previously unknown sounds.

And how reliable is it? That's a key point. We work closely with biologists, gamekeepers and farmers who verify our data in the field. If the AI claims to have heard a very rare species, for example, they check whether this is really the case. Every correctly or incorrectly allocated sound is entered back into the system so that the models can be continuously improved. We now achieve a very high level of precision for many species – especially for clearly distinguishable cries such as those of storks.

Where is Synature already in use? We currently have around ten test locations in Switzerland and abroad – from nature parks to farms. At Lake Greifen, we've been able to detect around 240 species with our technology – including nocturnal animals such as owls and migratory birds that are otherwise rarely observed.

And what is the economic potential? The use of the system in chicken coops is particularly interesting: chickens make over twenty different sounds, depending on whether they are happy, stressed or have just laid an egg. Animal welfare and health can be continuously monitored thanks to our technology. In aquaculture, underwater microphones help to observe the feeding behaviour of shrimps and reduce the amount of food given to them by up to 25 percent. This shows that acoustic data can also be economically relevant.

How important was EPFL on this journey? Without EPFL, Synature would not exist. The university provided us with rooms, mentoring and funding programmes – and above all with time. Time to develop a complex idea that would be too risky for traditional investors. EPFL creates an environment in which students and researchers can test innovations before they are ready for the market. This openness, combined with scientific excellence, is crucial to Switzerland's innovative strength.

How did you experience this transition from the laboratory to the market? It was definitely a big challenge. Suddenly it was no longer just about technology, but about production, financing and team management. Developing hardware is time-consuming. Every small change takes weeks. But it is precisely this perseverance that you learn in an academic environment. And EPFL remains a reliable partner even after the foundation of the company: if we need advice, we always find open doors there.

What do research, entrepreneurship and responsibility mean to you? I see them as a great opportunity. We are working on something that is both scientifically challenging and socially relevant. If we can use technology to improve the well-being of animals or record the condition of ecosystems more precisely, then we are making a contribution that goes far beyond economic success.

What drives you? I am lucky enough to be able to work in a field that has fascinated me since I was a child. We combine technology with the animal world – two universes that were kept completely separate for a long time. Especially if we can scale our solution, we will obtain a global nervous system of devices. We believe that this has great added value. One of my personal goals is to discover a new animal species with our technology.

And where will the journey take you? We want to be leaders in the field of bioacoustics, in the measurement and interpretation of animal communication. We offer Swiss engineering expertise associated with the innovative drive of Silicon Valley. As explained by Tim Gardner, another member of the team: if we combine these two visions, we can set standards worldwide. Our aim is for animal sounds to be heard everywhere – not just figuratively, but literally.

In the picture, the founders of Synature: Olivier Stähli, CEO (left) and Noah Schmid, CTO, at the Innovation Park in Dübendorf.

A “switch” for memories

More about the Laboratory of Neuroepigenetics.

Our experiences leave traces in the brain, stored in small groups of cells called “engrams”. Engrams are thought to hold the information of a memory and are reactivated when we remember. A team led by Professor Johannes Gräff at EPFL’s Laboratory of Neuroepigenetics combined CRISPR-based gene control with a technique that tags engram cells in mice. The mice were then trained to link a specific place with a mild electric shock to the paws. The researchers were able to show that CRISPR inhibition of the Arc gene in engram cells prevented the mice from learning, while boosting it made their memory stronger.

Similar approaches could help researchers better understand conditions where memory processing goes awry, such as traumatic memories in PTSD, drug-related memories in addiction, or the memory problems that appear in neurodegenerative diseases.

Image: Katarzyna Bialasiewicz/iStock

Microplastics in indoor climbing halls

Three of the study participants with Jocelyne Bloch (front row, left) and Grégoire Courtine.
Image (right): Gilles Weber/CHUV

When you go climbing indoors, you think you are doing something for your health. However, this does not take into account the substances in climbing shoes that can enter the lungs of climbers in the long term. “We wondered whether, like tyre particles in outdoor environments, climbing shoe particles could become resuspended in indoor air,” says Thibault Masset, a researcher from EPFL’s Central Environmental Laboratory (CEL). Masset collected dust samples from climbing halls in Switzerland, France and Spain. “Air pollution in the bouldering gyms was higher than we expected,” says Thilo Hofmann, Vice Director of the CeMESS (Centre for Microbiology and Environmental Systems Science) at the University of Vienna and corresponding author of the study. “Our research also aims to increase awareness among rubber manufacturers,” adds Masset. “Now that we have identified potentially harmful chemicals, their use in the products themselves should be excluded.”

The colourful holds in climbing gyms collect rubber abrasion from the soles of climbing shoes, which also gets into the air.
Image: Aaron Kintzi/CeMESS

New implant stabilises blood pressure

Over 70% of patients with a spinal cord injury live with chronic hypotension, a condition that leaves them exhausted, cognitively dulled and prone to fainting. A pair of landmark studies led by Grégoire Courtine, Professor of Neuroscience at EPFL and Director of the Neuro-X Institute, Jocelyne Block, CHUV neurosurgeon and Professor at the University of Lausanne, and Aaron Phillips from the University of Calgary, which were published in Nature and Nature Medicine, describe the development of a targeted therapy to address blood pressure regulation in patients with a spinal cord injury. Working with the EPFL spin-off ONWARD Medical, the team has demonstrated how an implanted neurostimulation system can successfully restore blood pressure stability.

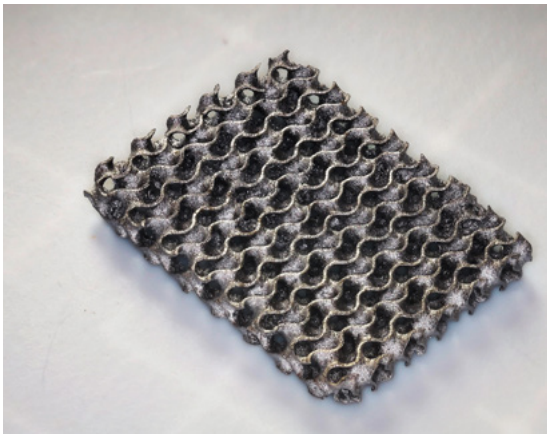
EPFL has introduced a preparatory programme for migrants and refugees

People who have had to flee their country may not have the academic qualifications needed for admission into the first year of the EPFL Bachelor's programme. They are now being given the chance to enrol after completing a three-semester CMS-3 course ("Cours de mathématiques spéciales") at EPFL, which started at the beginning of the semester in February 2025. It is a pilot project launched by EPFL and funded by the McCall MacBain Foundation. "There are a lot of armed conflicts in the world today, which we can do very little about. But with CMS-3, we can provide concrete assistance to those affected. Personally, I find it very gratifying," emphasises François Genoud, the head of the CMS programme. There are around twenty places on the CMS-3 course, which is designed for people who have applied for asylum in Switzerland (procedure ongoing or completed) and do not speak fluent French. After the first semester, participants join the regular CMS programme, which lasts one year and includes classes in mathematics, physics, computer science and chemistry, along with French language instruction.

More information about CMS-3.

A 3D printing method for ultra-strong materials

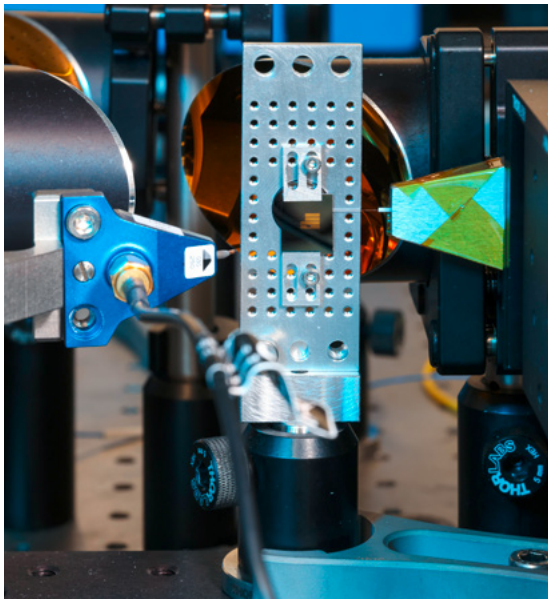
EPFL researchers have pioneered a 3D printing method that grows metals and ceramics inside a water-based gel. The team led by Daryl Yee, head of the Laboratory for the Chemistry of Materials and Manufacturing (ALCHEMY), is gradually infusing the molecules of this hydrogel with metal salts, resulting in exceptionally dense, yet intricate constructions. "Our materials could withstand 20 times more pressure compared to those produced with previous methods, while exhibiting only 20% shrinkage versus 60–90%," explains Yiming Ji, doctoral student and first author of an article published in the scientific journal Advanced Materials in the autumn.



Read more.

A photonic-terahertz chip for communications and sensing

Researchers at EPFL and Harvard University have engineered a chip that can convert between electromagnetic pulses in the terahertz and optical ranges on the same device. Its integrated design could enable the development of devices for ultrafast telecommunications, ranging, spectroscopy and computing. "In addition to demonstrating the first detection of THz pulses on a lithium niobate photonic circuit chip, we generated THz electric fields over 100 times stronger and increased the bandwidth by a factor of five (going from 680 GHz to 3.5 THz)," explains Cristina Benea-Chelmus, head of the Laboratory of Hybrid Photonics.



A large iron gyroid (1.3 x 1.0 cm).
Image (far left): ALCHEMY EPFL CC BY SA

Integrated and tested photonic and terahertz circuits on a single chip. The terahertz radiation generated is collected by the gold-plated mirror on the rear side and used for spectroscopy (or detection) of various materials.
Image: Alain Herzog / EPFL CC BY SA 4.0

PSI

RESEARCH FOR ETERNITY

Researchers at Paul Scherrer Institute PSI are working on the present and future of nuclear energy. That means that they are operating in a hotly debated subject areas for society. Safety is a key issue here. But not only that: the foundations for cancer therapies are also laid in the nuclear industry.

Around one third of Switzerland's electricity requirements are covered by nuclear energy. Although no new nuclear power plants may currently be built in this country, the debate about lifting the ban is in full swing. It is an explosive topic that triggers diffuse fears in many people. The focus is on how the safe operation of existing plants can be guaranteed and how radioactive waste can be stored safely for thousands of years. Right in the thick of it: Andreas Pautz and Maria Marques. They both work at the Paul Scherrer Institute PSI, the central Swiss competence centre for nuclear research. "90 percent of nuclear research in Switzerland is carried out at PSI," explains Pautz, Professor of Nuclear Engineering at EPFL and Head of the PSI Center for Nuclear Engineering and Sciences. "We work on an equal footing with renowned institutes in the USA, Japan and France."

"Nuclear energy forces us to think about science, technology and responsibility all at the same time."

While Pautz's focus is on the operation and safety of reactors, Marques explores the legacy of nuclear energy. She is an expert in geochemical processes in deep geological repositories and researches eternity scenarios, so to speak: one million years – this is the period for which the required safety case must be provided. To this end, all eventualities, risks and influencing factors must be tested as far as possible. "We investigate how waste, containers and rock change over time and how radioactive substances spread," she explains. The focus is on opalinus clay, the host rock in which Switzerland intends to permanently encase its radioactive waste. The team simulates how radioactive substances, water and minerals influence each other over long periods of time. Research is also carried out in the "hot lab" – the only one of its kind in Switzerland. Behind thick leaded glass windows and metre-thick concrete, the researchers work on highly radioactive samples, investigate the material behaviour of fuel rods or analyse geochemical changes in rock. "This combination of laboratory work and access to large-scale facilities such as the synchrotron light source or the neutron source is practically unique in the world," says Pautz. The knowledge gained here is of vital importance for safe operation and disposal.

However, PSI is not only working on the stability of existing systems, but also on new concepts. In association with a start-up, the institute is planning to licence and commission a compact molten salt reactor in the coming years – a project that is attracting international attention. The prototype would fit into a single room and would initially be operated at very low power in order to test material behaviour and safety concepts in real conditions. The project is an example of a new generation of systems that are designed to be smaller, safer and more sustainable than the previous ones. This fourth generation of reactors is intended to utilise uranium more efficiently and produce much less waste. Ideally, this would result in an almost closed-loop economy in which the nuclear fuel is recycled again and again. What is more, "The remaining waste decomposes much more quickly," says Pautz. "The repository would be a lot smaller, and the periods for providing the required safety cases would be considerably shorter." Safety is also higher: "With certain new reactor types, we can rule out accidents involving core meltdowns and the release of radioactivity by design," explains Pautz. "We want to show that power generation from nuclear energy can be safe and sustainable." Even if the topic of nuclear energy is politically charged, it is important to the researcher to make it clear that no political decisions are made at PSI. "We provide the data that allows politicians to make informed decisions – no more, no less." For example, significant parts of the general licence application for the future deep geological repository, which Nagra submitted to the federal authorities in November 2024, originate from PSI.

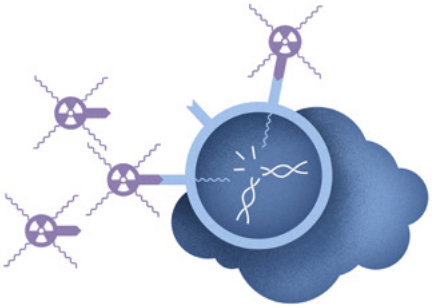
In addition to energy and safety research, PSI also studies nuclear applications in medical science. The basic building blocks for radiopharmaceuticals for cancer diagnostics and treatment are developed at PSI. "We produce radioisotopes that can be specifically deposited in tumour cells to destroy them," says Pautz. "This is a major advance in modern oncology."

For Marques, the diversity and excellence at PSI is one reason why she wants to continue working here after almost twenty years at the institute. "I feel very privileged to be able to work at PSI," she says. "I appreciate the multidisciplinary approach towards scientific issues, especially in highly applied areas like nuclear energy." Pautz, a physicist with three decades of experience in reactor safety research, shares this view. "There is nothing more exciting than nuclear energy," he says. "It forces us to think about science, technology and responsibility all at the same time."

In the picture: professor Andreas Pautz (left) and Maria Marques in the PSI hot lab.

Precise radiation against lymphoma

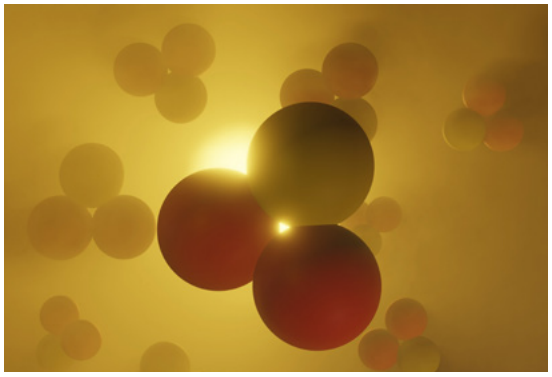
Every year, almost 2,000 people in Switzerland are diagnosed with lymphoma, and about 570 of them die from the disease. Researchers at PSI's Center for Radiopharmaceutical Sciences have now developed an innovative radioimmunotherapy using the nuclide terbium-161. Attached to a suitable antibody, it brings the radiation directly to the site of the cancer cells while sparing healthy tissue. Terbium-161 has a decisive advantage over the lutetium-177 used to date: in addition to beta radiation, which spreads over several millimetres in tissue, it also emits electrons with a range of less than one micrometre. This is ideal for the targeted destruction of individual cancer cells or small clusters of cells. Laboratory tests have shown terbium-161 to be two to 43 times more effective than lutetium-177, depending on the type of cell. The researchers are currently preparing clinical trials, aiming to develop a precise new weapon against lymphomas that are particularly difficult to treat.



Radiopharmaceuticals can target tumour cells locally.
Image: Aurel Märki

Read more about using terbium against lymphoma.

Closer than ever to the atomic nucleus



Read more.
Image: Adobe Stock

1.97007 femtometres – just under two quadrillionths of a metre: that's how tiny the radius of a helium-3 nucleus is. This precise value was determined in an experiment at PSI. To measure it, researchers radically modified a helium-3 atom: instead of being orbited by the usual two electrons, the nucleus is orbited by a muon, which is around 200 times heavier. The heavy muon gets much closer to the nucleus, making it a perfect probe for measuring the charge radius. A crucial share of the success is due to a laser system that the researchers themselves developed. When the laser frequency precisely matches the resonance of a specific atomic transition, the muon is excited to a higher energy state for the briefest moment before decaying to the ground state within picoseconds; at that point it emits a photon in the form of an X-ray. By measuring the resonance frequency, the researchers could deduce an extremely accurate value for the charge radius. This experiment was only possible thanks to the muon source at PSI, which is unique in the world, and it sets new standards in nuclear physics.

A protective coating can improve battery performance

A new sustainable process can improve the performance of lithium-ion batteries, potentially making them more efficient, for example in electric vehicles. Researchers at PSI have demonstrated that a coating based on trifluoromethane stabilises the cathode, allowing higher operating voltages and therefore increasing the energy density of the batteries. While commercial batteries typically run at a maximum of 4.3 volts, the protective layer enabled operation at 4.8 volts. It also improved battery longevity: after 100 charging and discharging cycles, there was a much lower drop in capacity.

Trifluoromethane is a by-product during the manufacture of plastics and a potent greenhouse gas. The PSI process provides an eco-friendly way to recycle this gas while protecting the battery cathodes.

Read more about the batteries.

PSI researchers have shown that it is possible to bind a greenhouse gas while simultaneously making batteries – for example those for electric vehicles – more efficient.
Image: Stefan Schulze-Henrichs

WSL

THE "TREE DOCTOR" WHO PROTECTS FOREST HEALTH

As a boy, Valentin Queloz used to love spending time in the forest. Today, his childhood playground is his place of work. As the "Group leader Swiss Forest Protection" at WSL, he is responsible for the "area monitoring" nationwide early-warning system.

When Valentin Queloz attends specialist conferences, he sometimes meets microbiologists who study the human microbiome. That's when he realises: "We actually deal with very similar issues. A healthy forest is like a healthy person: it needs a stable microbiome with lots of different things working together."

Queloz, who is from French-speaking Switzerland, also has good reason to be pessimistic: climate change is encouraging the spread of various pests. "As cold-blooded organisms, some native beetles are benefiting from the higher temperatures and reproducing more now than in the past. The milder winters are also allowing Mediterranean species to become established," explains Queloz. At the same time, the number of organisms being introduced into our forests is increasing exponentially.

WSL is countering this development by means of area monitoring – a nationwide early-warning system designed to protect Swiss forests from harmful invasive organisms. The research centre does not want to delay the discovery of dangerous species until they have already eaten their way through half a forest. The idea is to focus on prevention rather than treatment. "In the past, you simply reported on what you had found," says Queloz. "Today we search specifically and can say: we've checked and it's not there." Eight target species on the EU's quarantine list are being monitored – including the Asian longhorned beetle, the emerald ash borer and the pinewood nematode, as well as two fungal diseases, phytophthora ramorum (which causes sudden oak and larch death) and pine pitch canker.

Insects are caught in funnel traps in the treetops at 75 monitoring sites in 16 cantons, and spores are also collected. Forest protection officers from the cantons, often foresters or forest engineers, empty the traps every month during the spring/summer and send the contents to WSL. Around 600 to 1,000 samples are gathered each year. "We sort the sample contents and search for the target species. We also check whether non-native, non-listed species are present in the samples," says Queloz. "This makes us the hub between research, politics and practice." Queloz's group is working with experts from the Phytopathology and Forest Entomology groups to investigate how different species spread into Switzerland, and is testing DNA analyses to identify new species in trace material more quickly. "In the future, we want to be able to read from a kind of genetic soup to work out which insects or fungi are on the move." These methods are still complex and expensive. "But we are continuing our research to make them more economical and efficient," says the scientist.

His team is just as diverse as the task itself. Biologists, forest engineers, data analysts, laboratory technicians – everyone plays their part in ensuring that invasive organisms do not become established in Switzerland unnoticed. The system only works because the cantons support it. They look after the forest areas, while WSL supplies the material and instructions on how to empty the traps. However, if the presence of organisms on the quarantine list is suspected, Queloz and his team go out and assess the situation on site themselves and prevent any pests from spreading further as a result of human intervention. He is particularly pleased when the knowledge gained from research has a direct impact. "Professionals who have attended our courses and lectures often report suspicious forest protection cases from their everyday lives. This indirectly increases the monitoring density," explains Queloz. "That gives us a sense of achievement. And contributes to our prevention efforts." Once a year, all the forest protection officers meet up with the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and WSL. "Everyone works well together," emphasises Queloz. "At the end of the day, we all want the same thing: healthy forests."

Valentin Queloz does not believe that the forests will disappear, but thinks that their benefits will change. "The big question is what we expect from them. Should they store CO_2, filter water or provide protection? We have to act accordingly."

The boy who used to roam the woods as a child has become a researcher who has retained his fascination for this ecosystem – and all its facets: "We work with disease and death," he says, "but this often helps us to make the forests more attractive. When bark beetles destroy spruce trees in the Swiss Mittelland, hardwood grows back and adds to the diversity of the forest." And as a researcher, he is of course delighted when he discovers a new species of fungus, even if it is harmful to trees. "We sometimes have to curb our enthusiasm a little in the field," says Queloz, who has professional experience in forestry himself. He graduated in forest engineering from ETH Zurich and specialised in forest health and fungal diseases early on. He wrote his dissertation on root fungi on spruce trees and ash dieback – topics that have stayed with him to this day. Before joining WSL, he was responsible for forest protection in the Canton of Jura alongside his research activities at ETH Zurich. This dual function between research and practice stands him in good stead today. When the opportunity arose to take on a full-time position at WSL in 2015, he jumped at the chance: "It was a perfect fit for my career."

In the picture: Valentin Queloz in Oberwinterthur, a monitoring area in the Canton Zurich.

Learning to understand glide-snow avalanches

SLF researchers have collected data directly beneath glide-snow avalanches for the first time. In a glide-snow avalanche, the entire snowpack spontaneously slides down a suitable underlying surface such as grass or slabs of rock. This has made the release of a glide-snow avalanche difficult to predict until today. Over three winters, the researchers measured the temperature of the ground and the snow, as well as the liquid water content of the ground, every 15 minutes on the Seewer Berg in Davos. It has long been known that water at the snow-ground interface is a prerequisite for glide-snow avalanches. Until now, however, it was unclear which specific processes produce this water. Thanks to on-site measurements, the researchers were able to tell whether the water is formed by melting close to the ground, by meltwater seeping into the ground in the spring, or by rain on the snowpack – a distinction that is not possible when relying solely on weather data. This provides an important basis for formulating more precise avalanche warnings in the future.

What is a glide-snow avalanche?

Mega droughts are becoming more frequent and intense worldwide

Multi-year droughts have become much more frequent, longer and more extreme over the last forty years. A study led by WSL showed that during this period, the extent of the affected areas has increased by a surface area which is much larger than Switzerland. A drought inventory has been established on the basis of high-resolution climate data, satellite images and meteorological data. With a resolution of five kilometres, it is the most extensive in the world in the last forty years. The inventory is publicly accessible and is intended to help the countries affected to better prepare for future multi-year droughts.

Read more.

City trees provide cooling, even in extreme heat

These plane trees in Lancy evaporated large amounts of water, even in extreme heat.
Image: Christoph Bachofen /WSL

Even during heat waves with temperatures of over 39°C, plane trees continue to evaporate large amounts of water and help cool the surrounding area. This was demonstrated by researchers from WSL and EPFL thanks to measurements in the Geneva suburb of Lancy. They used sensors to record the sap flow in the trunks, which allowed conclusions to be drawn about the amount of water evaporated and thus the cooling capacity. The results refute earlier assumptions that trees close their leaf pores so much at around 30–35°C that the water flow and cooling capacity are significantly reduced. The next step is to find out how other tree species react to extreme heat. Cooling capacity is one of the tasks performed by urban trees – it will become increasingly important in the future.

The Los Andes region has been particularly hard hit by the ongoing drought in Chile.
Image (left): Dirk Karger / WSL

EMPA

A FLUORINE-FREE FUTURE – ANALYTICS, DEGRADATION AND ALTERNATIVES

They have become an integral part of our everyday lives. Yet they are a growing problem because they are barely degradable. PFAS, the "forever chemicals". Empa is rising to the challenge with precise analytics, new removal methods and alternatives suitable for industrial use. Manfred Heuberger, member of the Board of Directors and Head of the Advanced Fibers department, explains what this involves in practice.

Manfred Heuberger, why are PFAS strategically relevant for Empa? Because they show how closely technology and society are interwoven. PFAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are chemicals that repel water, grease and dirt. They can be found in outdoor textiles, pan coatings, paper finishes and fire extinguishing foams. They are therefore very useful, but are nearly impossible to degrade and sometimes remain in the environment for centuries. That's why we are working on three fronts: on reliable analytics, on processes to remove existing contamination and on industrially viable alternatives.

How is Empa going about this? In analytics, we cooperate closely with Eawag and the Ecotox Centre. Eawag is pressing ahead with methods to target difficult-to-measure compounds in water, while we are concentrating on complex samples such as blood, milk, meat or manure. Activated carbon filters already successfully remove PFAS from water in some cases. We are also researching degradation processes. By igniting a plasma directly in water, we can produce highly reactive particles that break up the PFAS molecules. However, our main focus is clearly on materials research and the development of alternatives suitable for industrial use. Our water-repellent coatings are currently being transferred to textile production with industrial partners. They do not require fluorine and are particularly durable thanks to a special plasma process. The surface of yarns is treated with ionised gases so that the protective layer adheres permanently and remains wash-resistant.

Are there certain regions in Switzerland that are particularly affected? Yes, several. There is a well-known hotspot in the Canton of St. Gallen, as well as training grounds where old extinguishing foams were used. PFAS probably entered the soil, and ultimately the food chain, via sewage treatment plants and sewage sludge. But high levels can also be found near airports, industrial sites and landfills. In some cases, entire areas are affected, especially the top layer of soil. Simply removing the soil and dumping it is not a sustainable solution, as it merely shifts the problem elsewhere, and suitable landfill sites are in short supply. We need to understand how PFAS move through the soil-water-plant system so that we can develop new methods to bind or degrade them locally.

> "It would be a real breakthrough if we could actually break down trifluoroacetic acid for good."

What methods already work today? Activated carbon works reasonably well in water with specific operating conditions and correct downstream disposal. We are working on fully mineralised degradation using plasma and radical chemistry. We are making rapid progress in this area. It is more difficult in the soil, where combined strategies are needed. We don't have a miracle solution yet, but our toolbox is getting bigger and more precise.

How reliable is analytics and what are the greatest risks? We have come a long way in terms of analytics, but the substance class is huge, which makes the methods very expensive. We are paying special attention to the compound TFA, trifluoroacetic acid. It is small, very mobile and very durable. We are seeing increasing concentrations in bodies of water. This means that we need close-meshed monitoring with more effective measurement methods that are even capable of accurately recording trace levels.

PFAS are also an issue in politics. What role does Empa play in this respect? We state facts and categorise risks. In association with other partners and the SCNAT, we have provided politicians with a short, easy-to-understand fact sheet. We also moderate debates with research, administration and industry, as problems and conflicting goals can be discussed more openly in such a framework. This work is currently being integrated into a PFAS research platform in Switzerland.

It's a global problem. What is the significance of the Swiss effort? Greater than you might think. There are very close links between research, the authorities and industry in Switzerland. The same can't be said in every country. If we can demonstrate that fluorine-free alternatives are technically and economically viable, this will send out a strong signal. Other countries are watching closely to see how Switzerland deals with these classes of substances. The aim is therefore not to solve the problem alone, but to create innovations that can be imitated internationally.

What do you think is currently the top priority? First, hotspots must be secured and cleaned. Health is a major priority, even though we have all been exposed to PFAS for a long time. At the same time, better monitoring is needed. In the medium term, stricter rules and scalable alternatives are unavoidable. In the long term, we must restructure value chains so that no PFAS are released. This will take time, which is why we should take fact-based, consistent action now.

How do you see the next few years? It would be a real breakthrough if we could not only measure trifluoroacetic acid – TFA – at trace levels, but actually break it down for good. That would be a huge technological step forwards. And if we can get to the stage of international production with our fluorine-free textile coating as a Swiss innovation, we will reduce one of the most important entry paths.

In the picture: Professor Manfred Heuberger at Empa in St. Gallen.

Solutions for the here and now: partnering with the public sector

Municipal and cantonal authorities are currently facing complex challenges. Empa research is helping to find fact-based solutions. One example is the decarbonisation model created by Empa researchers in the Graubünden Rhine Valley in association with the Canton of Graubünden, energy suppliers and leading industrial companies. Their conclusion is that decarbonisation is technically feasible and economically advantageous. The Empa study sets out implementation steps and can also be transferred to other regions as a model. In collaboration with Thurplus, Empa has extrapolated energy scenarios for the city of Frauenfeld up to the year 2050. District heating and heating replacement are crucial for achieving net-zero success. The "Colouring Dübendorf" project with the city of Dübendorf also aims to develop a sustainable, locally coordinated energy future. And in association with the Canton of Schaffhausen and regional industry, Empa is currently establishing a centre of excellence for sustainable robotics, making Schaffhausen the first application region for this new field of research.

CFRP: ultra-lightweight, extremely strong – and now recyclable

Carbon fibre reinforced polymers (CFRP) are increasingly being used in infrastructure construction to reinforce structures. The most recent example of the technology developed at Empa is the multi-award-winning 2025 Oder Bridge near Küstrin, which is supported by a network arch with 88 carbon hangers. These prestressed carbon cables were designed and manufactured by the (first) Empa spin-off "Carbo-Link"; similar cables were also used on the Alinghi yacht during its "America's Cup" victories. But what happens if the buildings have to be dismantled in the distant future? As part of Empa's "Design4reuse" initiative, researchers are developing technologies to give the valuable carbon fibres a second life.

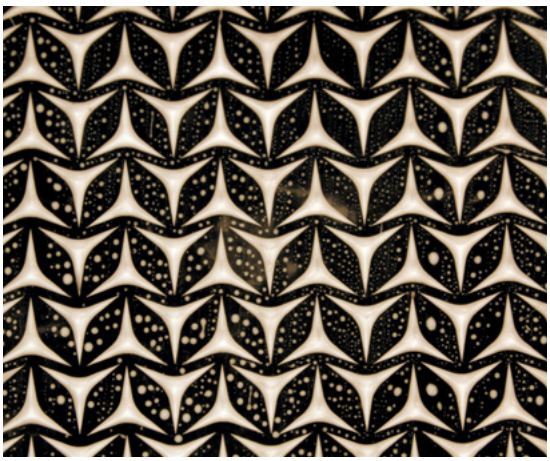
Read more about the Empa innovation in bridge construction.

The Oder Bridge and its network arch with a span of 130 metres and 88 carbon hangers
Image (left): Volker Emersleben/Deutsche Bahn AG

Nanoceramics – stardust in the bathroom

Widespread skin diseases such as psoriasis or neurodermatitis are difficult to treat. The problem is that modern active ingredients do not penetrate deep enough into affected skin layers if they are applied in conventional ointments or lotions. However, if the skin could be made permeable for a short time, the therapeutically active molecules could be delivered to their target site. Empa researchers have found an innovative solution together with the company Aldena Therapeutics in Lausanne: nanoceramic stars create tiny skin lesions and allow nucleic acid molecules ("small interfering RNA" or siRNA for short) to reach their site of action. The "StarCURE" project is funded by Innosuisse.

Read more about this stardust.



Pointedly efficient: the nanoceramic stars cross the skin barrier and increase the success of treatment.
Image (right): Empa

EAWAG

HOW EAWAG WANTS TO MAKE CITIES CLIMATE RESILIENT

Heavy rain and heat are increasingly causing problems, even in Switzerland, potentially leading to devastating floods and excess mortality. To counteract these effects, Eawag is researching blue-green infrastructure, which is designed to prepare our cities for climate change.

Closed roads, mud flows and flooding: in July and August 2025, heavy rain repeatedly caused chaotic conditions in various regions of Switzerland. Earlier in the year, a heatwave had swept across the country, prompting the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) to warn of health risks. Events of this kind are likely to increase in the future. The scientific community is called upon to work on solutions to these challenges. That's precisely the role of Lauren Cook. As a civil and environmental engineer, she completed a doctorate at Carnegie Mellon University in the USA and joined Eawag seven years ago. She and her colleagues are researching blue-green infrastructure, also known as the sponge city approach. Blue-green infrastructure refers to urban landscapes that absorb, store and release water. The aim is to restore the natural water cycle in the city, making it possible to tackle several problems at once. More vegetation and permeable surfaces help to retain rainwater where it falls – instead of channelling it into the sewer system without actually using it. Plants and soil in turn act like sponges by absorbing water, storing it temporarily and then slowly releasing it again. This not only relieves the sewer system, but also purifies the water before it returns to the natural cycle. At the same time, green spaces and evaporation help to cool down cities. "Both heat and heavy rainfall are set to increase due to climate change," says Cook. "Sponge cities are a solution for adapting to climate change." Elements of blue-green infrastructure include green roofs, ponds, urban wetlands, rain gardens and permeable paving. Concepts of this kind are being implemented more and more frequently in Switzerland – for example in Zurich's Greencity district in the Sihl Valley, where rainwater is drained off and retained on site. Initial pilot projects are also under way in Basel and Lausanne.

Cook's team has tested the practical implementation of solutions in various locations, including on Eawag's own roofs. Over a period of five years, the researchers investigated how different types of vegetation and combinations of techniques – for instance using solar panels – affect cooling, water retention and energy efficiency. However, a large part of Cook's work takes place on computers rather than on roofs. She uses models to simulate how blue-green infrastructure performs in different climate scenarios – with higher temperatures, longer periods of drought or heavier rainfall. The aim is to find out which combinations are most effective and how they can be integrated into existing urban structures.

It almost goes without saying that multiple disciplines have to come together to achieve this objective. "Sponge cities touch on engineering, ecology, social sciences, architecture – no single subject can cover every aspect," says Cook. Wherever water areas and vegetation are created, habitats also develop – for insects, birds and plants. At the same time, social questions arise: how safe, how attractive and how accepted are these spaces? Conflicts of interest are inevitable. Do people in the local area feel disturbed by greater numbers of insects, for instance? What is more, even blue-green infrastructure is not CO_2-neutral, as all infrastructure causes emissions during construction. "But it offers many advantages," says Cook. "Ultimately, it's about weighing up and prioritising." Eawag relies on laboratories known as living labs to help understand this balance between costs and benefits. These real-world laboratories enable researchers to work with cities and residents to observe how blue-green infrastructure systems function in everyday life.

> "We are all researching a climate-resilient future. Sponge cities are a solution for adapting to climate change."

At the same time, Switzerland is part of a global learning process. "Climate change is turning everything upside down," says Cook. "Our previous assumptions about infrastructure planning no longer apply. Blue-green infrastructure can help because of its flexibility." Eawag is gaining experience in planning and maintaining this type of system from partners in the USA, Australia and Canada. Conversely, knowledge from Switzerland – for example on biodiversity, water protection and ecological urban development – flows back into global networks. Cook is endeavouring to bring research and engineering practice closer together – so that the ideas from the laboratories and models actually find their way into real life. "We need to develop solutions that don't just work in theory, but can actually be put into practice," she says. This will make sure that our cities are ready for the future.

In the picture: Lauren Cook in Zurich-Oerlikon, where there is a pilot project for a sponge city.

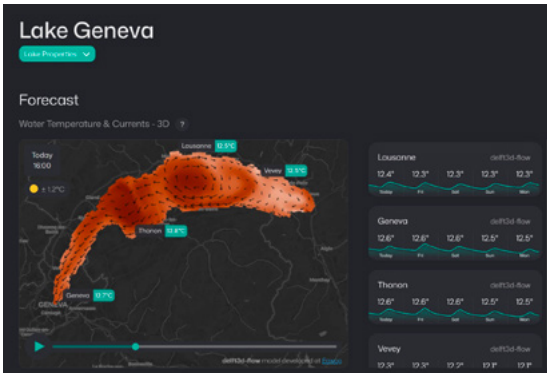
Groundwater under pressure

80% of Switzerland's drinking water comes from groundwater. Its protection is becoming increasingly difficult, especially on the densely utilised Central Plateau: higher water temperatures, longer periods of drought as a result of climate change and new pollutants such as PFAS are exacerbating the situation. Under the title "Groundwater – utilising and protecting the resource drinking water" at the Info Day in September 2025, Eawag researchers presented results and tools that support practitioners and administrators in safeguarding the quality and quantity of drinking water resources. Climate change is altering air temperature and precipitation patterns in Switzerland, thereby impairing the recharge and quality of groundwater. Eawag is developing monitoring methods and forecasting models in order to be able to react to changes at an early stage. The Info Day Magazine summarises the most important findings.

Dr Michael Berg speaking at the 2025 Info Day: "We must preserve our drinking water resources".
Image: Nicola Pitaro/Eawag

To the Info Day Magazine.

Alplakes – visualising climate change in Swiss lakes



The Alplakes platform documents water temperature trends and the spread of blue-green algae for 116 lakes in and around the Alps. Last year, the platform recorded around 150,000 hits. Alplakes combines three-dimensional model calculations with satellite data to provide predictions of water temperatures at various depths – in 30-minute steps for the next five days. "This exchange is essential for the ecosystem of our lakes," emphasises Damien Bouffard, head of the aquatic physics research group. "But with global warming, the surface water in some places no longer cools sufficiently in winter. The necessary circulation process is disrupted – with drastic consequences for life in the depths." The platform was significantly expanded and made more user-friendly in 2025. It serves as a bridge between research, water experts and the public.

Gaining time in the fight against the quagga mussel

To curb the spread of invasive quagga mussels in Swiss lakes, researchers at Eawag recommend taking swift action and focusing on comprehensive prevention, early detection and containment. A new quagga mussel unit at Eawag has been available to assist those responsible since 1 April 2025. In affected lakes, the biomass per square metre is likely to increase by a factor of 9 to 20 over the next 22 years. Filters and heat exchangers can protect infrastructure from mussels attaching themselves. However, this sometimes requires very costly conversions and new construction. "We are talking about costs that are likely to amount to hundreds of millions of Swiss francs for the whole of Switzerland," says quagga mussel expert Piet Spaak.

On the Alplakes website: Lake Geneva under observation.
Image (left): Eawag

To the Alplakes website.

Quagga mussels on a pipe in Lake Geneva.
Image: Linda Haltiner/Eawag

To the Quagga Competence Center website.

GOVERNANCE

Legal basis and structure of the ETH Domain

The Federal Government operates the Federal Institutes of Technology in accordance with the Federal Constitution (Art. 63*a* para. 1). The Federal Act on the Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH Act) defines this mission, as this law governs the ETH Domain. Together with Art. 64 para. 3 of the Federal Constitution, it also forms the legal foundation for operating the four research institutes of the ETH Domain and for the ETH Board as the strategic governing and supervisory body of the ETH Domain.

The ETH Act defines the status, structure and mission of the ETH Domain. The ETH Domain is autonomous within the framework of the law. The ETH Act also defines the autonomy of both Federal Institutes of Technology and the four research institutes. The ETH Domain is allocated to the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER).

Tasks
According to the purpose set out in Art. 2 of the ETH Act, both Federal Institutes of Technology and the four research institutes (institutions of the ETH Domain) must educate students and specialists in scientific and technical fields and ensure continuing education, expand scientific knowledge through research, foster the development of junior scientific staff, provide scientific and technical services, perform public relations work, and make use of their research results. The institutions of the ETH Domain discharge their mission in observance of internationally recognised standards. They take account of Switzerland's needs and promote national as well as international cooperation.

Strategic objectives and expenditure ceiling
The political leadership of the ETH Domain rests with the Federal Council and the Federal Parliament. The central leadership tools are the Dispatch on the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation (ERI Dispatch) and the associated strategic objectives set by the Federal Council for the ETH Domain. The political tools are supplemented by the ETH Board's strategic controlling, which provides information on financial reporting and mission fulfilment. In accordance with Art. 34*b* of the ETH Act, the Federal Assembly determines an expenditure ceiling for each four-year period to cover the operational and investment needs of the ETH Domain. The Federal Assembly then decides on the annual financial contribution with the budget.

Reporting
The ETH Board reports annually to the Federal Council and shows the degree to which the strategic objectives have been met and how the ETH Domain has used the total federal contribution. The Federal Council, in turn, reports to Parliament on the achievement of the strategic objectives, drawing on the ETH Board's reporting, among other things. In each half of the Promotion of Education, Research and Innovation Policy (ERI) period, the ETH Board compiles a self-evaluation report which comments on issues specified by the competent Federal Councillor. This self-evaluation report serves as the basis for the evaluation of the ETH Domain by a group of international experts (peer review), which is to be carried out by the Federal Department of EAER. The last evaluation took place in 2023, and the next one is scheduled for March 2027.

Discussions are held twice a year between the proprietor, represented by the EAER and the Federal Department of Finance (FDF), and the ETH Board, represented by its President.

A Managing and supervisory body ETH Board: mission and operating principles
The ETH Board is responsible for the strategic leadership of the ETH Domain; it defines the strategy of the ETH Domain within the framework of the strategic objectives of the Federal Council, represents the ETH Domain when dealing with policymakers and government authorities at federal level, issues directives about financial controlling, and carries out strategic controlling. It also approves the development plans of the institutions of the ETH Domain, oversees their

implementation and supervises the ETH Domain (Art. 25 ETH Act). It agrees targets with the institutions and allocates federal funds, specifically on the basis of the institutions' budget requests (Art. 33*a* ETH Act). It submits requests to the Federal Council for the election or re-election of the Presidents of both Federal Institutes of Technology and of the Directors of the four research institutes (Art. 28 para. 1 and 7 ETH Act). It also appoints the other members of the Executive Boards of both Federal Institutes of Technology and of the Directorates of the four research institutes (Art. 28 para. 4 and 7 ETH Act). Finally, the ETH Board appoints professors at the request of the Presidents of both Federal Institutes of Technology (Art. 14 para. 2 and 3 ETH Act).

The Executive Boards of both Federal Institutes and the Directorates of the four research institutes are responsible for the operational leadership of the individual institutions of the ETH Domain. In accordance with Art. 4 para. 3 of the ETH Act, the institutions of the ETH Domain assume all responsibilities which are not expressly assigned to the ETH Board by the ETH Act.

The rules of procedure of the ETH Board are published in the Official Compilation of Federal Legislation. The ETH Board usually meets five times a year for two days at a time, and arranges additional meeting days for dialogues with the institutions of the ETH Domain. The President of the ETH Board is responsible for holding periodic individual discussions with the Presidents of both Federal Institutes of Technology and with the Directors of the research institutes.

The ETH Board performs its supervisory function through the use of the following tools: periodic reporting by the institutions on resources (finances, personnel, real estate), annual reporting by the institutions on the extent to which they have fulfilled their duties with regard to target agreements, annual discussions (known as dialogues) between the ETH Board and the institutions of the ETH Domain within the scope of strategic controlling, handling supervisory complaints addressed to it while observing subsidiarity and institutional autonomy, as well as reports by the institutions within the scope of their risk management systems. Moreover, the ETH Board's Internal Audit department evaluates the risk management processes, internal control system (ICS) and governance processes of the institutions and reports on them to the ETH Board.

Structure of the ETH Domain

* Employment contracts incl. doctoral students, as of 31 December 2025

ETH Domain

ETH Board
11 members
61 employees (staff, Internal Audit, Appeals Commission)

Federal Institutes of Technology

ETH Zurich
26,555 students and doctoral students
13,845 employees*

EPFL
14,072 students and doctoral students
6,432 employees*

Research institutes

PSI
2,280
employees*

WSL
647
employees*

Empa
1,086
employees*

Eawag
559
employees*

Vested interests and awareness-raising activities

In keeping with expectations for good governance, vested interests are regulated extensively.[1] The legal requirements are consistently implemented by the ETH Board within its area of responsibility: all vested interests and secondary employment of members of the ETH Board and of members of the Executive Boards and Directorates of the ETH Domain's institutions are examined once a year by the Audit Committee and then approved by the ETH Board – subject to the proviso that the Federal Council is responsible – provided that the requirements are met in accordance with the applicable legal basis. Regular treatment by the ETH Board also serves to raise the awareness of members.

New vested interests and secondary employment are reported to the ETH Board during the year on an ongoing basis and examined to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Management Salaries Ordinance (no reputational risks or conflicts of interest; maximum workload of 10%; surrender of the part of the income from secondary employment which exceeds 30% of the salary). In addition, the secondary employment of members of the ETH Board and the Directors of the research institutes is published on the websites of the Swiss Confederation[2] and the ETH Board[3]; the institutions are responsible for publishing the secondary employment of members of the Executive Board and of the research institutes' Directorates.

Audit and Executive Committee

The Audit Committee assists the ETH Board in financial supervision and in the monitoring of risk management, of the ICS, and of financial auditing activities. As a rule, it is composed of two to three "external" members of the ETH Board who are independent of the executive leadership, but may also involve additional people in a consultative capacity. The President of the ETH Board, the Head of the Internal Audit department and the Head of the Finance section of the ETH Board's staff attend the meetings in an advisory capacity.

The Executive Committee assists the ETH Board in preparing for and following up on meetings, in filling management positions of institutions in the ETH Domain and in fulfilling its duties as an employer. It also liaises with the social partners. It is composed of the President of the ETH Board (chair), the Presidents of both Federal Institutes of Technology, the representative of the research institutes and the delegates of the University Assemblies. The Executive Director and, if necessary, other members of the ETH Board's staff attend the meetings.

[1] The key legal bases can be found on the website of the ETH Board: www.ethboard.ch/legal-basis: Art. 24*c* ETH Act; Art. 2*a* and 7*a* Ordinance on the ETH Domain; Art. 11, 13 and 14 Management Salaries Ordinance; Guidelines of the ETH Board on secondary employment of members of the Executive Boards of the Federal Institutes of Technology and of the Directorates of the research institutes; Directives of the ETH Board on secondary employment of professors in the ETH Domain; Art. 6 ETH Ordinance Concerning Professors; Art. 56*a* Personnel Ordinance for the ETH Domain (PersO-FIT); Guidelines of both Federal Institutes of Technology on conflicts of interest and secondary employment.

[2] www.admin.ch/ch/d/cf/ko/Gremien_interessenbindung_79.html

[3] www.ethboard.ch/vested-interests

Remuneration of the ETH Board

In 2025, the President of the ETH Board received a gross salary of CHF 307,990 for 0.8 FTE (with an annual salary of CHF 384,988 for 1.0 FTE). In addition, the employer paid social security contributions of CHF 97,368. The President is insured by the Swiss Federal Pension Fund, the rules of which determine the employer contributions.

Based on the decision of the Federal Council of 24 June 2020 regarding the fees of external members of the ETH Board who do not have an employment contract with an institution of the ETH Domain, the Vice President of the ETH Board and the President of the Audit Committee received a lump-sum payment of CHF 32,000 each in 2025. The external members of the ETH Board received a lump sum of CHF 20,000. In addition, external members of the ETH Board were paid a total of CHF 74,500 for dialogue meetings, the project Fit for the Future and the Election Preparation Committees, etc. Additionally, their expenses were refunded in accordance with federal personnel law in the total amount of CHF 10,772.90. "Institutional" members of the ETH Board who are employees of one of the institutions of the ETH Domain do not receive additional fees for their activities on the ETH Board. For the 0.7 FTE position, the ETH Board covered 40% of the wage and social security costs (including compensation for expenses) incurred by EPFL for the delegates of the University Assemblies of both Federal Institutes of Technology, in order to guarantee the delegates' independence.

Executive bodies of the ETH Domain

Presidency and Members of the ETH Board
- Prof. Dr Michael O. Hengartner[1], President
- Pascale Bruderer[1], Vice President
- Cornelia Ritz Bossicard[2], President of the Audit Committee
- Prof. Dr Joël Mesot[1]
- Prof. Dr Anna Fontcuberta i Morral[1]
- Prof. Dr Christian Rüegg[1]
- Dr Kristin Becker van Slooten[1]
- Marc Bürki[2]
- Beatrice Fasana[2]
- Prof. Dr sc. nat., Dr h. c. mult. Susan Gasser (until December 2025)
- Dr Martin Keller (since August 2025)
- Dr Matthias Leuenberger (since January 2026)
- Christiane Leister*

Executive Board of ETH Zurich
- Prof. Dr Joël Mesot, President
- Prof. Dr Günther Dissertori, Rector
- Dr Julia Dannath, Vice President for Personnel Development and Leadership
- Prof. Dr Annette Oxenius, Vice President for Research (since August 2025)
- Stefan Spiegel, Vice President for Finance and Controlling
- Prof. Dr Ulrich Weidmann, Vice President for Infrastructure and Sustainability
- Prof. Dr Christian Wolfrum, Vice President for Research (until June 2025)
- Prof. Dr Vanessa Wood, Vice President for Knowledge Transfer and Corporate Relations (until December 2025)
- Prof. Dr Eftychia (Effy) Vayena, Vice President for Knowledge Transfer and Corporate Relations (since January 2026)

Executive Board of EPFL
- Prof. Dr Anna Fontcuberta i Morral, President
- Prof. Dr Ambrogio Fasoli, Vice President for Academic Matters and Provost
- Françoise Bommensatt, Vice President for Finance
- Prof. Dr Edouard Bugnion, Vice President for Innovation
- Dr Matthias Gäumann, Vice President for Operations (until July 2025)
- Prof. Dr Stéphanie P. Lacour, Vice President for Support to Strategic Initiatives
- Dr Adrian Wägli, Vice President for Operations (since December 2025)
- Marianne Wannier, Vice President for Personnel Development

Directorate of PSI
- Prof. Dr Christian Rüegg, Director
- Prof. Dr Gabriel Aeppli, Deputy Director
- Dr Thierry Strässle, Deputy Director
- Dr Peter Allenspach, Member (until January 2026)
- Prof. Dr Andreas Pautz, Member
- Prof. Dr Thomas J. Schmidt, Member
- Prof. Dr Mike Seidel, Member

Directorate of WSL
- Prof. Dr Rolf Holderegger, Director
- Dr Christoph Hegg, Deputy Director
- Prof. Dr h.c. Anna Hersperger, Member
- Birgit Ottmer, Member
- PD Dr Anita Risch, Member
- Prof. Dr Jürg Schweizer, Member
- Dr Thomas Wohlgemuth, Member

Directorate of Empa
- Prof. Dr Tanja Zimmermann, Director
- Dr Peter Richner, Deputy Director (until March 2025)
- Dr Urs Leemann, Deputy Director (since April 2025)
- Dr Nathalie Casas, Member
- Dr Lorenz Herrmann, Member
- Prof. Dr Manfred Heuberger, Member
- Prof. Dr René Rossi, Member
- Prof. Matthias Sulzer, Member (since June 2025)

Directorate of Eawag
- Prof. Dr Martin Ackermann, Director
- Dr Christian Stamm, Deputy Director
- Prof. Dr Florian Altermatt, Member
- Dr Sara Marks, Member
- Gabriele Mayer, Member
- Prof. Dr Carsten Schubert, Member
- Prof. Dr Lenny Winkel, Member

* † 1 March 2025, Member of the ETH Board since 2017, deceased in office.

Appeal body

ETH Appeals Commission
The ETH Appeals Commission decides on appeals against rulings made by bodies of the institutions of the ETH Domain (Art. 37 para. 3 ETH Act). It is an independent internal appeal body with its registered office in Bern and is administratively assigned to the ETH Board, to which it reports (Art. 37*a* ETH Act). Since 2022, the Federal Council has elected the members of the ETH Appeals Commission.
Appeals mainly relate to matters arising from legislation on higher education and human resources. The Commission is assisted by a secretariat (Art. 11 et seq. of the Ordinance on the ETH Appeals Commission). Appeals against the rulings of the ETH Appeals Commission can be made to the Federal Administrative Court.

– Lawyer Barbara Gmür Wenger, President
– Lawyer Yvonne Wampfler Rohrer, Vice President
– Prof. Dr Simone Deparis, Member
– Nils Jensen, Member
– Dr Mathias Kaufmann, Member
– Dr Eva Klok-Lermann, Member
– Prof. Dr Christina Spengler Walder, Member

ETH Board support

Staff of the ETH Board
The ETH Board's staff support the ETH Board in fulfilling its legal mandate, particularly regarding strategic leadership, supervision, promotion of cooperation in the ETH Domain and liaising with the Federal authorities (Art. 26*b* ETH Act).

Executive Team
– Dr Michael Käppeli, Executive Director
– Dr Monique Weber-Mandrin, Deputy Executive Director and Head of Legal Services
– Karsten Bugmann, Head of Personnel & Services (since January 2025)
– Dr Ines Egli, Head of Science
– Gian-Andri Casutt, Head of Communications
– Daniela Oehy, Head of Finance
– Michael Quetting, Head of Real Estate

Internal Audit
The ETH Board employs Internal Audit staff, as per Art. 35*a*[ter] ETH Act. The department conducts internal audits for the institutions of the ETH Domain.
– Patrick Graber, Chief Audit Executive

[1] Member of the Executive Committee
[2] Member of the Audit Committee

Status as of 31 December 2025
(reference is also made to changes agreed upon in 2025 which will become effective in 2026).

Ombuds Office

Ombuds Office
The Ombuds Office of the ETH Board is an independent body responsible in a subsidiary capacity for dealing with reports of illegal and unethical conduct observed by members of the ETH Domain in the course of ETH Domain-related activity. Subsidiary capacity means that, whenever possible, reports must initially be made inside both Federal Institutes of Technology or the four research institutes, first to senior bodies or, if this is deemed unreasonable, to the bodies responsible for dealing with such reports in the institutions concerned.

This applies without prejudice to Art. 22*a* of the Federal Personnel Act (FPA): employees are obliged to report all officially prosecutable crimes or offences which they have discovered during their official work or which have been reported to them, to the criminal prosecution authorities, their line managers or the SFAO.

The Ombuds Office consists of:
– Dr Michael Daphinoff, LL.M., external lawyer in Bern
– Cendrine Rouvinez, MLaw, external lawyer in Lausanne and Sion

Conciliation Commission

Conciliation Commission under the Gender Equality Act for the ETH Domain
The Conciliation Commission under the Gender Equality Act for the ETH Domain provides information and advice in the event of disputes which fall under the Gender Equality Act that involve employment relationships in the ETH Domain. The aim of the conciliation process is to achieve a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute in verbal negotiations, with the assistance of the parties (employer and employee), in order to avoid court proceedings. The Conciliation Commission does not issue any judgements. It handles cases confidentially, but not anonymously.

President's Office:
– Dr Anne-Catherine Hahn, President

Employer representatives:
– Dr Patrick O. Dilger (Member)
– Hélène Fueger, EPFL (Member)
– David Heusser, Empa/WSL (substitute Member)
– Beatrice Lamprecht, PSI/Eawag (substitute Member)

Employee representatives:
– Gregor Spuhler, ETH Zurich (Member)
– Prof. Dr Sabine Süsstrunk, EPFL (Member)
– Dr Rowena Crockett, Empa/WSL (substitute Member)
– Dario Marty, PSI/Eawag (substitute Member)

Monitoring and auditing

Internal control system
The institutions of the ETH Domain each have an ICS (Art. 35*a*[bis] ETH Act) which is operated within the framework of the Federal Council's guidelines. Its objectives are to protect the assets of the ETH Domain, to prevent errors and irregularities in accounting, and to ensure proper accounting and reliable reporting. It is an integral part of the audit by the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) or the auditors appointed by it. The focus is on financially relevant business processes.

Internal Audit
The Internal Audit department conducts internal revision for the institutions of the ETH Domain (Art. 35*a*[ter] para. 1 ETH Act). This department reports directly to the President of the ETH Board, and its activities are supervised by the Audit Committee. The Internal Audit department provides independent and objective auditing services. It is also responsible for coordinating and supporting the external audits of the ETH Domain.

Auditors
The SFAO performs external auditing duties for the ETH Domain (Art. 35*a*[ter] para. 3 ETH Act). In 2025, it audited the consolidated financial statements of both Federal Institutes of Technology and the consolidated financial statements of the ETH Domain and it conducted interim audits. The audits of the research institutes are performed by the SFAO jointly with PricewaterhouseCoopers AG (PwC). The SFAO's audit report on the consolidated financial statements of the ETH Domain comprises an audit report and a "comprehensive report". These reports are discussed with representatives of the SFAO in the Audit Committee every year. In 2025, the SFAO invoiced the ETH Board for the total amount of CHF 831,238.65 (of which CHF 460,154.15 was for the 2024 final audits, CHF 329,669.50 for the interim audits of the 2025 annual financial statements and CHF 41,415.00 for additional claims in connection with the 2024 interim audit at ETH Zurich).

Information policy
Its legal mandate makes the ETH Board an interface between academia, policymakers and society. Within its rules of procedure, the ETH Board undertakes to ensure honest, appropriate and transparent communication for the benefit of society with the aim of explaining its decisions and reinforcing the role and reputation of the ETH Domain. Responsibility for this rests with the President. The key communication tools are the ETH Board's Annual Report to the Federal Government, the website www.ethboard.ch, targeted media relations work and the case-by-case illumination of relevant facts and positions, particularly regarding policies on education, research and innovation.

Participations and cooperations
In accordance with Art. 3*a* of the ETH Act, both Federal Institutes of Technology and the four research institutes may found or invest in companies, or cooperate with third parties in any other way within the framework of the Federal Council's strategic objectives and the ETH Board's directives, for the purpose of fulfilling their duties. The investments and relationships with controlled and associated entities are listed in sections 20 and 35 of the annual financial statements in the ETH Board's Annual Report and Financial Report respectively. These mainly involve investments in foundations and simple partnerships which meet accounting standards. The controlled entities Société pour le Quartier de l'Innovation (SQIE) and Société pour le Quartier Nord de l'EPFL (SQNE), which maintain rights of use for leased buildings with contracts over a lease term of up to 40 years, generate cash outflows therefrom of about CHF 6m per year. The associated entities have significant investments in the ETH Zurich Foundation. The contribution to the annual result of the ETH Domain amounted to CHF 39m in the reporting period.

Michael O. Hengartner

* 1966, Swiss/Canadian, Prof. Dr

President of the ETH Board since February 2020.

Michael O. Hengartner served as President of the University of Zurich (UZH) from 2014 to 2020, and as President of swissuniversities from 2016 to 2020. He has dual Swiss and Canadian citizenship and grew up in Quebec City, where he studied Biochemistry at the Université Laval. In 1994, he was awarded his doctorate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the laboratory of Nobel Laureate H. Robert Horvitz. He then headed a research group at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (New York, USA). In 2001, he was appointed Professor at the Institute of Molecular Biology at UZH, and he was Dean of the Faculty of Science at UZH from 2009 to 2014. Hengartner has an Executive MBA from IMD Lausanne and multiple awards for his research and teaching.

Joël Mesot

* 1964, Swiss, Prof. Dr sc. nat.

Member of the ETH Board/Executive Committee since 2010. President of ETH Zurich since 2019.

Joël Mesot studied Physics at ETH Zurich, obtaining a doctorate in Solid State Physics in 1992. He was awarded the Swiss Physical Society (SPG) IBM Prize in 1995 and the ETH Zurich Latsis Prize in 2002. After research residencies in France and the US, he came to ETH Zurich and joined the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI), where he became Head of the Laboratory for Neutron Scattering in 2004. He was Director of PSI from 2008 to 2018, and he has been a full professor of physics at ETH Zurich since 2008. Mesot is part of various national and international advisory bodies, including the Foundation Board of the "Switzerland Innovation" Park and the Governing Board of CREATE (Singapore).

Image: Markus Bertschi/ETH Zurich

Christian Rüegg

* 1976, Swiss, Prof. Dr sc. nat.

Member of the ETH Board since June 2022 and representative of the research institutes. Director of PSI since 2020. Dual professorship at ETH Zurich/EPFL and professor at the University of Geneva.

Christian Rüegg studied Physics at ETH Zurich, obtaining his doctorate in 2005 at the Laboratory for Neutron Scattering at ETH Zurich and PSI. From 2005 to 2011, he worked at the Centre for Nanotechnology at University College London (UCL) and Imperial College London (ICL). He was a Royal Society University Research Fellow and Assistant and Associate Professor at UCL. From 2011 to 2016, he headed the PSI Laboratory for Neutron Scattering and Imaging in the Research Division Neutrons and Muons, and from 2017 to 2020, he was the head of this Research Division. Rüegg represents PSI on numerous international committees for large-scale research facilities and as part of important cantonal/national initiatives for the promotion of innovation, such as Switzerland Innovation.

Image: PSI

Marc Bürki

* 1961, Swiss, Dipl. El.-Ing.

Member of the ETH Board since 2017 and of the Audit Committee since 2018. CEO of Swissquote Group Holding Ltd since 1999 and of Swissquote Bank Ltd since 2002.

Marc Bürki obtained a degree in Electrical Engineering from EPFL. After gaining his initial professional experience with the European Space Agency in the Netherlands, he formed Marvel Communications S.A. in Gland in 1990, a company that specialised in the development of financial information software. Swissquote Group Holding Ltd, which specialises in online trading, was formed in 1999 and was floated on the stock market in 2000. In 2001, Swissquote Bank Ltd received a banking licence. Bürki is the CEO of both companies. Furthermore, he is President of the Board of Directors of the following companies: Swissquote MEA Ltd, Dubai, UAE (since 2012), Swissquote Ltd, London, UK and Swissquote Asia Ltd, Hong Kong (both since 2014), Swissquote Pte. Ltd, Singapore and Swissquote Bank Europe SA, Luxembourg (both since 2019), Yuh Ltd (since 2021), Swissquote Capital Markets Ltd, Cyprus (since 2022) and Swissquote South Africa (Pty), South Africa (since 2024).

Image: Swissquote

Pascale Bruderer

* 1977, Swiss, lic. phil.

Vice President of the ETH Board since 2024.

Pascale Bruderer completed her studies in political science, constitutional law and social and economic history with a Master's degree in political science. From 2002 to 2011, she was a member of the National Council and a member of the Science, Education and Culture Committee. In 2009/2010, she was the President of the National Council, and, from 2011 to 2019, a member of the Council of States. Today she is an entrepreneur and a member of several boards of directors. She is the Founder and President of the Board of Directors of Swiss Stablecoin AG and, among other things, a member of the Board of Directors of the Galenica Group and the TX Group.

Anna Fontcuberta i Morral

* 1975, Swiss/Spanish, Prof. Dr

Member of the ETH Board/Executive Committee since 2025. President of EPFL since 2025.

Anna Fontcuberta i Morral studied Physics at the University of Barcelona, followed by a PhD in Materials Science at the Ecole Polytechnique Palaiseau, France. Between 2001 and 2005, she conducted research as a visiting researcher at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA, and as a CNRS researcher in France. During this time, she was co-founder of the successful start-up Aonex Technologies in the USA. She received her post-doctoral degree in Experimental Physics at the Technical University of Munich, Germany, in 2009. Since 2008, she has been working at EPFL, where she was promoted to Associate Professor of Materials Science and Engineering in 2014 before being promoted to Full Professor in September 2019.

Image: Nicolas Righetti

Kristin Becker van Slooten

* 1962, Swiss/German, Dr

Member of the ETH Board and of the Executive Committee since 2017. Representative of the university assemblies of ETH Zurich/EPFL on the ETH Board. Project head of equal opportunities at EPFL since 2017. Maître d'enseignement et de recherche (MER).

Environmental scientist Kristin Becker van Slooten studied Biology at the University of Geneva and obtained her doctorate in Environmental Chemistry and Ecotoxicology at EPFL. From 1995 to 2002, she was employed as a scientist at the Laboratory for Environmental Chemistry and Ecotoxicology, where she headed up the Experimental Ecotoxicology research group from 2002, obtaining the title of MER in 2005. From 2006 to 2016, she was an advisor to the President and General Secretary of EPFL. Becker van Slooten has been the project manager for equal opportunities at EPFL since 2017 and has reprised her role as a delegate on the ETH Board, representing the university assemblies of ETH Zurich and of EPFL as she did from 2004 to 2006.

Beatrice Fasana

* 1969, Swiss, Dipl. Ing. Lm

Member of the ETH Board since 2012 and of the Audit Committee since 2024. Managing Director at Sandro Vanini SA since 2013.

Beatrice Fasana studied Food Science at ETH Zurich. After a traineeship at the "Nestlé Research and Development Center" in New Milford (Connecticut, USA), she worked in various leadership roles for several large food and beverage production companies in Switzerland, including in the management of Chocolat Frey and as a marketing manager for Coca-Cola. Until the end of 2012, she ran her own company BeFood Consulting SA. Since 2013, she has held the position of Managing Director at Sandro Vanini SA, a company of the Haecky Group. Fasana is also Vice President of the Board of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland (SUPSI, Scuola universitaria professionale della Svizzera italiana). She has served on the Ticino Regional Advisory Committee of the Swiss National Bank since 2018 and on the Board of Directors of Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE) since 2023. Since 2021, Fasana has also been a member of the Board of Directors of the Ticino industry association AITI.

Susan Gasser
* 1955, Swiss, Prof. Dr sc. nat., Dr h. c. mult.

Member of the ETH Board since 2018. Director of the ISREC Foundation at the AGORA Research Centre and visiting professor at the University of Lausanne since 2021.

Susan Gasser studied Biology and Biophysics at the University of Chicago and obtained a doctorate at the University of Basel. She was group leader at the Swiss Institute for Experimental Cancer Research (ISREC) from 1986 until she was appointed professor at the University of Geneva in 2001. Between 2004 and 2019, she was Director of the Friedrich Miescher Institute for Biomedical Research (FMI) in Basel, and professor of Molecular Biology at the University of Basel from 2005 to 2021. Since 2021, she has been a visiting professor at the University of Lausanne and the ISREC Foundation Director at the AGORA Research Centre. Gasser chairs the strategic advisory board of the Helmholtz Association Health Centres (health research) and serves on a number of scientific advisory boards of European research institutes, e.g. the Francis Crick Institute in London and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) Council in Heidelberg. From 2014 to 2019, she chaired the Gender Equality Commission of the SNSF.

Image: Nestlé Nutrition Council

Martin Keller
* 1970, Swiss, Dr

Member of the ETH Board since August 2025. Entrepreneur and independent board member.

Martin Keller studied Agricultural Sciences at ETH Zurich where he earned his doctorate (Dr sc. nat.). Having held a number of management positions in the Swiss agricultural and food industry, he joined the international seed company KWS SAAT AG in Einbeck, Germany, where he was in charge of Corporate Marketing & Business Development, among other things. From 2010 until the end of June 2025, Keller worked at the fenaco cooperative; for the last 13 years – as of 2012 – as Chief Executive Officer and head of the Corporate Development division, which includes the Energy department (AGROLA). Since 2020 he has also been a member of the Swiss National Bank's Mittelland Regional Economic Council, since 2024 he has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Securitas Group, and since 2025 he has served on the Shareholders' Committee of the CLAAS Group in Germany. Keller has been nominated for a seat on the Board of Directors of BKW AG as of the next annual general meeting in 2026.

Image: Christian Schnur/Martin Keller

Cornelia Ritz Bossicard
* 1972, Swiss, Business economist, CPA

Member of the ETH Board and President of the Audit Committee since 2021. Independent board member.

Cornelia Ritz Bossicard studied Business Administration at HEC Lausanne and Freie Universität Berlin, and obtained a Master of Science in Business Administration. In addition, she is qualified as both a Swiss Certified Accountant and a US Certified Public Accountant (CPA). From 1995 to 2014, she worked as an auditor with PwC, both in Switzerland and Silicon Valley, USA. Since 2014, she has been a sparring partner for strategy, corporate governance and finance and served on a variety of boards, audit committees and strategic management committees of multinational companies. She is the founder of 2bridge Ltd and, among other things, President of IVF HARTMANN and the César Ritz Foundation Niederwald, and a member of the administration of the Federation of Migros Cooperatives and of the Board of Directors of Läderach and Audemars Piguet. Having chaired various audit committees for many years, Ritz Bossicard is a recognised expert in financial supervision.

Image: Cornelia Ritz Bossicard

Christiane Leister
* 1955, Swiss/German, Graduate economist Dipl.-Vw.

Member of the ETH Board since 2017. Owner and President of the Board of Directors of the Leister Group since 1993. Christiane Leister died in office on 1 March 2025.

After graduating from Christian Albrecht University of Kiel with a degree in Economics, Christiane Leister started her career at Jungheinrich (floor-level conveyors and warehousing systems). She then headed the Controlling and Finance departments of Vereinigte Papierwerke AG and Milupa AG. She took over strategic and operational duties within the Leister family business in 1989. She was the owner of the Leister companies since 1993, where she also acted as operations manager until 2014. During that time, Leister diversified the companies with new technologies and expanded them internationally to create the Leister Group. Christiane Leister died on 1 March 2025.

Image: Leister Ltd

New member of the ETH Board since 2026: Matthias Leuenberger

Matthias Leuenberger (*1965, Swiss, Dr) studied Law at the University of Bern, where he also obtained his doctorate. He worked at the Boston Consulting Group in Zurich and Tokyo for nine years before joining Novartis in Basel in 2004. He held various management positions there, most recently as country president for Switzerland from 2014 to the end of 2024. Matthias Leuenberger was also President of scienceindustries from 2018 until the end of May of 2025, and is Vice President of economiesuisse. His many years of experience in various leading positions in the pharmaceutical industry, among others, make him an ideal addition to the ETH Board. Leuenberger took office on the ETH Board on 1 January 2026 as the successor to Susan Gasser, whose term of office expired at the end of 2025.

Image: Daniel Kellenberger

A complete overview of the vested interests of the members of the ETH Board can be found at www.ethboard.ch/vested-interests/.

Personnel matters

In Memoriam

In 2025, the ETH Board had to bid farewell to its highly esteemed colleague Christiane Leister, who passed away unexpectedly on 1 March 2025. She will be remembered as a committed, forward-thinking and vivacious personality. She was strongly committed to science, research, knowledge transfer to industry and society, and sustainability within the ETH Board. Her input, drawn from her wide-ranging experience, particularly from the perspective of a successful entrepreneur, was always highly valued by the ETH Board.

Personnel matters of the Federal Council

Election of two new members to the ETH Board
On 6 June 2025, the Federal Council elected Dr Martin Keller and Dr Matthias Leuenberger to the ETH Board. Dr Keller took office on 1 August 2025, succeeding Christiane Leister, who passed away at the beginning of March 2025. Dr Leuenberger took over from Professor Susan Gasser on 1 January 2026, following the expiry of her term of office at the end of 2025. Dr Keller has many years of experience in corporate management and development, while Dr Leuenberger has held various leading positions in the pharmaceutical industry, making them both ideal new members of the ETH Board.

Start of the election preparation procedure for a new President of ETH Zurich (nomination to the Federal Council)
At its meeting on 21/22 May, the ETH Board initiated the election preparation procedure for the nomination of a new President of ETH Zurich from 2027. The members of the Election Preparation Committee are listed at www.ethboard.ch/election-preparation-procedure.

Personnel matters of the ETH Board

Appointments to the Executive Board of ETH Zurich
Upon application of the President of ETH Zurich, Professor Joël Mesot, the ETH Board appointed Professor Annette Oxenius and Professor Eftychia (Effy) Vayena as new members of the Executive Board of ETH Zurich.

Professor Oxenius succeeded Professor Christian Wolfrum as Vice President for Research on 1 August 2025. She obtained her doctorate from ETH Zurich in 1997, became an assistant professor in 2002 and has been a full professor of immunology at ETH Zurich since 2012. Professor Vayena took over from Professor Vanessa Wood as Vice President for Knowledge Transfer and Corporate Relations on 1 January 2026. She is one of the world's leading experts on digitalisation in healthcare, data governance and the governance of new technologies in general. She has been a full professor of bioethics at ETH Zurich since 2017.

Appointments to the Executive Board of EPFL
Upon application of the President of EPFL, Professor Anna Fontcuberta i Morral, the ETH Board appointed Dr Adrian Wägli as a new member of the Executive Board of EPFL. He succeeds Dr Matthias Gäumann and took over as Vice President for Operations (VPO) on 1 December 2025. Dr Wägli studied Rural Engineering at EPFL before completing a doctorate in Information and Communication Sciences. His main area of research was the integration of navigation sensors used to analyse the performance of athletes. He subsequently pursued a career at the international consulting company Eraneos, where he was responsible for the Swiss business as a Managing Partner from 2022.

Appointments to the Empa Directorate
Upon application of the Empa Director, Professor Tanja Zimmermann, the ETH Board appointed Professor Matthias Sulzer as a new member of the Empa Directorate. Professor Sulzer took over the research focus area "Built Environment" from Dr Peter Richner, who retired in March 2025. In association with two partners, Professor Sulzer founded an energy and building technology company that went public in 2018. He has been a Senior Scientist at Empa since 2017 and has a research position at the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab in the USA.

Professorial matters
Please refer to the right-hand side of page 47 for information about the appointment of professors.

Professorial matters

Appointment of professors
In 2025, the ETH Board dealt with 195 professorial matters at its meetings. It appointed a total of 80 professors, 52 of whom were newly appointed persons and 28 were internal promotions. At ETH Zurich, 20 women and 24 men were appointed, and 19 women and 17 men were appointed at EPFL.

Out of the 19 full professor appointments, 11 involved promotions of associate professors. Of the 22 associate professor appointments, 17 were promotions of associate professors with tenure track.

Women accounted for 28 (53.8%) of the 52 newly appointed professors in 2025. Over the past four years, the average proportion of women among newly appointed professors has been 46.4%.

The ETH Board awarded the title of professor (adjunct professor) to 17 researchers, including 4 women. In addition, it awarded the title of "Professor of Practice" to one woman and 5 men.

Retirements and resignations
In 2025, the ETH Board was informed of 25 retirements for reasons of age: 17 from ETH Zurich and 8 from EPFL. In addition, ETH Zurich and EPFL advised the ETH Board of a total of 9 resignations for other reasons.

Appointments

80

professors,
20 of whom were women and 24 men at ETH Zurich, as well as 19 women and 17 men at EPFL

Proportion of women

53.8%

of newly appointed persons

The total of 80 appointments comprised:

Full professors	Associate professors	Assistant professors with tenure track	Assistant professors without tenure track
19	22	29	10
8 of whom were women	10 of whom were women	15 of whom were women	6 of whom were women

Risk situation and risk management

As the managing and supervisory body, the ETH Board sets out the risk policy for the ETH Domain. In this capacity, it has set targets for the two Federal Institutes of Technology and the four research institutes. On the one hand, this serves to ensure that the tasks are performed effectively, cost-efficiently and with foresight, and that functional and innovative capabilities are maintained. On the other hand, this must guarantee personal safety and the security of property and other assets to the greatest possible extent. The leadership of the institutions of the ETH Domain is intended to be supported by comprehensive, transparent and up-to-date risk information and risk awareness among students and staff, and the good reputation of the ETH Domain is to be safeguarded.

The presidents of the two Federal Institutes of Technology and the directors of the research institutes are responsible for risk management. All institutions of the ETH Domain have their own procedures for risk management, which serve to identify and evaluate the individual risks, as well as strategies for coping with them and for monitoring them appropriately. The risk management activities and supervision of risk management procedures at each institution are coordinated by a risk manager and/or a risk committee. Each institution keeps its own risk catalogue in which the identified risks are described in detail with an assessment on the basis of probability of occurrence and extent of the potential damage. Here, consideration is given to the possible effect a risk could have on reputation. The individual profile, specific focus and size of each institution are reflected in its risk catalogue. Thus, the two Federal Institutes of Technology have partly different core risks to the four research institutes, and the assessment of the same risks can vary.

As part of their annual reporting to the ETH Board, the institutions provide information about their core risks, in particular their current status, extent and possible consequences. Core risks are those with a potentially very high degree of damage, as well as those with a high or significant degree of damage depending on their probability of occurrence. The reports on the core risks are then submitted to the department responsible for the ETH Domain (EAER). Moreover, the institutions are obliged to inform the ETH Board directly about any extraordinary changes in risk or damaging events.

The effects of an inhibiting political, economic and legal environment, the significant loss of financial resources (budget cuts, uncertainty in terms of funding developments), cyberattacks and major damage to the real estate owned by the Federal Government and used by the ETH Domain, which should be financed via the ETH budget, represent four of the most important risks for the ETH Domain. A deterioration in the framework conditions also harbours the risk of a loss of competitiveness, difficulties with recruitment and retention of top researchers and a decline in the quality of teaching. Other important core risks of the ETH Domain include a significant impairment of an institution's operations due to the failure of important internal or external infrastructure, geopolitical conflicts or extreme weather events, significant price increases in procurement, insufficient suitability of the available buildings/spaces to meet the quantitative and qualitative requirements of teaching and research, violence/threats against persons and taking on excessive financial obligations.

Despite careful risk management, it cannot be ruled out that an institution may be affected by a damaging event which endangers the fulfilment of its duties enshrined in law. In this case, the ETH Board would submit a request to the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), for the attention of the Federal Council, to adapt the strategic objectives or increase the federal financial contribution in accordance with Art. 30(2) of the Ordinance on Finance and Accounting of the ETH Domain following consultation with the Federal Finance Administration (FFA).

The insurance policies taken out by the institutions are of great importance. The institutions must take out insurance against possible losses, subsidiary to other measures, where such insurance is feasible and the funding is sufficient for it. Each institution is responsible for taking out insurance cover and administering its own insurance portfolio. When doing this, they must take into account their specific risk situation, strive for an appropriate cost/benefit ratio and ensure compliance with the federal regulations governing public sector procurement. The insurance cover must meet the standards which are customary in the Swiss insurance market and be concluded with an insurance institution that is licensed in Switzerland. The institutions have taken out property and employers' liability insurance policies, as well as smaller insurance policies for specific risks. The real estate owned by the Federal Government but used by the ETH Domain is not insured, because the Confederation follows a strategy of self-insurance.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Details of the Federal Council's strategic objectives for the ETH Domain can be found on the SERI website www.sbfi.admin.ch under Education/Institutes of Higher Education/Federal universities/The ETH Domain.

Strategic objective

TEACHING

1

Student numbers rose again in the reporting period. Faced with this growth, ETH Zurich and EPFL are committed to the ongoing development of their teaching to ensure the quality of training in the long term. At the same time, the use of artificial intelligence has become much more widespread, opening up new teaching and learning perspectives at both universities.

High-quality training and further education

In 2025, the student and doctoral student population at ETH Zurich and EPFL numbered 40,627 representing a year-on-year increase of 2.0%. ETH Zurich recorded the strongest rise (+2.9%), while growth at EPFL was lower (+0.4%). The proportion of women in the student and doctoral community continued to increase slightly (2025: 33.1%, 2024: 32.9%). The increase was particularly marked at Bachelor's and Master's level, from 32.3% in 2024 to 32.5% in 2025. By contrast, the proportion of foreign nationals fell slightly from 50.9% to 50.5% (37.5% at Bachelor's level, 53.4% at Master's level and 80.3% at doctoral level). The supervision ratio was 37.7 Bachelor and Master students per professor. For detailed figures on teaching, see p. 94 et seq.

ETH Zurich has started to implement measures from the study reform project PAKETH, which will involve the total revision of all study regulations. The content of the Bachelor's degree programme in Architecture has been adapted accordingly. For the purposes of this revision, teaching formats are being aligned more clearly with learning objectives, social and ecological challenges are being integrated more effectively into the curriculum, and even closer links are being established with practice and research in the Department of Architecture. As part of PAKETH, the qualification profiles of all degree courses are also being updated in order to place a stronger focus on skills. The curricula for environmental and agricultural science are currently being modified to reflect this. The same applies to the Bachelor's degree programme in Human Medicine, which will offer a revised curriculum consisting of additional options, a stronger emphasis on key skills and an expanded practical hospital component. The Master's degree programme in Micro and Nanosystems was removed from the curriculum as of the autumn semester 2025. The content has been integrated into other Master's programmes.

In August 2025, EPFL announced the launch of the "s'EPanouir-FLourish" project. The first step will be to restructure the Bachelor's degree programmes in line with a number of key principles. One of these principles is the idea of an education that is firmly anchored in the core disciplines (mathematics, physics and computer science) and the development of methods and approaches for tackling complex and multidisciplinary problems in a structured and efficient manner. In addition, the number of courses with fewer credits will be reduced and a stronger emphasis placed on courses with more credits. This should give students more time for their own studies, for group work and for reflection. This means that everyone will have the same chance of success, regardless of their previous education. There are also plans to involve students more closely in research projects and specialised work to give them the opportunity to learn to tackle com-

In August 2025, EPFL launched the "s'EPanouir-FLourish" project to rethink and develop its training programmes to make sure that it continues to offer its students the best possible environment in the increasingly fast-paced world of science and technology.
Image: Alain Herzog/EPFL
CC BY SA

plex challenges. A holistic and collaborative approach will be taken to curriculum design. To this end, working groups will be formed consisting of heads of department, professors, teachers and students. The introduction of the revised Bachelor's programmes, initially for students in their first academic year, is planned for the autumn semester 2027.

The contribution to teaching made by the staff of PSI, WSL, Empa and Eawag increased slightly in 2025. A total of 25,392 hours of tuition were provided at the universities in the form of lectures, seminars, internships or other teaching activities. In the reporting period, the research institutes also played an important role in the supervision of Bachelor's and Master's theses (770), as well as doctoral theses (1,084). In addition, the ETH Board appointed a full professor at ETH Zurich and an associate professor at EPFL who are co-financed by Eawag. A WSL scientist was awarded the title of adjunct professor at ETH Zurich.

Further education is another important pillar of the ETH Domain's educational programme. In the reporting period, ETH Zurich introduced a new CAS in Infrastructure Construction Management (a twin programme with EPFL, which will offer a similar course in French from the spring semester of 2026) and a CAS in Cloud and Mobile Computing, for example. EPFL has established two new CAS/DAS in Sustainable Energy Systems Engineering (Industry Decarbonisation and Integrated Approach to Energy Transition) and a CAS in Risk Management. In 2025, the university amended its ordinance and directive on further education in order to be able to issue micro-certificates certifying the acquisition of a set of skills or specific knowledge following the completion of short courses (corresponding to a workload of between 1 and 9 ECTS).

As part of the ENRICH initiative, which is designed to strengthen strategic cooperation between the four research institutes of the ETH Domain, the "lead campus" platform offers further education services for the staff of the research institutes and for external customers. The platform was expanded in 2025 to include new courses on interdisciplinary topics such as data security, resilience (mental health) and cybersecurity. Eawag also coordinates the PEAK further education programme, which comprises nine practical courses. Some courses are offered in collaboration with the Ecotox Centre, EPFL and other Swiss educational institutions. In 2025, PSI organised a four-day course on "Electronic-structure simulations for user communities at large-scale facilities", which introduced experimenters at large-scale research facilities to the current possibilities of structure simulations on materials. WSL regularly organises courses on lichens and fungi for field biologists, ecobiologists and cantonal agencies working in the field of species conservation.

Interdisciplinary cooperation, responsible action
ETH Zurich launched a student initiative entitled "Enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration in Engineering Education" (IDEE) to address major challenges related to teaching and learning. It includes helping the departments to maintain the quality of teaching, even with limited resources and despite rising student numbers, and to strengthen interdisciplinary teaching and learning, as well as project-based, cross-departmental teaching.

The "MAKE" projects at EPFL give teaching a strong interdisciplinary component, enabling students to tackle complex projects with the help of suitable infrastructure and supervisory staff. One person was hired to support and structure the activities that make up all these projects. The joint EPFL–ETH Zurich "Doctoral Program in the Learning Sciences" (JDPLS) aims to train a new generation of scientists to combine knowledge and methods from different disciplines such as psychology, education, computer science and data science. The objective is to gain a deeper understanding of learning mechanisms in order to adapt teaching methods to the digital age.

EPFL introduced a first-year Bachelor's programme on sustainability for all degree courses in the reporting period. New ethics courses were established in the Computer Science and Life Sciences degree programmes. Finally, doctoral courses were added in "La durabilité dans ma recherche" (sustainability in my research) and "La pratique de l'éthique dans la recherche en ingénierie" (the practice of ethics in engineering research).

An ethics and sustainability strategic initiative is being implemented at ETH Zurich as part of the "ETH Net Zero" programme by integrating the relevant topics into all degree courses. The initiative is supported by the Federal Government with project-related contributions via swissuniversities. Finally, a new Master's degree in Space Sciences at ETH Zurich, which is designed to be interdisciplinary, has been open to Bachelor graduates from the fields of engineering, natural science and systems science since the autumn semester 2024.

Current developments in teaching, especially in digitalisation and artificial intelligence
ETH Zurich has implemented a series of digital tools to reduce the workload required for tasks such as organising and conducting tutorials, answering students' questions and correcting exams. These measures will help to cushion the effects associated with the steady increase in student numbers. The generative artificial intelligence (AI) system "Ethel", which has been introduced in around 20 courses so far, uses a reference-based chatbot and can comment on exercises (including handwritten texts) and conduct rapid surveys in the classroom, making it an effective teaching aid. The online tool "STACK" allows the automatic assessment of numerical and algebraic expressions, going beyond the evaluation of conventional multiple-choice questions. "STACK" is actively used for courses and examinations in the Department of Mathematics (D-MATH). It has proved particularly useful in engineering subjects, which have large numbers of students and where complex calculations are required. "STACK" is currently also being introduced in other departments. Finally, the interactive platform "LabBuddy" is used by certain departments to help students understand, prepare and carry out laboratory experiments more effectively.

EPFL has launched digital initiatives financed by the DRIL fund to support educational innovation. Work is currently being carried out to develop three specific areas in relation to AI: creation of resources (quizzes and exercises), assistance with daily work (AI tutors that are already in the test phase and chatbots) and support for teaching staff for the preparation and correction of exams. Directives for teachers and students on the responsible use of AI in teaching and learning have also been drawn up and will be developed in parallel.

The LEARN Center at EPFL is developing teaching materials and helping to train teachers in the context of the digital transformation (including the integration of AI) in collaboration with various cantons. The LEARN Center supported the training of 80 digital education specialists in lower secondary education in Neuchâtel in 2025, for example. The collaboration between EPFL (via the LEARN Center) and the Department of Education of the Canton of Bern as part of the BeLEARN Hub for digital education also continued in the reporting period. The Training and Advisory Center for Computer Science Education (ABZ) at ETH Zurich offers a wide range of training and further education programmes for computer science teachers, including a teaching diploma in computer science for upper-secondary Matura schools, a specialised further education programme for primary and secondary school teachers, and initiatives to integrate AI into the classroom.

As part of ENRICH, the four research institutes organised a joint "AI Business Operations Day" in October 2025. The aim was to discuss experiences, opportunities and challenges in the practical use of AI tools with each other and with the two Federal Institutes of Technology, and to coordinate aspects relating to their use, licence management and security. The individual research institutes are also active in this field: Eawag held two workshops on the current possibilities and limitations of AI tools in daily work and programming, as well as on prompt engineering, for example. Empa in turn organised the "Seminars on Large Language Models (LLM) in Practice" for its staff and the "EnhanceR Symposium 2025 – Swiss RSE in Action", which was attended by more than 20 Swiss research institutions.

Innovations in teaching and support for successful degree completion

EPFL is expanding its infrastructure of interactive computing tools (Jupyter notebooks) with specialised processors (GPUs) to simplify teaching in the field of machine learning.

Assessment methods are also changing: in addition to traditional multiple-choice tests, open formats are gradually being integrated, with AI-supported correction. These open formats are designed to encourage conceptual understanding and scientific thinking while ensuring fair and measurable implementation.

Surveys among students and lecturers on the current use of generative AI show that the technology is widely accepted and critically reflected upon, and that many lecturers express a desire to make greater use of it.

ETH Zurich has introduced various support programmes to help students prepare for the basic examination. As well as offering students voluntary refresher courses in mathematics and programming before they start their degree course, it organises special "Pre-Study Events" that represent a valuable opportunity for students to familiarise themselves with everyday student life, start meeting people and obtain information about the degree programmes. EPFL has also strengthened its supervision measures to help new students overcome the challenges of their first year. Support is provided by coaches and mentors, i.e. more experienced students who are tasked with facilitating the social and academic integration of new groups of students and familiarising them with administrative procedures; the initiative "Student4Student" is a good example of this. Specific support is available for female students and for "first-generation students" – students from families without an academic background – in order to increase their self-confidence, their sense of belonging and their autonomy. In addition, the introduction of deferred examinations in the event of justified absences, e. g. due to illness, should reduce the assessment pressure and take better account of exceptional situations.

Strategy for the development of enrolment

The strategy for the development of student numbers in the ETH Domain was adopted in 2022. It is based on the following fields of action: identification and definition of quality and capacity limits, implementation of measures to ensure long-term capacity and quality, and finally, admission restrictions for students. Examples of measures include the implementation of digital tools (see also p. 52) and the harnessing of synergies with the research institutes (see also p. 51). Following the revision of ETH Zurich's admission regulations, the admission requirements for Bachelor's programmes for students with foreign diplomas will be adjusted to the level of the Swiss Matura. This measure should lead to a reduction in the number of applications in the medium term while maintaining student diversity. At the request of the Rector, a working group is developing a communication strategy to make prospective students aware of lesser-known Bachelor's degree programmes with free capacity. In line with the fields of action defined in the strategy, EPFL introduced an upper limit of 3,000 study places for the first Bachelor's year from September 2025 (see also p. 8). The measure is planned to last four years. The situation will be assessed in due course to decide whether an extension is necessary. In addition to the measures mentioned above in connection with this strategy, the tripling of tuition fees for students from outside Switzerland came into force at ETH Zurich and EPFL in the autumn semester 2025. It is not currently possible to make a clear distinction between the impact of the tuition fee increase and that of the admission restrictions at EPFL on the decline in admissions in the first year of the Bachelor's degree.

Increasing the proportion of women and promoting diversity

In December 2024, the ETH Board adopted the Strategy for Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) 2025–2028 for the ETH Domain. Each institution is responsible for implementing this strategy individually. This involves defining a DEI strategy or action plan, establishing practical measures and setting aside appropriate financial resources. Examples of measures include ensuring inclusive culture and communication, guaranteeing equal opportunities in career development and incorporating inclusion into research and teaching.

As part of its "s'EPanouir-FLourish" project, EPFL is adapting the structure of its Bachelor's degree programme and teaching in the first year to take better account of the different profiles and prior knowledge of students, for example. The proposals are expected to be finalised in spring 2026. Various campaigns were organised at PSI in 2025 to raise awareness of female role models and underrepresented groups. Examples include the "PSI Diversity Gallery" exhibition and the video portraits of female researchers that were created as part of the "International Day of Women and Girls in Science". WSL also produced equivalent video portraits. The institutions of the ETH Domain organise mandatory workshops on diversity for staff and doctoral students that address DEI topics. The range of events was expanded in 2025. Examples of new courses include psychological safety at Empa and unconscious bias at Eawag.

The institutions of the ETH Domain also actively encourage interest in STEM subjects among school-age children, especially girls. ETH Zurich, for example, runs the "Up4Mint" initiative, a national project that helps parents and carers to stimulate children's interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The idea is to stimulate investigative minds and incorporate STEM topics into everyday family life in a fun way. EPFL organises pre-university weeks for upper secondary school students on exciting current topics (such as medicine and AI, mathematical thinking, and "Nature, in code"). In 2025, PSI introduced a career orientation programme for school pupils aged 11 to 14 with interactive job stations representing different occupational fields where the children have to complete different tasks independently. The subsequent evaluation helps them to find out which of the vocational training programmes offered by PSI could suit their individual profiles.

In the reporting period, around 30 school classes visited WSL, which is participating in the "Mädchen-Technik-los!" programme. The institutions of the ETH Domain also opened their doors for "Future Day 2025", which enables participating children to broaden their horizons, discover careers in science and question gender stereotypes. In addition to experimental demonstrations and tours, Eawag organised discussions with researchers and apprentices, while Empa held a mechanics workshop especially for girls. Empa also tested a climate challenge simulation game with several school classes. The game was developed as part of the joint initiative "Energy Science for Tomorrow" (ES4T) and is now available to schools as a workshop – at the Museum of Transport, on Future Day and at the "Treffpunkt Science City" event.

Strategic objective

RESEARCH

2

The institutions of the ETH Domain conduct their research activities in open-ended basic research, in accordance with the defined Strategic Areas, and within the framework of numerous partnerships and joint initiatives. Moreover, Swiss researchers once again have the opportunity to apply for European research programmes on an unrestricted basis.

Leading international position in research and in the Strategic Areas

As mentioned in the review (see p. 8), the ETH Board's Strategic Plan 2025–2028 defines five Strategic Areas for the ETH Domain. These areas are geared towards the research activities in which the ETH Domain is ideally positioned to have a major impact. In the rapidly developing field of artificial intelligence (AI), for example, numerous research activities are being carried out as part of the "Responsible digital transformation" Strategic Area. In the reporting period, EPFL and ETH Zurich published "Apertus" in association with the Swiss National Supercomputing Centre (CSCS). This is the first major multilingual Large Language Model (LLM) developed in Switzerland that is available as open source. EPFL and ETH Zurich are thereby setting a milestone for transparent and diverse generative AI. Apertus was developed as part of the "Swiss AI Initiative". Researchers, professionals and all other users can build on this model, adapt it to their specific needs and review each step of the learning process.

As part of the "Human Health" Strategic Area, a PSI team has investigated the molecular causes of Primary Ciliary Dyskinesia (PCD), a rare genetic disease, and established the basis for early diagnosis and more targeted treatment of the people affected. In medical diagnostics, EPFL researchers have developed an algorithm that is compatible with portable ultrasound devices and enables tuberculosis to be detected by automatically analysing ultrasound images. A research group at EPFL has developed "Systema", a new tool to assess the effectiveness of AI models in predicting the consequences of genetic disorders, with important applications in cell engineering and the development of new treatments. In addition, the "Swiss Precision Digital Therapeutics for the Prevention of Type-2 Diabetes" project led by Empa, which ETH Zurich is also involved in, was approved as part of the "Artificial Intelligence in Life Sciences with a Focus on Human Health" project for the Innosuisse flagship initiative. Researchers at ETH Zurich have developed a microrobot that can transport drugs to specific locations in the body and has the potential to soon be used in hospitals. Finally, a new type of exoskeleton for the hand has been developed by ETH Zurich's Rehabilitation Engineering Laboratory. It helps patients who have suffered a stroke to learn how to hold objects again.

Climate and sustainability are other important research topics of the ETH Domain and represent an integral part of the "Energy, Climate and Environmen-

tal Sustainability" Strategic Area (for progress in the field of energy research, see section "Research activities in the energy sector"). ETH Zurich, the "Center for Climate Systems Modelling" (C2SM, a joint initiative by ETH Zurich, MeteoSwiss, Empa, WSL and Eawag) and MeteoSwiss published the latest generation of national climate scenarios for Switzerland in 2025. These scenarios form the basis for the Federal Council's strategy for adapting to climate change. One of the main aims of the project was to improve the links between observation data and model-based scenarios. This will make it possible to quantify risks and prioritise regions and sectors where adaptations are required, among other things. In addition, Eawag initiated several strategic collaborations and platforms in the reporting period to strengthen research focuses, such as the "Lake Competence Cluster". In association with Empa, Eawag has created the "Climate Solution Hub" (CSH) (see p. 14). The two institutions have also jointly founded the "Sustainable Polymer Competence Cluster" (SPCC) in order to network research into sustainable polymers and promote joint activities. Finally, WSL has prepared the launch of the new multi-year research programme "NOVA-City: Nature-based and Open Solutions for Viable, Adaptive Cities", which is based on a transdisciplinary research approach.

The ALIVE initiative ("Advanced Engineering with Living Materials") at ETH Zurich was launched as part of the ETH Domain's "Advanced Materials and Key Technologies" Strategic Area. Its aim is to research and apply the design principles of living systems to create the basis for sustainable, intelligent and resilient materials and technologies. The most important results published in the reporting period include the development of a living building material that actively reduces the amount of CO_2 in the atmosphere. This material contains photosynthetic cyanobacteria, which produce biomass and solid minerals and bind CO_2 in two different ways. In the field of quantum technologies, a PSI physics team played a key role in the construction of a new type of digital-analogue quantum simulator. This quantum processor, which was developed in the "Google Quantum AI Campus" laboratory, makes it possible to investigate complex physical phenomena – from solid-state physics to astrophysics – with unprecedented precision and flexibility.

Thanks to the full activation of the transitional arrangements, which came into force on 1 January 2025, the Swiss scientific community was able to participate as a beneficiary in almost all calls for project proposals under Horizon Europe and the Euratom programme – even as project coordinators – starting from the 2025 programme year. The temporary measures introduced by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), such as the "SNSF Consolidator Grants" and "SNSF Advanced Grants", have therefore been discontinued. In the reporting period, numerous ERC grants were awarded to researchers in the ETH Domain, including 16 Starting Grants, 13 Advanced Grants, 9 Consolidator Grants, 6 Synergy Grants and 6 Proof of Concept Grants.

The decision on the sixth call for proposals for the National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCRs) was published by the SNSF in January 2026. The institutions of the ETH Domain lead five of the six new NCCRs selected for funding and are participating in a the sixth as partners. As far as National Research Programmes (NRP) are concerned, WSL and Eawag are involved in several projects launched as part of NRP 82 "Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services", for example.

Scientists from the ETH Domain won several prestigious awards in 2025. Tobias Kippenberg received the Swiss Science Prize Marcel Benoist for his work on quantum optomechanics and the generation of optical frequency combs, for example. Nicola Aceto was honoured with the Cloëtta Prize for his contributions to metastasis research, while Tanja Stadler received the Doron Prize for her work in the field of computational evolution and for her involvement in providing scientific advice to the authorities during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Andrea Ablasser was named Clarivate Citation Laureate in "Physiology or Medicine" for her contributions in the field of innate immune systems. Sarbajit Banerjee won the Royal Society of Chemistry's Centenary Prize for his research on material structures and chemical bonding under extreme conditions and for his outstanding work in communication with the public, while Johannes Raths was honoured with the Otto Jaag Water Conservation Prize. Julia Vorholt received the Novonesis Biotechnology Prize, Li Tang the Friedrich Miescher Prize and Maryna Viazovska the Fejes Tóth László Prize and Medal 2025 (for details of the international rankings of both universities, ETH Zurich and EPFL, see p. 103).

Research activities in the energy sector

The ACHIEVE consortium ("Pathways to ACHIEVE net-zero target for hard-to-abate Swiss emissions") won the "Net-Zero" tender of the Swiss Federal Office of Energy's "SWEET" funding programme in 2025. This programme promotes innovations that are necessary to implement the Energy Strategy 2050 and achieve Switzerland's climate targets. The consortium is led by Empa and comprises nine research groups from ETH Zurich, PSI and WSL, as well as other academic institutions and private companies. The focus is on reducing emissions that are difficult to avoid, for example in agriculture and industry. At the same time, sustainable solutions are developed for the capture, utilisation, transport and storage of CO_2, as well as for CO_2 removal.

The Energy Science Center (ESC) and the Institute of Science, Technology and Policy (ISTP) at ETH Zurich together organised the Energy Summer School 2025, an

Physicist Tobias J. Kippenberg from EPFL was awarded the 2025 Swiss Science Prize Marcel Benoist for his excellent work on quantum opto-mechanics and the generation of optical frequency combs.
Image: Daniel Rihs

exchange format for researchers, which took place for the second time. The event focused on the following key topics: energy security, technological innovation, (geo)political dynamics and social resilience. The first implementation phase of the "Heating Bits" research project at the EPFL EcoCloud Centre was completed in 2025. The aim of this first project phase was to improve the energy efficiency of data centres and reduce their carbon footprint, in particular through the use of a demonstrator in the EPFL Data Center. As of 2026, the second phase will involve expanding infrastructure capacities at EPFL and transferring knowledge to other data centre operators, particularly at industrial level. The "Coalition for Green Energy & Storage" (CGES), in which ETH Zurich, EPFL, PSI and Empa participate, has developed an interactive map in collaboration with SPIN (Swiss Power-to-X Collaborative Innovation Network) that lists the "Power-to-X" plants in Switzerland ("Power-to-X" tracker). A "power-to-gas" demonstrator was inaugurated in Sion following a joint project between EPFL, the HES-SO Valais-Wallis and several industrial partners.

A demonstration plant for the production of electro-sustainable aviation fuel (eSAF) based on green hydrogen and sustainable sourced CO_2 is being built at PSI in collaboration with the start-up Metafuels. The mechanical installation of the plant was completed in the reporting period. Commissioning is scheduled for 2026. In the field of energy storage, Empa has developed improved graphene-based supercapacitors, which it intends to optimise even further with a view to large-scale commercial production. For its part, WSL has explored the issue of energy supply and investigated how the positioning and orientation of photovoltaic modules in high mountains can be optimised in order to maximise the use of light reflected from the snow. In collaboration with Eawag, WSL scientists have produced a report that identifies significant knowledge gaps regarding the balance between sustainable hydropower expansion and maintaining ecological residual flows in rivers. In addition, Eawag has formed a partnership with Nagra to analyse the porosity of ancient glacial sediments. The aim is to determine whether these rock types are suitable for the storage of radioactive waste, even in the event of future glaciation. Finally, Empa won the "Building Award 2025" for its research into CO_2-storing concrete, which is to be used in the NEST building demonstrator unit "Beyond.Zero".

Complementary expertise and synergies within the ETH Domain

The institutions of the ETH Domain have initiated various research programmes and initiatives to make better use of their complementary strengths and potential synergies. The joint initiatives introduced in 2022 are large-scale projects carried out on a collaborative basis by the institutions of the ETH Domain and external partners. They are based on the Strategic Areas defined by the ETH Board. The "ReClean" joint initiative is just one example. The synthesis of the research results on the expected development of the nitrogen cycle in the course of climate change and in view of the energy transition was the main activity conducted by "ReClean" in 2025.

As part of the "ENRICH" initiative, cooperation between the four research institutes was strengthened in the "Health", "Data & Computing" and "Climate" streams. In March 2025, for example, they organised the "4RI Onco Day" at PSI to network researchers and practitioners in order to identify joint project ideas in cancer research.

The new WSL-Eawag Biodiversity Centre, which was approved in 2025 and officially opened in January 2026, is an interdisciplinary initiative to create and support synergies between scientists within and between the two research institutes. The centre is also seeking to enhance the visibility of biodiversity research at WSL and Eawag among researchers and practitioners. The two institutions are also working together on the "Biodiversity Monitoring" (BiMo) initiative, which plans to develop innovative approaches and identify future opportunities for analysing environmental DNA (eDNA), remote sensing and automated image analysis using AI. Eawag has also set up the PFAS Cluster in collaboration with the Ecotox Centre and Empa in order to improve the coordination of activities in the field of perfluorinated and polyfluorinated chemicals and to foster exchanges with politics, administration and industry.

Following a bottom-up approach, expertise is also pooled within the framework of various specific cooperation projects, often involving partners from outside the ETH Domain. The "National AI Initiative for Precision Oncology" (NAIPO) was launched in the reporting period, for example. It was set up by the centres for artificial intelligence at EPFL and ETH Zurich in collaboration with four major university hospitals and other partners from research and industry. The aim of the initiative is to develop a secure infrastructure hosted in Switzerland to enable AI-enhanced precision oncology – from diagnosis to treatment decisions – while ensuring the protection of patient data.

Coordination with government-funded research

The ETH Board and the institutions of the ETH Domain engage in regular dialogue with representatives of the Federal Administration. Discussions take place at various levels, depending on the need for coordination. The ETH Board is a member of the Interdepartmental Coordination Committee for Federal Government Research (KoorA-RF). Members of the ETH Domain also sit on the Swiss Federal Energy Research Commission (CORE). Participation in the work and discussions of these two bodies facilitates comprehensive information-sharing and the coordination of relevant research initiatives and programmes. EPFL also hosted the latest edition of the "Swiss Federal Offices Day", which brought together representatives of several Swiss research institutions and Federal Offices. The one-day conference focused on the various research mandates, strategies and priorities of the Federal Offices.

On a practical level, cooperation between the units of the Federal Administration and the institutions of the ETH Domain generally takes place within the framework of specific projects. Examples include the POLIZERO project led by PSI (supported by the Swiss Federal Office of Energy, SFOE, see p. 14), Eawag's "Wastewater-based epidemiology" project, which is funded by the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) (see p. 64), or the CLIMGAS-CH project, which is led jointly by Empa and the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) and aims to analyse and measure regional emissions of non-CO_2 greenhouse gases (halogenated hydrocarbons, methane and nitrous oxide).

Ethics and scientific integrity

The institutions of the ETH Domain are planning to adopt a new joint ordinance on scientific integrity to establish standardised rules in this area for all six institutions. The ordinance defines scientific integrity according to four basic principles: reliability, honesty, respect and responsibility. It also refers to the "Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity" drawn up under the leadership of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences. The ordinance will be submitted for internal consultation within the ETH Domain in the course of 2026 and is expected to enter into force before the end of the year.

As far as the institutions are concerned, "Research Integrity Advisors" took up their duties in the departments of ETH Zurich in the reporting period after completing specific training. The aim is to anchor scientific integrity and discipline-specific good scientific practice even more firmly into everyday research. This also involves settling conflicts, for example regarding authorship or data utilisation. In 2025, EPFL's Research Office drew up guidelines to help researchers obtain approval from the cantonal ethics committee for projects that require it. Eawag appointed a compliance officer and commissioned a CMS (Compliance Management System): the role played by line managers in compliance responsibility will be strengthened in the future – particularly with regard to their exemplary function and reporting obligations. WSL and Eawag have also established closer cooperation with the ETH Zurich Ethics Commission in order to harness synergies within the ETH Domain.

The specific educational offering on ethics and scientific integrity for doctoral students at ETH Zurich was expanded in the reporting period. In the future, courses from individual departments will be offered several times per semester or in both semesters in order to meet the high demand from doctoral students. In addition to the mandatory basic training courses on research integrity for doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, a special further education course was offered during 2025 for members of staff at PSI who conduct interdisciplinary research at the interface between medicine and physics. An "Ethics of

technology" workshop was organised for members of the EPFL teaching staff and employees of the university's central services. The workshop focused on how ethics can be integrated into education, research and innovation.

Objective 6 (p. 75 et sqq.) contains additional details about export control checks in the context of international collaborations and industrial partnerships.

Open science practices

The institutions of the ETH Domain adhere to the principles of the Swiss National Open Access Strategy. In 2025, the joint library of the research institutes (Lib4RI) institutionalised and stabilised the Open Access fund. This fund is intended to cover the costs of publishing scientific articles if no other sources of funding are available. The initiative was launched as part of the "National OA Fund" cooperation project (supported by the Federal Government, see also Objective 5, p. 70) and received initial funding from the ETH Board.

In addition, the ETH Domain is committed to promoting Open Research Data (ORD) in coordination with the Swiss National ORD Strategy. The ambitious ORD programme of the ETH Domain was endowed with CHF 15m. Its aim is to promote ORD-related pioneering projects, encourage the development of processes and infrastructure and offer training on ORD. The project results were presented to interested members of the scientific community at the "Advancing Open Research Data (ORD) Practices: Collaboration and Innovation in the ETH Domain" event in June 2025. The programme has also helped to clarify the legal framework that governs the open nature and protection of research data in Switzerland. In terms of institutional measures, EPFL wants to draw more attention to the "Research Software Engineer" (RSE) professional profile and underline its contribution to open science. This title is awarded to members of staff in recognition of their role and expertise in the field of open science. EPFL is also planning to strengthen its network in this area within the ETH Domain and at international level. At the same time, research data management specialists are being appointed at ETH Zurich. Finally, the library and the "Scientific IT Services" unit (ID SIS) at ETH Zurich are improving networking and knowledge exchange between the institution's ORD specialists in line with the objectives of the Swiss strategy.

In collaboration with other Swiss scientific institutions, the institutions of the ETH Domain have launched several initiatives as part of the new "Open Science II" programme supported by the Federal Government (see also Objective 5, p. 70). One example is the "Swiss EOSC Node Prototype" (SENPro) project, which was developed under the leadership of ETH Zurich. It aims to create a prototype for a Swiss node of the "European Open Science Cloud" (EOSC) in order to implement a reference framework for interoperability, compliance with EOSC standards and the seamless integration of Swiss resources and services into European and international science clusters. Finally, ETH Zurich and EPFL continue to be involved in strategic committees at national level, such as the "Open Science Delegation" (DelOS) of swissuniversities and the "Swiss ORD Strategy Council" (StraCo).

Strategic objective

RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES

3

The institutions of the ETH Domain develop and operate research infrastructures of national and international importance. They make these infrastructures available to scientists in Switzerland and around the world. As the new ERI period 2025–2028 begins, the research infrastructure projects laid down in the Swiss roadmap have entered the implementation phase. The institutions of the ETH Domain also remain highly committed to major international research infrastructures.

Operation, development and provision of large research infrastructures

The ETH Domain owns and operates a portfolio of large research infrastructures that are of vital importance for scientific excellence and innovation in Switzerland. These one-of-a-kind facilities are constantly being enhanced and made available to the national and international scientific community. They include PSI's large-scale research facilities, digital research infrastructures and various state-of-the-art technology platforms.

In summer 2025, the modernised Swiss Light Source (SLS) was inaugurated at PSI in the presence of Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin, members of the Aargau government and other guests from politics, business and science. The upgrade, co-financed by the ETH Board as part of the Swiss Roadmap for Research Infrastructures, enables experiments to be conducted with X-ray light that is up to a thousand times more intense than before, opening up completely new scientific possibilities. At the same time, it will accelerate the transfer of scientific discoveries into practical applications – particularly in the areas of health, the climate, energy and future technologies. One example is a new method developed at the SLS which already enables 3D images of brain tissue to be taken in unprecedented resolution. The SLS 2.0 upgrade will make it possible to carry out analyses of this kind up to a hundred times faster or on much larger samples, which will provide even deeper insights into the functioning of the brain.

The number of users of the various PSI facilities is comparable to that of the previous year. One exception is the SLS, which was in shutdown for the SLS 2.0 upgrade project for just over a year from September 2023 and therefore carried out experiments for a shorter period and on fewer beamlines in 2025. The average annual availability of accelerator systems at PSI between 2022 and 2025 stood at 94%.

In 2025, the capacities of the Alps research infrastructure at the CSCS were very heavily utilised over longer periods of time, for example during the training of Apertus (see also p. 17). The cluster dedicated to the "User Program" recorded utilisation rates that were on a par with the previous year. As part of the this programme, two calls for project proposals are issued each year. As in previous years, the CSCS gave numerous users access to its computing and data services via the programme in 2025.

SwissCat+, the joint ETH Zurich and EPFL research infrastructure, expanded its research capacities in the field of high-throughput catalysis in 2025, significantly accelerating the development of new chemical catalysts as a result. Thanks to automation and artificial intelligence, researchers can now test hundreds of promising compounds within the space of a few weeks. These advances are paving the way for more efficient and sustainable processes, e.g. for the production of methanol from CO_2.

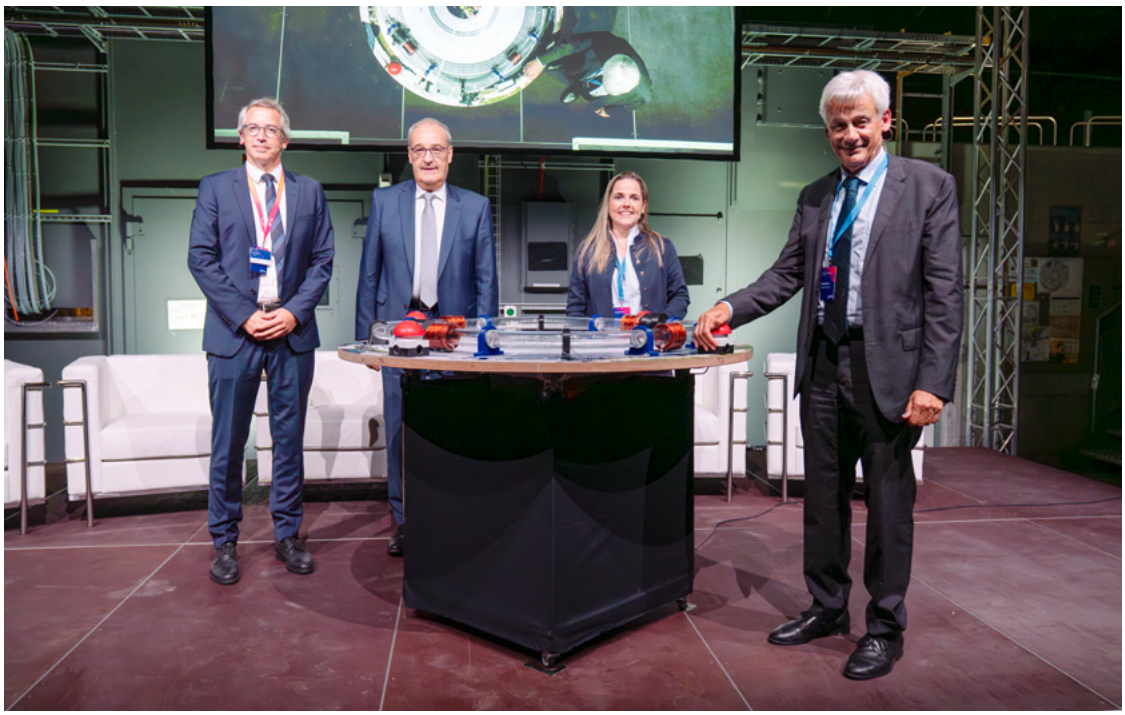
Alongside these large research infrastructures, the ETH Domain also operates platforms and demonstrators to strengthen applied research and accelerate the transfer of innovation. In 2025, NEST, the research and innovation building platform of Empa and Eawag, entered into a new partnership with Omya, a leading Swiss producer of industrial minerals that operates internationally. The partners will work together on the planning and construction of the new NEST unit "Beyond.Zero". The aim is to develop and test CO_2-reduced materials and technologies across the entire life cycle of buildings. Also at NEST, Eawag researchers operate the "Water Hub", an experimental platform for the resource-oriented use and treatment of wastewater from buildings. In the reporting period, Eawag put together a toolbox – a compendium that presents the most important guidelines and technologies for resource-oriented, decentralised and sustainable sanitation systems.

Swiss Roadmap for Research Infrastructures: implementation of strategic projects

The Swiss Roadmap for Research Infrastructures is the Federal Government's planning instrument for major research infrastructures of national significance. The projects contained in the 2023 Roadmap which the ETH Board has prioritised for the 2025–2028 ERI period entered the implementation phase in the reporting period. For financial reasons, it was not possible to implement all the infrastructures listed in the roadmap.

The Swiss Data Science Center (SDSC) has consolidated its role as a national research infrastructure at the service of research, innovation and data-based decision-making. It is strengthening its impact thanks to its new organisation centred around five main topics – health and biomedical sciences, energy and sustainability, climate and environment, large infrastructures and the digital society – supported by cross-divisional units for research, innovation and engineering.

At the end of 2024, the new Alps supercomputer was officially inaugurated at the Swiss National Supercomputing Center (CSCS) at ETH Zurich. Thanks to the HPCN-28 initiative ("Sustained Scientific User Laboratory for Simulation and Data-based Science"), three clusters – for HPC, weather and the climate, and machine learning – are now in operation on the new system and meet the specific needs of the relevant communities. The cluster for machine learning has enabled the implementation of the "Swiss AI Initiative" and the development of the Apertus language model, among other things. "Merlin-7", the new high-performance computer cluster specially



PSI Director Christian Rüegg, Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin, Aargau Cantonal Councillor Martina Bircher and SLS 2.0 Project Manager Hans Braun (from left to right) at the opening of the Swiss Light Source (SLS).
Image: Mahir Dzambegovic/PSI

tailored to the needs of PSI was also installed. Despite the geographical distance between PSI and the CSCS, the cluster fits seamlessly into PSI's network and services.

One of the impacts of the "Swiss Fusion Hub" project to modernise the infrastructure of EPFL's "Swiss Plasma Center" (SPC) will be to further increase the performance of the "Tokamak à Configuration Variable" (TCV), one of the leading experimental facilities for nuclear fusion. The first project implementation phase, during which the physical foundations of the upgrade will be validated, began in the reporting period. The SPC infrastructure plays a crucial role in the EUROfusion work and contributes directly to the ITER project ("International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor").

The IMPACT project ("Isotope and Muon Production using Advanced Cyclotron and Target technologies") aims to modernise PSI's high-intensity proton source (HIPA) in order to increase muon production for experiments in particle physics and materials science by two orders of magnitude, thereby confirming PSI's leading international position in this field and allowing the production of new medically relevant radionuclides for cancer diagnostics and treatment in clinically useful quantities. The project entered the realisation phase in 2025, which involved the publication of the technical design report and the launch of several public tenders for the procurement of key components.

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) has launched the 2027 roadmap process for the 2029–2032 ERI period. On the basis of proposals put forward by the institutions of the ETH Domain, the ETH Board has selected strategically important research infrastructure projects as part of its strategic planning and submitted them to the SERI. The scientific quality of the projects will be assessed by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) from the beginning of 2026.

Involvement in international research infrastructures

The institutions of the ETH Domain contribute to Switzerland's worldwide reputation as an education hub through their participation in international research infrastructures.

The institutions of the ETH Domain play a key role in the "European Research Infrastructure Consortium" (ERIC) at national level. Within the scope of the European Plate Observing System (EPOS-ERIC), which is supported by the Swiss Seismological Service, the "Bedretto Lab" at ETH Zurich was actively involved in the development of harmonised metadata models. It is thereby creating the basis for reproducible research and evidence-based policy-making in the field of geoscience in Europe. Through PSI, Switzerland is participating in the construction and operation of the European Spallation Source (ESS) in Lund, Sweden.

Three of the five instruments with PSI investment have already been fully built. Two of them underwent a "System Acceptance Review" in 2025. As soon as the second acceptance review has been approved, the transfer of these instruments to the ESS will be considered complete. WSL coordinates the Swiss contribution to the European research infrastructure network eLTER. This is a platform for the long-term observation of ecosystems, including the unique WSL research platform in the Pfynwald in Valais. In 2025, WSL confirmed its commitment to funding a Swiss hub as part of the future eLTER-ERIC. The corresponding application for its creation in 2025 has been submitted to the European Commission.

For several years, ETH Zurich, EPFL and PSI have been working on the conceptual development and associated technological innovations for the construction of a new large particle accelerator at CERN. The CHART ("Switzerland Accelerator Research and Technologies") partnership, which is co-financed by the ETH Board and the SERI, entered its third phase in the reporting period. In this phase, development efforts will continue in the areas of superconducting high-temperature magnets, magnets with high magnetic fields and research into synergies with other areas related to accelerators – such as synchrotron light and neutron sources. As part of a consultation on the European strategy for particle physics, the CHIPP association ("Swiss Institute of Particle Physics"), which includes researchers from ETH Zurich, EPFL and PSI, expressed a clear preference for the implementation of the "Future Circular Collider" (FCC) programme at CERN.

Since 2021, EPFL has been coordinating Switzerland's participation in the "Swiss-Norwegian Beamline" (SNBL) at the "European Synchrotron Radiation Facility" (ESRF) in Grenoble, France. The SNBL comprises two state-of-the-art synchrotron beamlines that give researchers from Switzerland and Norway access to the ESRF's new "Extremely Brilliant Source". Following the successful upgrade of one of the two beamlines, a development plan for the modernisation of the second line was drawn up in association with the user community. The cooperation agreement with EPFL was extended for a further four years in the reporting period.

Strategic objective

KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

4

The institutions of the ETH Domain worked closely with industry, cantonal authorities and the Federal Government on a wide range of projects in the reporting period. The key figures on cooperation agreements, patents and spin-offs are evidence of this intensive knowledge and technology transfer. Dialogue with society was strengthened by the "Swiss National Science Advice Network" and the founding of the "Albert Einstein School of Public Policy", among other things. The institutions also continue to take responsibility for tasks assigned by the Federal Council for the benefit of Switzerland as a whole.

Research collaboration with Swiss industry and the public sector

In the reporting period, the institutions of the ETH Domain registered 205 new patents and 92 licences, as well as 318 invention disclosures and 31 software notifications (see p. 101). In addition, 556 new collaboration agreements were concluded with private businesses and 286 with the public sector (each worth at least CHF 50,000, see Fig. 14, p. 102). These key figures illustrate the successful application of scientific findings in marketable products and services. One particular highlight of 2025 was the grand opening of the "European Space Deep-Tech Innovation Centre" (ESDI) in Park Innovaare by the European Space Agency (ESA) in collaboration with PSI. The centre promotes deep-tech innovations in the fields of quantum, data and materials in order to strengthen the transfer of cutting-edge technologies to the European space sector, as well as to Swiss academia and industry. Knowledge and technology transfer (KTT) also gained structural strength in the reporting period thanks to initiatives such as "MatchMinds". As part of its long-term partnership with UBS, in 2026 ETH Zurich will start offering its students and public and private partners access to an innovation referral platform that lists internships and opportunities for student work. The first partners have been active since November 2025. An increasingly important role is being played by framework agreements concluded with large companies that include other elements such as donations or joint events in addition to individual research contracts. In 2025, for example, EPFL signed framework agreements with a Swiss SME active in the field of energy distribution and with a leading multinational consumer electronics and audiovisual media company to intensify cooperation with these companies in these areas of research. EPFL also signed a declaration of cooperation with the Canton of Jura to promote cooperation with Jura-based companies and the ETH Domain. In the reporting period, Empa entered into a partnership with the Canton of Schaffhausen to establish a competence centre for sustainable robotics. In a similar way to the new "DroneHub" in Dübendorf, Empa wants to transfer its research from the laboratory to the real world – in close cooperation with Eawag, Schaffhausen-based companies, authorities and educational institutions. The WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research (SLF) focuses on moun-

tainous regions. As part of the "Snow Compass" project, an alliance of Swiss ski lift operators and tourism organisations is delving deeper into the unanswered questions that winter destinations are having to ask themselves due to the consequences of climate change. The SLF makes predictions about how much snow there will be in different regions in the future. On the same topic, WSL achieved success with the European patenting of the "SnowImager" for analysing snow cover and with the avalanche prevention app "White Risk", which was awarded the title "Master of Swiss Apps 2025". In addition to the Innosuisse funding agency, other stakeholders that play a key role in strengthening Switzerland's competitiveness and innovative strength at a structural level include the Swiss Innovation Park, which networks science and industry at various locations throughout Switzerland, and the national network of Advanced Manufacturing Technology Transfer Centers (AM-TTC). ETH Zurich opened a second hall at the Switzerland Innovation Park Zurich as planned in the reporting period. It contains 4,000 m^2 of space for cooperation projects with industry in the fields of mobility, space travel and advanced manufacturing. The establishment of the "Exploration Lab" innovation programme in the hall was particularly welcome. It resulted in the expansion of a successful pilot project on innovation methodology with the globally active Swiss company Bühler, for example. Plans to open a Swiss "Chip FabLab" are also being driven forward at the Innovation Park as a partnership between Empa, ETH Zurich, Swissmem and industry. This facility, which will house a clean room of around 4,000 m^2, will produce highly specialised chips that will help the domestic industry to remain competitive. The SwissChips initiative, which is supported by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), is active in the same field. EPFL, the CSEM and ETH Zurich are working on chip design together. The "Switzerland Innovation Park Network West EPFL" enjoyed extensive interactions with international companies in the reporting period. These companies were given the opportunity to explore the potential for innovative partnerships on the EPFL campus and at other network locations. The technology mission to Japan with a focus on decarbonisation was a particular highlight. Park Innovaare continues to attract both PSI spin-offs and external companies. A "Metrology and Inspection" innovation hub for the semiconductor industry is being set up with industry partners. The first "Swiss Semiconductor Day", which was held at Park Innovaare in March 2025, demonstrated the great interest shown by Swiss companies.

The ETH Domain played a key role in setting up the AM-TTC network as part of the Federal Government's "Digitalisation Action Plan". The network currently comprises four centres, including ANAXAM and Swiss PIC, which PSI is involved in as a scientific partner. The Swiss PIC production centre for the integration of light-based microchips was officially opened at Park Innovaare in November 2025. In the reporting period, PSI and ANAXAM gave a presentation on their activities to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in French-speaking Switzerland and organised an event with EPFL to obtain new industrial contacts from French-speaking Switzerland. Empa is continuing its involvement in the umbrella organisation of the association and in the "Swiss Advanced Manufacturing Community Events". In addition, it is helping to set up the new "form3D" training centre for additive manufacturing and facilitating access to the latest 3D printing technology for specialists, apprentices and students at higher technical colleges.

Finally, the public sector also plays an important role as a cooperation partner in many KTT projects. In the reporting period, Empa worked with the Canton of Graubünden, energy suppliers and industrial companies to investigate how decarbonisation can be implemented cost-effectively in the Graubünden Rhine Valley, for example. The study finds decarbonisation to be technically feasible and economically advantageous and outlines specific implementation steps that can be transferred to other regions (see also p. 31). With the same objective in mind, the Association for the Decarbonisation of Industry (VZDI) and its research partners, which include the Canton of Zug, 16 companies and Empa, put an innovative methane pyrolysis plant into operation at the end of November 2025. WSL's many years of expertise in applied research in the field of drought were incorporated into the development of a new drought warning platform for the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), MeteoSwiss and swisstopo, which went online in May 2025. The national platform is based on a WSL prototype and has set up a national early detection and warning system for droughts. In this context, Eawag is investigating questions relating to the ecological effects of low water levels due to climate change and hydropower utilisation. In the reporting period, Eawag also continued its wastewater monitoring programme with the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), ETH Zurich and a dozen wastewater treatment plants. The programme now also monitors changes in the levels of drug residues in addition to pathogens. Clarifications are also currently under way for greater cooperation between the ETH Domain and the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) in order to work more closely together in the areas of research and innovation.

The first Swiss Semiconductor Day took place at Park Innovaare in March 2025 with leading companies and high-calibre scientific presentations from ETH Zurich, EPFL, PSI and the CSEM.
Image: Park Innovaare

Favourable conditions for KTT and enterprise

The institutions of the ETH Domain have a variety of funding programmes that support entrepreneurial thinking and action among their students. These programmes have different focuses, e.g. ETH Zurich's Pioneer Fellowship, which specifically supports the founding of deep-tech spin-offs, or the "Social Impact Incubation" programme for technologies and services with a social impact. Since 2025, ETH Zurich has provided "UPortunity", a new accelerator for start-ups (see next section). The initiative is made possible by the support of UBS. The three-month business coaching programme helps start-ups to bring their products to market maturity and prepare to successfully raise capital. The Innogrants programme at EPFL celebrated its 20th anniversary in the reporting period. An "AI Track" start-up launchpad is now specifically promoting start-ups in the field of artificial intelligence.

Every year, all the different programmes result in the creation of a number of spin-offs, such as Kuafu AG at Empa, an "intelligent energy management platform". Araris Biotech AG, which emerged from a PSI Founder Fellowship, was acquired by a Japanese pharmaceutical company in 2025 and was the first PSI spin-off to achieve "unicorn" status. It develops novel antibody-drug conjugates for targeted cancer treatment. WSL and Eawag can also boast one spin-off each: mountainfutures GmbH (data-based solutions for climate resilience in mountainous regions) and OGMO (wastewater treatment and sanitation systems). A total of 70 spin-offs were founded in the ETH Domain in the reporting period (see p. 101).

At a structural level, the institutions regularly revise their regulations to ensure transparent and start-up-friendly framework conditions. The ETH Zurich regulations on founding companies were completely revised in the reporting period and a new category, "ETH Start-ups", was introduced. This is not based on research at ETH Zurich, but on ideas and inspiration gained from training or employment at the university. New participation and licensing guidelines were also drawn up, for instance on topics such as express licences and the use of open source software by spin-offs. WSL has also issued new directives that aim to strengthen the utilisation of research results and support spin-offs – based on Empa's concept. New sciencepreneur status has now been introduced at EPFL. It is awarded to people who work directly on spin-off ideas in research groups and laboratories. Activities are currently being planned to promote dialogue within this community. In addition, the Master's projects on how to set up a company were restructured. This opportunity is now primarily intended for students who have already completed an internship in industry. A new course, "PhD to CEO: Launching Deep Tech Start-ups", was created at doctoral level. Empa has agreed with ETH Zurich that all participants in Empa's Entrepreneur Fellowship programme will be given access to the "CAS ETH in Entrepreneurial Leadership in Technology Ventures".

Raising sufficient capital is of great importance for successful KTT. ETH Zurich has an initiative called "ETH Investor Connect", which was set up to promote dialogue with venture capitalists and other investors, while EPFL organises an annual EPFL Investor Day. A corporate venture capital event was also held at PSI and Park Innovaare for the first time in the reporting period. This format will be repeated by PSI in the future on a rotating basis with ETH Zurich and EPFL.

Dialogue with society and tasks assigned by the Federal Council

The institutions of the ETH Domain engage in direct dialogue with the public on socially relevant research topics. This can take place in different places and ways. The newly published hiking guide "Hiking where others research" on Davos and the surrounding area describes eight hikes to introduce interested parties to research topics and issues relevant to WSL. An app that goes with the book provides additional information, as well as video and audio files. In May 2025, the EPFL Center for Learning Sciences (LEARN) published a comic entitled "Utop'IA". It can be combined with teaching materials to explore the challenges of artificial intelligence and sustainability during workshops in schools. At ETH Zurich, the future blog was replaced in September 2025 by the successor product "Perspectives", which offers ETH Zurich researchers the opportunity to contribute their opinions on current debates in Switzerland and worldwide based on their scientific expertise. The "Ministry for the Future" series of events organised by the Collegium Helveticum and Theater Neumarkt in Zurich is dedicated to current and future scenarios relating to climate change. In February 2025, controversial solutions such as geoengineering were discussed with researchers from ETH Zurich, PSI and the University of Bern, for example. Trade fairs all over the world also represent the ideal opportunity to exchange ideas. One example is the "Berlin Science Week", which ETH Zurich participated in again in 2025, organising special activities for the 10th edition of the fair. Another example is the Venice Biennale, which a research group from ETH Zurich took part in with a living microbial factory they had developed. Empa showcased a contribution on the subject of "Mining the Atmosphere" in the Swiss Pavilion of the World Expo in Osaka.

"Engagement and dialogue with society" is also one of the ETH Domain's Strategic Areas for the 2025–2028 ERI period (see Objective 2, p. 55 et seq.). Several joint initiatives of the institutions of the ETH Domain are dedicated to this Strategic Area. These include "Energy Science for Tomorrow" (ES4T), which features an interactive exhibit by Empa entitled "Emission Explorer" at the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne for calculating CO_2 footprints. The exhibit recorded 15,000 interactions in the reporting period and has been available as an online version since April. Joint initiatives for "Engagement and Dialogue" are scientifically monitored by Eawag. The aim is to systematically record their effectiveness, to investigate which formats work well and to determine which projects need to be adapted in order to continuously optimise dialogue with society. A cartoon series developed at Eawag illustrates the skills required to ensure effective collaboration, for example.

The ETH Domain also considers itself responsible for providing scientific advice on current issues to authorities and political decision-making bodies. In autumn 2025, Swiss ERI stakeholders together launched the "Swiss National Science Advice Network" on behalf of the Federal Government (see Review, p. 10). The ETH Domain is represented in the executive bodies of all the clusters established to date. ETH Zurich also inaugurated the "Albert Einstein School of Public Policy" in October in the presence of Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis. The Einstein School intends to strengthen the link between science and politics and provides relevant educational offerings for students and specialists. It is also designed to promote inter- and transdisciplinary research in close cooperation with political decision-makers and to support ongoing dialogue.

The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences are another important player at the interface between science, politics and society, e.g. with the "Young Swiss Academy", the "SATW Technology Outlook" or the "Science et Politique à table" format. Scientists from the ETH Domain are frequently selected or invited and are able to contribute their expertise. The institutions of the ETH Domain and their members also regularly take part in consultation processes, hearings of parliamentary commissions or scientific advisory groups of the Federal Administration. In the reporting period, WSL's advisory role was linked to a specific event following the landslide and glacier collapse at Kleines Nesthorn/the Birch Glacier in Blatten. Researchers from the WSL site in Sion and the SLF provided the necessary information for assessing the situation and actively supported the local authorities.

Finally, it is important to mention some examples of current developments regarding the tasks assigned to institutions of the ETH Domain by the Federal Council in accordance with the Annex to the Ordinance on the ETH Domain (for more information about the CSCS, see also Objective 3, p. 60 et seq.). WSL is jointly responsible for various tasks in accordance with the Forest Ordinance. In the Forest Report 2025 drawn up in association with the FOEN, it provided information on the state of Switzerland's forests and analysed the changes since the last report in 2015. The data basis came from comprehensive research and monitoring programmes that had been put in place in the last few decades. The Swiss Seismological Service (SED) at ETH Zurich acts as the Federal Government's specialist centre for earthquakes. A new record was set in 2024 with around 2,300 earthquakes recorded. This was partly due to the occurrence of active earthquake sequences, a dense measuring network and improved evaluation methods. However, external factors such as the increased melting of glaciers in the high mountains as a result of climate change and heavy rainfall in the early summer could also have played a role. PSI in particular is dedicated to maintaining expertise on nuclear safety in Switzerland. In the reporting period, the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences published a basic report on the prospects for nuclear energy in Switzerland. Experts from PSI, ETH Zurich and EPFL made a significant contribution to this report (see also the article on p. 23 et seq.).

Communication in the national languages

The institutions of the ETH Domain provide the most important contents of their websites in German, French and Italian in order to reach Switzerland's different language communities. In addition to the services of translation agencies, ETH Zurich also utilises innovative automated tools. The sections of the EPFL website that contain information about education (e.g. the Bachelor's programme) are available in Italian as well as in French and German. The four research institutes also have websites. The most important contents of these sites and all the news articles can be found in German, French and Italian.

Strategic objective

COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

5

The close cooperation between the institutions of the ETH Domain and other Swiss educational and research institutions was further strengthened and expanded in the reporting period thanks to new partnerships, for example with the University of St. Gallen and the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland. There were important developments at the various associated sites of the institutions of the ETH Domain, such as the ETH Zurich Campus Heilbronn and the EPFL Fribourg site.

Cooperation and shaping of Swiss higher education
Cooperation with education and research stakeholders throughout Switzerland is of great importance to the ETH Domain. An important contribution is made by lecturers from the ETH Domain at cantonal universities and universities of applied sciences in the form of teaching hours and the supervision of theses (Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral theses) (see also Objective 1, p. 50). At institutional level, discussions are currently under way between ETH Zurich and the University of St. Gallen to establish closer cooperation in the areas of teaching, continuing education and extracurricular student projects. EPFL has a longstanding close partnership with the University of Lausanne, which involves the two universities making their expertise in natural and technical sciences, social sciences and humanities available to each other. Talks are ongoing between EPFL, the University of Lausanne, the University of Geneva, the CHUV (*Centre hospitalier universitaire vaudois*, University Hospital of the Canton of Vaud) and the Swiss Society of Radiobiology and Medical Physics to set up a joint further education programme in oncology and possibly also in medical physics. In the reporting period, three additional further education programmes on the energy transition and risk management were launched in cooperation with the University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland (HES-SO). PSI is currently establishing closer ties with the newly founded School of Computer Science at the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW). Specific areas of cooperation include artificial intelligence and high-performance computing. A joint summer school organised by PSI and the Institute for Data Science at the FHNW took place in August 2025 and will be repeated in 2026.

In addition to cooperation agreements of this kind, researchers at the institutions of the ETH Domain work closely with colleagues from other Swiss research institutions on large numbers of specific research projects. Two projects carried out in the reporting period are worth mentioning as examples. In a joint research project with Agroscope and the advisory centre for Switzerland's agricultural and food sector AGRIDEA, WSL researchers at the Cadenazzo site showed that overgrown vines and certain insects in forests contribute to the spread of the golden yellowing of the vine. Control measures in vineyards must be supplemented by additional measures in forests to effectively contain the dreaded vine disease. In collaboration with the Universities of Zurich and Bern, ETH Zurich and the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), Eawag collected data on up to 40 water quality parameters for 115 Swiss catchments as part of the "CAMELS-CH-Chem"

project and made the data publicly available to the international research community.

This collaboration is also being driven by strategic alliances entered into by ETH Zurich and EPFL with a total of five Swiss technology competence centres and research institutes funded by the Federal Government, such as the inspire AG competence centre for technology transfer to the mechanical, electrical and metal (MEM) industries or the Swiss Centre for Electronics and Microtechnology (CSEM). In the reporting period, the performance agreements between these research institutions and the Federal Government, as well as the alliance agreements between ETH Zurich and EPFL and these five research institutions of national importance, were renewed for the next ERI period.

The ETH Domain also enjoys particularly close cooperation with the Swiss healthcare system. Researchers from the ETH Domain are playing a leading role in activities linked to the multidisciplinary "National Data Streams" platforms, which are of national significance. The data streams are based on existing infrastructures and include clinical and analytical data, as well as lighthouse research projects that aim to contribute to the creation of a personalised healthcare ecosystem in Switzerland. Various cooperation agreements are also in place with hospitals.

In 2025, ETH Zurich signed a framework agreement to strengthen biomedical research and medical teaching with the "Ente Ospedaliero Cantonale" (EOC) in Ticino, while EPFL extended its combined medical and scientific doctoral programme (MD-PhD) with the University of Lausanne and the CHUV. It also launched a clinical study as part of a nationwide collaboration with the University Hospital Zurich, Bern University of Applied Sciences and the University of Fribourg to design new therapeutic strategies for the treatment of tinnitus. The Insel Group and PSI signed a cooperation agreement in 2025 to expand their collaboration in order to provide patients suffering from eye tumours with faster and better coordinated access to proton therapy. Empa is working with ETH Zurich and the Cantonal Hospital of St. Gallen to fill a jointly funded professorship in biosensor technology. In association with the Inselspital in Bern, it also successfully completed a project for a new 3D computed tomography method for thyroid tumours in 2025. Information on further collaborative research initiatives in the medical field, such as NAIPO, which is led by ETH Zurich/EPFL, can be found in Objective 2, p. 58.

When it comes to helping to shape Swiss higher education and coordination in particularly cost-intensive areas, the ETH Domain makes a significant contribution with its research infrastructures, which are available to the entire research community (see also Objec-

"Shaping the future" – this was the theme of the first "ETH Domain Conference", which brought together around 600 researchers from the ETH Domain to promote exchange and collaboration and to discuss scientific progress on all strategic topics.
Image: François Wavre/ ETH Domain

tive 3, p. 60 et seq.). As members of swissuniversities, ETH Zurich and EPFL are closely involved in coordination in accordance with the Higher Education Act (HEdA). The institutions of the ETH Domain also participate extensively in the cooperation projects funded by the Federal Government within the scope of the project-related contributions via swissuniversities. The ETH Board provides the necessary funds for the participation of the research institutes on a centralised basis. It is currently funding measures to promote young talent, for instance. As part of the "Open Science II" programme, the NAIF project (National Approach for Interoperable repositories and Findable research results) was launched in mid-2025 under the leadership of ETH Zurich and the ETH Library alongside EPFL and six other universities. Its aim is to improve interoperability and standardisation between the institutional repositories in Switzerland (for information on the "ETH Domain Open Research Data" programme, see Objective 2, p. 59). The institutions of the ETH Domain are also participating in the "Equal Opportunities" programme with several projects. Furthermore, the association of the gender equality officers of the ten Swiss universities and the two Federal Institutes of Technology (IDEAS) networks extensively in this area. In 2025, IDEAS, and therefore also the research institutes of the ETH Domain as members, organised a workshop on the "Athena Swan Charter" – a framework for the global promotion of gender equality in higher education.

Review of the structure and organisation of the ETH Domain

As part of the "FIT for the Future" organisational development project, the ETH Board is currently reviewing the organisation and structure of the ETH Domain to make it better equipped to meet current and future challenges. The project is currently in the design phase and is focusing on the specific design of the future structure. There are plans for an ETH Domain with three strong strategic pillars: ETH Zurich, EPFL and the four research institutes. The ETH Board is expected to begin an internal consultation in spring 2026.

Protection against cyber risks

The Swiss Support Center for Cybersecurity (SSCC), which is run jointly by ETH Zurich and EPFL, operates within the framework of the National Cyber Strategy (NCS) and in close coordination with the National Cybersecurity Centre (NCSC) as an interface to all Swiss university and research institutions. The SSCC offers project management support for scientific projects that require the coordination of several cooperating institutions. Following the integration of the ZHAW as a partner institution, the University of Geneva and the School of Business and Engineering Vaud (HEIG-VD) will soon also be joining as partners. The SSCC recently set up a scientific working group to support Switzerland's critical infrastructures, which examines the complexity of modern IT infrastructures and provides cybersecurity forecasts.

Furthermore, an MAS in Cybersecurity was added to the existing further education programme at ETH Zurich in the reporting period. AARC TREE, a project co-financed by the EU that PSI is involved in to improve authentication and authorisation for research collaborations, also made significant progress in 2025. Advancements were made in particular in the standardisation of registration technologies for simplified use in research infrastructure communities. Security measures are continuously reviewed and adapted in order to strengthen protection against cyber risks in the ETH Domain. The "lead campus", the joint education centre of the ETH Domain's research institutes (see also Objective 1, p. 51), offers mandatory training on IT security.

Support for data science

Since 2021, the Swiss Data Science Center (SDSC), which is run by EPFL, ETH Zurich and PSI, has been helping the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) to establish the Federal Administration's Data Science Competence Center (DSCC) as part of the Federal Government's data science strategy. This has also involved supporting data science projects and helping to recruit the necessary specialists. Talks are currently under way to renew and expand the collaboration.

In 2025, PSI continued the development of the "Materials Cloud" open source platform, which EPFL also participates in, and increased its accessibility to external users. The platform is designed to help simulate and analyse material properties before, during and after experiments at four of PSI's large-scale analytical research facilities.

Strategy for the sites of the institutions of the ETH Domain

The strategy for the associated sites of the institutions of the ETH Domain was adopted by the ETH Board in 2022 in order to ensure a consistent strategic approach with regard to the associated sites established after 2006, as well as any future associated sites. There were a number of important developments in the reporting period. The ETH Board examined and approved the draft framework agreement submitted by ETH Zurich for the construction of the ETH Zurich Campus Heilbronn (see also Objective 6, p. 74). Thanks in large part to a donation from the Jörg G. Bucherer-Foundation and the participation of the Canton of Lucerne, ETH Zurich is also currently finalising the establishment of an "ETH Swiss GeoLab". One of the criteria of the site strategy is to ensure a critical mass. Significant progress was made in this respect for the EPFL Fribourg site in the reporting period. Work began on the construction of the Smart Living Lab on the bluefactory site at the beginning of 2025 – thanks in part to the support of the Canton of Fribourg – and is proceeding according to plan. The Smart Living Lab will provide space for 120 employees of the participating institutions EPFL, the University of Fribourg and the School of Engineering and Architecture of Fribourg. The site will be strengthened thanks to these partner institutions and the forthcoming installation of two additional professorships by EPFL.

Strategic objective

INTERNATIONAL POSITIONING AND COOPERATION

6

The institutions of the ETH Domain continued to strengthen their international positioning in 2025 by establishing new strategic partnerships, reinforcing their international presence and intensifying global scientific cooperation.

International positioning and cooperation

The institutions of the ETH Domain are pursuing their efforts to step up academic cooperation and strengthen their position on the world stage. The measures taken as part of new partnerships, alliances and research collaborations, as well as their presence abroad, underline this ongoing commitment to international cooperation. The competitiveness of researchers in the ETH Domain, and of Switzerland as a centre of research, was also strengthened by the signing of the EU Programmes Agreement (EUPA) in November 2025. This gives Switzerland full access to the "Horizon Europe", "Digital Europe" and "Euratom" programmes and to calls for projects in strategic areas (artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and space) with retroactive effect from 1 January 2025.

The partnership between ETH Zurich and the United Nations (UN) established in 2023 combines the scientific and technological excellence of ETH Zurich with the expertise of the UN in order to develop and disseminate technological innovations with a strong societal impact to help tackle global challenges. The first UN-ETH Forum took place in Zurich in October 2025. In February 2025, EPFL and the City University of Hong Kong signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a joint "Institute for Materials Innovation". In 2025, WSL signed several MoUs with international research institutions to strengthen scientific cooperation in the fields of forest ecology and natural hazards, e.g. with partners in Norway, Austria and Iceland on avalanche research or in Japan with the National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Resilience (NIED) on research into snow and processes in wet snow avalanches. Empa, in turn, signed an agreement with the Advanced Institute for Materials Research (AIMR) at the University of Tohoku, Japan, to set up the "AIMR Joint Research Center" at Empa.

The institutions of the ETH Domain maintain networks and participate in university alliances all over the world. In August 2025, for example, ETH Zurich welcomed 24 students from ENHANCE universities to its first summer school since joining the alliance. The programme, which was organised in cooperation with Eawag, focused on inter- and transdisciplinary integration in science, politics and practice. EPFL further strengthened cooperation within the "EuroTech" and "EuroTeQ" alliances by carrying out various activities, for example in the areas of virtual mobility,

For a carbon-binding society: "Mining the Atmosphere" with an Empa exhibit at the World Expo 2025 in Osaka (see also Objective 4, p. 66).
Image: FDFA, Presence Switzerland

challenge-based learning and continuing education. EPFL was also heavily involved in the activities of the CESAER alliance, an association of over 50 leading European universities specialising in science and technology, including ETH Zurich. EPFL is now represented on the Board of Directors of the alliance, which not only enables it to follow European strategies, policies and programmes more closely, but also to influence their design. In addition, the research institutes work with various important international organisations. In April 2025, PSI organised a meeting between the two most important executive bodies of the Generation IV International Forum (GIF) in Baden (Canton of Aargau). The GIF brings together 13 countries and Euratom to coordinate research and development activities for the nuclear reactors of the future. In May 2025, WSL hosted a conference on tree health for working groups of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) at its site in Birmensdorf. IUFRO contributes to the development of sustainable policies and the conservation of forest ecosystems at international level. Eawag has helped to compile several reference collections on water, sanitation and hygiene published by major international organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO).

The openness of the institutions of the ETH Domain to the world promotes bottom-up initiatives led by scientists, which in turn strengthen international cooperation between the institutions of the ETH Domain. The "Centre for Worldwide Sustainable Construction" (CWSC) was founded at EPFL in 2023. Its aim is to make sustainable construction accessible, affordable and achievable worldwide. The CWSC expanded its international presence in 2025 by entering into strategic partnerships with leading institutions in India, South Africa, Morocco and France. These relationships facilitate joint research, teaching and capacity building in the field of sustainable construction. The "WildinSync" initiative organised by ETH Zurich and WSL is strengthening international cooperation in the monitoring of global biodiversity trends by establishing a large scientific network involving more than 20 countries. This promotes the open exchange of know-ledge, technologies and data while developing collaborative local infrastructures to ensure coordinated global biodiversity monitoring using environmental DNA.

The presence of the institutions of the ETH Domain abroad helps to strengthen the image of the ETH Domain and Switzerland as a whole. The three major research programmes on urban planning and health technology undertaken by the Singapore-ETH Centre (SEC) came to an end in 2025: "Future Resilience" was successfully completed, while "Future Cities Lab" and "Future Health Technologies" were extended until 2026. A second five-year phase has been planned for this last programme. At the same time, new, smaller programmes are in preparation on the topics of learning sciences and artificial intelligence. The "Cooling Singapore" project, which was led by Empa's Urban Energy Lab and received a great deal of media attention, was presented at the UN Climate Change Conference in November 2025. In Germany, work on the ETH Zurich Campus Heilbronn is progressing rapidly (see also Objective 5, p. 71). The campus is a long-term project that will take three decades to complete. It will form part of a widespread innovation and research ecosystem that intends to cooperate with numerous German and international partner institutions.

The institutions of the ETH Domain were involved in scientific diplomacy and humanitarian aid work again in 2025. ETH Zurich organised the "Strengthening Ukraine's Science and Innovation System" workshop in association with the Simons Foundation and the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), for example. The aim of the workshop, which was attended by around 80 key players from the USA, Europe and Ukraine, was to strengthen cooperation and to support the sustainable reconstruction of the Ukrainian science system. At the same time, the partnership between ETH Zurich and the Kyiv School of Economics was strengthened with the arrival of a second cohort of 18 students and successful external accreditation. The programme, which combines tandem teaching, online resources and practical training, has seen a significant improvement in academic performance. For its part, PSI is contributing key components for the new beamline of the SOLARIS synchrotron in Poland, which is intended for Ukrainian scientists as part of the "Light for Ukraine" project supported by the SNSF. Building on the CMS ("Cours de mathématiques spéciales"), in spring 2025 EPFL launched "CMS-3" as a three-semester integration programme for people with a scientific background who have fled to Switzerland from other countries and do not yet meet the language or academic criteria for admission to a Bachelor's degree course. The first cohort of 16 students from six countries achieved promising results, with only one person dropping out of the programme and average grades above the level obtained by regular CMS students. In addition, EPFL's EssentialTech Centre increased its international impact by mobilising science and technology for peace, humanitarian action and sustainable development, carrying out initiatives with the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières and partner universities, while deploying practical innovations and technological solutions with high social impact at the same time.

International mobility

International mobility programmes are crucial for maintaining academic excellence and strengthening the attractiveness of the ETH Domain for the best talents from Switzerland and around the world. The two Federal Institutes of Technology encourage the mobility of students (see Fig. 11, p. 100) and scientific staff, in particular thanks to institutional partnerships with the best international universities and participation in international alliance networks. In 2025, for example, EPFL concluded or renewed exchange agreements with various leading universities in the USA (Princeton University), Canada (University of Waterloo) and Australia (University of New South Wales, Monash University). Through its participation in the "IDEA League" and thanks to mobility grants, ETH Zurich enables its researchers to spend research periods at one of the alliance's partner universities. ETH Zurich also promotes student mobility as part of the ENHANCE alliance by offering short-term "Blended Intensive Programmes", among other things. The cooperation projects within the Doctoral Networks of the EU's "Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions" (MSCA) not only strengthen European research partnerships, but also enhance the quality of training for young scientists at all partner institutions. In 2025, PSI was selected as a partner in four new MSCA Doctoral Networks. The Ecotox Centre opened by Eawag and EPFL also participates in an MSCA Doctoral Network.

What is more, the institutions of the ETH Domain attract international young scientists thanks to scholarships such as the "Eawag Postdoctoral Fellowship" and the "Eawag Partnership Program" (EPP), and by organising various international summer schools. These include the "35th European Dendroecological Fieldweek", which was held by WSL in Catalonia in collaboration with the University of Barcelona.

Bilateral cooperation and responsible internationalisation

The institutions of the ETH Domain play an active role in bilateral research cooperation. The "Transnational Red Sea Center" (TRSC), an EPFL initiative supported by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), strengthens Switzerland's bilateral cooperation by combining science and diplomacy to protect corals in the Red Sea. In 2025, it introduced the "Coral Reef Monitoring Toolbox" (CRMT), an innovative tool developed with EPFL and ETH Zurich and adapted to the needs of local partners. Thanks to training courses in Jordan, Djibouti, Eritrea and Sudan, the programme was implemented independently in these countries. New partnerships, particularly in Jordan, Oman and Yemen, are evidence of the expansion of scientific cooperation initiated by Switzerland in these regions. PSI scientists are participating in five European projects supported by the Swiss contribution to selected EU member states to reduce economic and social disparities in the EU. These projects explore topics ranging from improving air quality to experimental physics and smart energy with partners in Hungary, Romania, Latvia and the Czech Republic. In 2025, Eawag participated in a project as part of the second Swiss-Hungarian cooperation programme to support the implementation of the EU Regulation on micro-pollutant removal in wastewater treatment. The FORACCA (Forest Restoration and Climate Change in Armenia) project financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) strengthens bilateral cooperation between Switzerland and Armenia. Within this framework, WSL is working with partners from Switzerland and Armenia to promote community reforestation and resilient forest management in the face of climate change.

The institutions of the ETH Domain ensure that their internationalisation is carried out in a responsible manner, that their risk management is properly coordinated and that they comply with the relevant legal framework and export control regulations. They also actively strengthen "knowledge security" by working closely with each other and with their partners in Switzerland and abroad to share experiences and identify emerging vulnerabilities and effective countermeasures. In this context, the two Federal Institutes of Technology were active participants in the swissuniversities working group on knowledge security, whose recommendations were presented to the Swiss University Conference in November 2025. In addition, the two Federal Institutes of Technology have jointly defined the admission criteria to their Master's and doctoral programmes for applicants from countries or institutions that are considered sensitive. The institutions of the ETH Domain took further measures on export controls in 2025, including the organisation of training courses and the recruitment of specialist staff.

Strategic objective

FUNDING SOURCES AND USE OF FUNDS

7

Reliable funding from the Federal Government and a balanced share of third-party funding are key to the success of the ETH Domain. In the short term, the reduction in federal funding for 2025 has been cushioned by the use of reserves, further prioritisation and cost-cutting and austerity measures. In the long term, however, the reserves will not be able to offset the cuts. This will have an impact on the ETH Domain's ability to fulfil its tasks.

Allocation of funds based on relevant criteria

Funds in the ETH Domain are allocated in accordance with the ETH Act (Article 33*a*) and the Ordinance for the ETH Domain (Art. 12 (2)). The ETH Board agrees on objectives with the institutions on the basis of the Federal Council's strategic objectives, which are tailored to the expenditure ceiling and aligned with the four-year ERI period. The ETH Board bases its annual allocation of funds on the institutions' budget requests, the achievement of goals and the assessment of academic performance, taking into account the financial burden of teaching, research, KTT and tasks assigned by the Federal Government. The ETH Board decides on the allocation of funds in March according to the expected federal funds. The funding effectively available to the ETH Board is then determined by Parliament in December. Any changes to the funding provided under the federal decree are taken into account when allocating funds in March of the following year by way of a supplementary resolution. This was the case in 2025.

The Federal Assembly approved a total of CHF 2,642m for the 2025 budget of the ETH Domain (FedD Ia of 19 December 2024) (see Fig. 1, p. 78). This includes CHF 20m of third-party funds for investments in federal real estate used by the ETH Domain (third-party co-financing); these amounts are recognised in the federal accounts. The funding requested by the institutions of the ETH Domain for the 2025 budget exceeded the available federal funds (excluding third-party co-financing) by CHF 12m. The ETH Board therefore decided in March 2024, and by a supplementary resolution in March 2025, to finance the expenditure surplus from its reserves and allocated the available CHF 2,635m as follows.

CHF 2,529m for the institutions' base budget:

– ETH Zurich	CHF 1,305m
– EPFL	CHF 700m
– PSI	CHF 296m
– WSL	CHF 61m
– Empa	CHF 106m
– Eawag	CHF 62m

CHF 91m for strategic projects:

- Research infrastructure/large-scale research projects: CHF 55m
- Joint initiatives in the Strategic Areas: CHF 14m
- Other projects, in particular the "Swiss AI Initiative": CHF 7m
- Incentive and seed capital funding, other central and various expenses, as well as special funds: CHF 16m

Due to the reduction in the total federal contribution, the ETH Board decided not to finance, and hence implement, two of the planned research infrastructures.

CHF 14.5m was allocated to the ETH Board (own consumption by the Administration and the Internal Appeals Commission).

2025 marked the start of the current ERI period. The Federal Council made a one-off cut of CHF 100m to the 2025 budget and an additional linear cut of 1.4%. Parliament, on the other hand, increased the 2025 budget by CHF 12.5m. Overall, this resulted in a significant decline of –4.6% compared with the 2024 budget. In order to compensate for the lack of funds in the face of the growing extent of services and rising student numbers, the institutions intensified the cost-cutting measures and cutbacks they had initiated in previous years and once again drew on their reserves.

Financial management in the ETH Domain: strategic and efficient use of funds

Stable basic funding by the Federal Government remains essential for the ETH Domain and its institutions, as it protects their strategic ability to act, the independence of teaching and research, and their competitiveness. A good two-thirds of total expenditure is covered by federal funds, while third-party funds are mainly used for temporary projects and positions and for offsetting operating deficits with reserves. The diversification of the funding base is important (see also Development of third-party funding, p. 79).

Thanks to forward-looking financial planning, clear governance and established control processes and instruments, the ETH Board and the institutions ensure that federal funds are used in a timely and targeted manner for teaching and research, as well as for knowledge and technology transfer. Rolling multi-year plans and forecasts allow ongoing monitoring of budget compliance. Close coordination between the management levels ensures that resources are allocated in line with requirements, utilised efficiently and can be reassigned rapidly if conditions change.

Priorities in the use of federal funds are set to ensure the fulfilment of core tasks in teaching, research and infrastructure. The institutions of the ETH Domain and the ETH Board consistently align their resources with their statutory and strategic mandates, while non-compulsory activities are limited or postponed. At the same time, cross-divisional initiatives such as the "Empa-Eawag Sustainable Polymer Competence Cluster", the "WSL-Eawag Biodiversity Centre" and the "ETH Zurich-EPFL Swiss National AI Institute" are specifically promoted in order to provide socially relevant impetus. In addition, clarifications are under way under the leadership of ETH Zurich for potential cooperation in security matters with the DDPS and the institutions of the ETH Domain.

The effectiveness of targeted financial management can be seen in the timely implementation of major infrastructure and research projects, as well as in the stable core services provided despite a real decline in funding. The cross-divisional coordination of procurements (KOBE ETH+) also increases efficiency and promotes the targeted use of funds. Overall, the ETH Domain manages to use the available federal funds economically and supports both institutional and overarching strategic objectives in a sustainable manner.

All the institutions of the ETH Domain have structured liquidity plans in place that are regularly updated and integrated into their reporting. These plans include daily monitoring of bank balances, system-based creditor forecasts, weekly cash dashboards, investment strategies in line with investment guidelines, and quarterly updates of medium and long-term cash flows for major strategic projects. The institutional liquidity plans are determined, reviewed and adjusted as necessary on an ongoing basis. This allows changes to be recognised at an early stage and financial management measures to be initiated promptly. This guarantees short and long-term liquidity at all times. In addition, key performance indicators such as defined target ranges for bank balances or rolling multi-week forecasts are used to increase transparency and predictability even more. Liquidity that is not immediately required is partly invested with the Federal Government.

Thanks to clearly defined processes, modern instruments and close monitoring, the institutions ensure reliable liquidity management, even under challenging financial conditions. Nevertheless, the liquidity portfolio declined again in 2025 (CHF –54m), and a further decrease is to be expected. This means that the institutions were unable to fully cover their liquidity requirements for investments and operations from federal contributions and third-party funding, but instead had to draw on their reserves.

As part of their regular reporting to the ETH Board, the institutions provide information on their multi-year planning and liquidity planning. The ETH Board submits annual aggregated reports to the departments responsible for the ETH Domain (EAER, FFA).

Fig. 1: Allocation of funding to the institutions of the ETH Domain (after taking into account credit/fund reallocations in 2025)

CHF millions	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Δ 2025/2024 abs.	Δ 2025/2024 %
ETH Domain [1, 2]							
Total federal contribution including co-financing of investments	**2,600.1**	**2,666.2**	**2,736.2**	**2,747.9**	**2,642.1**	**–105.8**	**–3.9**
Co-financing from third-party funds					**20.0**	**20.0**	**n/a**
Total federal contribution	**2,600.1**	**2,666.2**	**2,736.2**	**2,747.9**	**2,622.1**	**–125.8**	**–4.6**
ETH Zurich [3]	1,316.3	1,349.3	1,372.6	1,388.4	1,344.2	–44.1	–3.2
EPFL [4]	712.1	725.7	747.5	754.3	720.6	–33.7	–4.5
PSI [5]	336.5	340.5	346.5	334.5	311.4	–23.0	–6.9
WSL [6]	63.2	65.3	64.8	62.8	62.7	–0.0	–0.1
Empa [7]	126.9	119.9	126.2	123.1	108.4	–14.7	–12.0
Eawag [8]	62.2	62.8	67.1	64.6	62.6	–2.0	–3.1
ETH Board [9]	–17.2	2.8	11.5	20.3	12.1	–8.2	–40.3

Additional information on the budget/financial statements 2025:

1 Total allocation of funds in 2025

2 Annual tranches in accordance with the approved expenditure ceiling for 2025–2028 (credits taking into account the expenditure ceiling), annual tranche for 2025: CHF 2,649m

3 Including upgrade of the Sustained Scientific User Lab for Simulation-based Science at the CSCS (HPCN-28): CHF 27m, Phase 2 SwissCat+: CHF 1m, Swiss AI Initiative: CHF 3m, Joint initiatives in the Strategic Areas: CHF 5m

4 Including Swiss Data Science Center+: CHF 13m, Swiss Fusion Hub: CHF 3m, Phase 2 SwissCat+: CHF 1m, Swiss AI Initiative: CHF 2m, contribution in conjunction with the STCC purchase: CHF 3m, Joint initiatives in the Strategic Areas: CHF 3m

5 Including IMPACT: CHF 10m, Chart collaboration Phase 3 und Center of Excellence Switzerland (CH-ESA): CHF 1m each, Joint Initiatives in the Strategic Areas: CHF 2m

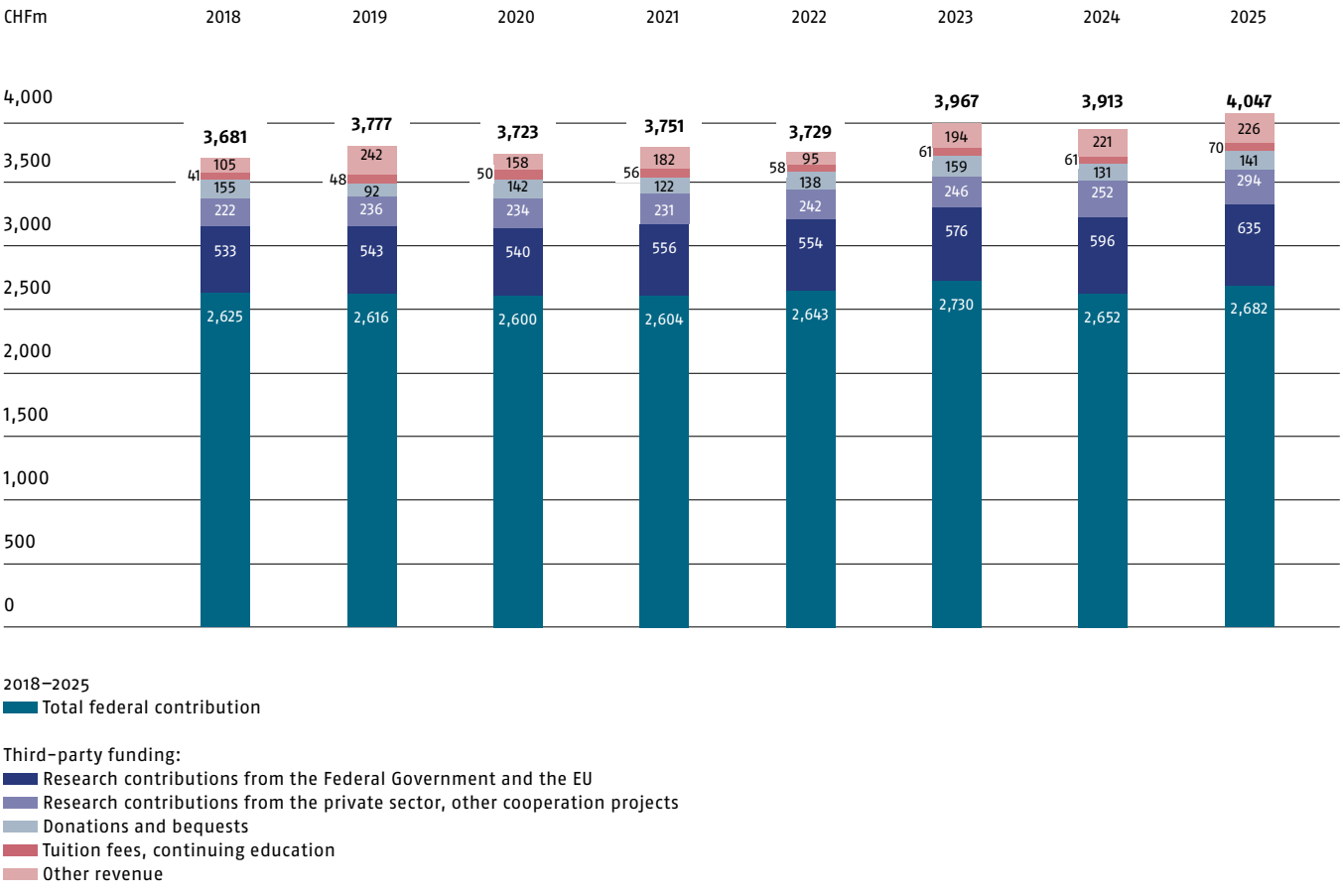
6 Including Joint Initiatives in the Strategic Areas: CHF 1m

7 Including Joint Initiatives in the Strategic Areas: CHF 2m

8 Including Joint Initiatives in the Strategic Areas: CHF 1m

9 Including strategic projects, financing the dismantling of accelerator facilities at PSI (CHF 11m); 2025 reporting period: the low revenue of CHF 12m is due to the fact that CHF 15m was taken from the reserves of the ETH Board to finance the allocation of funds in 2025.

Fig. 2: Development of revenue 2018–2025



2018–2025
Total federal contribution

Third-party funding:
Research contributions from the Federal Government and the EU
Research contributions from the private sector, other cooperation projects
Donations and bequests
Tuition fees, continuing education
Other revenue

Expansion of the funding base: development of third-party funding

The total revenue for 2025 of CHF 4,047m consisted of the total federal contribution from the Federal Government (CHF 2,682m, 66%)[1] and revenue from third-party funding (CHF 1,365m, 34%). With the increase in third-party funds, the funding base remains broadly supported. The strategic objective of a 32% proportion of third-party funding was exceeded by the end of 2025. The diversification of the funding base is becoming increasingly important, as shown by the rising proportion of total revenue that is made up of revenue from third-party funding (see Fig. 2, p. 78).

The consistently high acquisition of third-party funding emphasises the scientific excellence, competitiveness and strategic alignment of the institutions. Private funding such as foundations, donations, bequests and services allow the faster implementation of strategic projects and give new impetus to the thematically focused expansion of teaching and research. In order to strengthen the acquisition of third-party funding, the institutions take targeted measures to support their researchers (workshops, information events and individual advice). The research institutes use specialised fundraising organisations or strengthen their own capacities for philanthropic fundraising. The stagnating number of professorships, on the other hand, limits the growth in revenue from research contributions.

After a period of limited participation, Swiss researchers have had full access to Horizon Europe again since 2025. The aim is that they should once again take on a strong role as coordinators of European projects.

Compared to 2024, revenue from third-party funding rose by CHF 104m (2024: CHF 1,261m). All income categories recorded an increase; the majoritycame from research project income. The revenue included in this figure and financed by the transitional measures amounted to CHF 146m in 2025, compared to CHF 121m in the previous year (see p. 112 and the 2025 Financial Report). About 39% of the revenue from third-party funding in 2025 originated from competitive projects with national research funding (SNSF/Innosuisse: CHF 381m; 2024: CHF 353m) and with European research funding (CHF 149m; 2024: CHF 147m). Other significant sources of funding were cooperation with the business sector (CHF 157m; 2024: CHF 142m), funding for research projects from the Federal Government (government-funded research: CHF 106m; 2024: CHF 97m) and cooperation projects with the cantons, municipalities and various international organisations (CHF 137m; 2024: CHF 110m).

Other third-party funding included donations and bequests (CHF 141m; 2024: CHF 131m), various service revenue (other revenue: CHF 159m; 2024: CHF 169m) and net financial income and income from investments (CHF 66m; 2024: CHF 51m).

The reported research revenue reflects the annual progress made on the projects financed with third-party funding and not the contract volume obtained. For an overall assessment of the development of third-party funding, see the 2025 Financial Report.

The attracted research projects must be consistent with the core mandate and strategy and be financially feasible so as not to jeopardise the base budget. Indirect costs are netted, where possible, and inflation is passed on. The relevant amounts serve to partially cover costs that the institutions incur from research projects. The institutions therefore pay attention to controlled growth in third-party funding.

Reserves

In the context of the strategic objectives 2025–2028 set by the Federal Council for the ETH Domain, the Federal Council expects the reserves (sum of the reserves with internal dedication and the reserves without dedication) to be managed actively and to be reduced to under CHF 800m (upper limit) by 2028. At the end of 2024, which provides the baseline figure for the reduction target, the reserves totalled CHF 941m, and at the end of 2025, they still amounted to CHF 916m. Reserves are being reduced strategically with a focus on efficiency. The details of the use of funds from the reserves are published in each case in the Financial Report of the ETH Board for the ETH Domain.

The ETH Domain reserves have been managed actively for years. As part of its reserve policy, the ETH Board has issued guidelines on this topic for the ETH Domain. The institutions regulate the operational reserve management through internal directives and processes. The targeted appropriation of reserves for determining strategic priorities in teaching and research, for providing initial funding for initiatives or for realising large-scale research and building projects is integrated into the institutions' budgeting and planning processes and is discussed regularly by the executive bodies.

[1] This refers to the total federal contribution of the Federal Government as accounted for in the consolidated financial statements of the ETH Domain (financing contribution of CHF 2,471m and federal contribution to accommodation of CHF 211m). On the other hand, the two approved loans, which are credited to the expenditure ceiling, amounted to CHF 2,642m (financing contribution or operating credit of CHF 2,471m and investment credit of CHF 172m). For explanations, see also Total federal contribution, p. 114.

Strategic objective

REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

8

The Federal Council's strategic objectives 2025–2028 require the ETH Domain to achieve exemplary performance in sustainability and climate protection in real estate management and to ensure that value and functionality are maintained at a high level. This is a challenge, given the increasingly tight financial framework, and makes cutbacks inevitable. Priority is given to the provision of functional space and technology for teaching and research.

Strategy and long-term portfolio development

The medium and long-term planning for the ETH Domain's real estate, which was updated last year on the basis of the "Spatial and Financial Master Plans" (SFMPs), was enhanced in 2025. The various approaches were pursued in line with the priorities set and in consideration of the framework conditions.

Despite a slight levelling off in terms of momentum, student numbers are still forecast to rise, and more space continues to be needed, particularly at the Federal Institutes of Technology. To ensure that the requirements of the core business are met, high priority is given to measures to make efficient use of space and to projects for targeted space expansion. Space efficiency measures mainly target office space. They are implemented in new buildings and, where possible, in renovated premises. As well as taking into account the increase in student density, these measures also consider the changing needs of a modern working environment and aspects related to interpersonal communication and occupational health (mental health). Potential synergies are however explored for other types of utilisation and are implemented where possible. For example, with its "Advanced Science Campus" vision, EPFL is endeavouring to bring its laboratories up to date with the latest technological and safety standards, optimising their use and harnessing potential for densification and joint use by various research groups. ETH Zurich is examining the creation of shared platforms in order to increase the availability and utilisation of its research infrastructures. In line with its vision "Partnership for Space – Creating Space for Development Together", ETH Zurich is planning to strengthen buyer and creator expertise, as well as business partnering. At PSI, space and utilisation efficiency is being improved by clustering usage and by developing concepts for office and laboratory space. ETH Zurich is also enhancing its model for calculating demand and supply trends in order to forecast long-term requirements more accurately.

Due to the ageing building stock, maintaining the value and functionality of building infrastructure is becoming increasingly important for strategic planning in the medium term. The focus is on ensuring functionality and availability for the core business. Large-scale renovation work will be carried out on existing buildings, which will be technically and functionally upgraded, optimised and adapted to current requirements. EPFL prioritises its projects in accord-

ance with its "Renovation Masterplan"[1] and has started planning the first stage of refurbishment. At the three research institutes Empa, Eawag and WSL, the emphasis is on maintaining real estate. Refurbishment projects are also used as an opportunity to examine how to optimise the use of existing buildings and to carry out the necessary work wherever possible. In parallel to ongoing maintenance and refurbishment projects, PSI began developing an associated masterplan in the reporting period.

The legal changes to the environmental and energy requirements that came into force in 2025 were anticipated in the strategy. In addition to building refurbishments, they also require the expansion of in-house PV electricity production and further measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (see Environment and energy, p. 83). These stricter requirements are therefore having a significant impact on strategy in the real estate sector. An estimate of the substantial investments needed and the corresponding financing has been submitted to the Federal Council and is currently being analysed in more detail.

Real estate management in figures

The purchase value of the ETH Domain's real estate portfolio at the end of 2025 amounted to CHF 8.8bn. In terms of value, this represents about one third of the entire real estate portfolio of the Federal Government. The book value is around CHF 4.28bn. The ETH Domain uses around 400 buildings on 108 plots of land. The main usable area reported at the end of 2025, which covers 1,095,967 m^2, is up 2.6% in relation to 2024. The mix of space (see Fig. 28, p. 108) – consisting of spaces in state-owned buildings for own use and use by third parties and leased spaces in third-party buildings (in m^2 of main usable area since 2016) – shows how some of the growth in recent years was only able to be covered using additional leased spaces. The lease rate of the ETH Domain corresponds to 16.7% of the main usable spaces.

Ongoing and completed projects

At ETH Zurich, the GLC research building project will be completed at the end of 2025, and the final report will be available in spring 2026. ETH Zurich has paid the general contractor for all services. However, it has not settled all claims and receivables from subcontractors. All guarantee claims confirmed as justified were paid by ETH Zurich in 2025. Legal action over disputed claims cannot be ruled out. The refurbishment of the office and laboratory space in the HPT building was also successfully completed, and the space is now available for teaching and research. Commissioning began at the HRZ data centre. The new physics building (HPQ) and the first stage of the refurbishment of the main building (HG) are currently under construction. There are plans for a follow-up stage to convert and restructure the main building and to fully renovate the MM extension (main canteen and sports facilities). A two-stage integral dialogue process was launched for the construction of the new HWS teaching and research building. Various properties were sold in 2025 to reduce the number of residential properties as requested by the City of Zurich, and all contractual obligations were fulfilled.

The EPFL Data Center was successfully put into operation, and construction started on the "Double Deck Coupole-Esplanade" project, which will add 1,500 teaching places and 600 workplaces for students. The two new research buildings – the "Biocosme" (COS/SDLV), which will provide space for practical chemistry and biology lessons, and the "Advanced Science Building" (ASB) for cutting-edge research – are still in the planning stage. The study of possible ways to protect against the spread of the quagga mussel in the cooling pipes and to protect the network was completed, and planning for putting measures into practice has begun. Ownership of the SwissTech Convention Center (STCC) was transferred to the ETH Domain's portfolio at the beginning of 2025.

The upgrade of the Swiss Light Source (SLS) was completed at PSI, and the large-scale synchrotron research facility was officially inaugurated. The basic fit-out of the new QMMC ("Quantum Matter and Materials Discovery Centre") building was completed, and the building is ready for the user fit-out. The WMFA IMPACT TATTOOS (replacement of research infrastructure) and SAMBA (new processing centre for the Federal Government's collection point for radioactive waste from medicine, industry and research) projects are currently in the planning phase. The construction of a new data centre in collaboration with ETH Zurich is also being planned. Triggered by cooperation with an industrial partner, the need for a nuclear test facility to carry out an experiment as part of the BALDER project was announced and initial planning steps were taken.

A project for the partial refurbishment of a laboratory building at Empa was launched. The aim is to make cost-effective repairs to maintain value and functionality and to make improvements in the area of personal safety (fire protection/earthquakes). The replacement of lighting using LED technology continued at the Dübendorf and St. Gallen sites to increase energy efficiency and reduce operating costs and greenhouse gas emissions. The replacement of the building management system was started for the same reason. Both measures are also being implemented at Eawag at the same time. Eawag's "Limnion" project at the Kastanienbaum site to build a new office, storage and laboratory building was still blocked by an objection in 2025. The refurbishment of the WSL workshop building in Birmensdorf is being planned

[1] Masterplan for the renovation of EPFL buildings and infrastructure and for the densification of the Campus, EPFL 2024, in French only.

so that economic use can be made of the building for another 20 years. In addition, measures to expand the PV system and develop infrastructure for e-mobility were driven forward at the Birmensdorf site. The seismic retrofitting of the buildings in Davos is currently being finalised. As part of the construction measures in Davos, modernisation work was also carried out on the offices to create an open office landscape in the New Work style.

Investments and source of funds in 2025

The 2025 investment credit for buildings in the ETH Domain amounted to CHF 189.52m; this is due to a credit reallocation to the financial contribution of CHF 18.0 million (9.5 %). It was therefore lower than in the previous year (CHF 299.39m) and below the long-term average. Dedicated reserves of CHF 17.0m were created. Of the investments, 38.8% related to new buildings and 61.2% to maintaining value and functionality. CHF 20m in third-party funds were used for federal real estate (co-financing, HPQ project). These amounts are included in the investment loan. CHF 81.67m from the federal financial contribution was used for investments in user-specific operating facilities which will be owned by the institutions. These investments were supplemented by third-party funding of CHF 0.55m. The total volume of construction authorised by the ETH Domain in 2025 amounted to CHF 236.74m (see Fig. 30, p. 109). The ETH Domain received an accommodation credit of CHF 211.4m in 2025 for the imputed rent on federal real estate. The Source of funds chart (see Fig. 25, p. 107) shows the sources of funds for the buildings in the ETH Domain since 2015. The annual fluctuations are dependent on the type of grant and the status of the current construction projects.

Construction programme for 2026

In terms of new construction projects planned as part of new builds, extensions or refurbishments, in 2025 the ETH Domain applied for the necessary contingent credits via its annual construction programme. The 2026 construction programme totalling CHF 347.9m (total credit), approved by the Federal Parliament on 19 December 2025, includes a number of major projects: EPFL applied for a contingent credit of CHF 200.0m for the ASB project. The planned new research building will create space for future-oriented quantum physics, which cannot currently be carried out in the existing EPFL buildings. The building will contain offices, laboratories and platforms for interdisciplinary cooperation and will meet high sustainability standards. EPFL also applied for a contingent credit of CHF 11.0m for the "Bassenges" project. The aim is to make strategic space available for the core business of teaching and research. The existing historic and partially listed buildings will be renovated. ETH Zurich applied for a contingent credit of CHF 40.4m for the Wolfgang-Pauli-Strasse redesign project, which comprises the renovation and upgrade of the main traffic axis and the associated utility and energy supply lines on the Hönggerberg campus. The site will be optimised to ensure that it can cope with future requirements, to improve efficiency and to increase traffic safety.

A contingent credit of CHF 96.5 million was requested for additional real estate projects in the ETH Domain. This amount will be used to carry out construction projects costing up to CHF 10m or to plan projects over CHF 10m.

Maintaining value and functionality

The ETH Board is legally obliged to maintain the value and functionality of the properties of the ETH Domain, and this is in the interests of the Federal Government as the owner of the real estate and of the ETH Domain as the user. The refurbishment work on the historical building stock is considerable in some cases, leading to challenging projects. Renovation projects in excess of CHF 571.7m are currently included in the 2026 – 2029 real estate investment plan. They generated an investment volume of around CHF 94.6m in 2025. In addition, annual maintenance work amounting to over CHF 61.0m on average was funded from the federal financial contribution. Despite the advanced age of some of the buildings and their intensive use, the current condition value of 81.0% determined in 2025 remains high in relation to the new value (see Fig. 26, p. 107). Consequently, the ETH Domain has demonstrated that it is using the building stock provided by the Federal Government responsibly and sustainably.

In the "Minimum standards for portfolio management" project (see Governance, p. 83), the strategic maintenance of value and functionality was reviewed and various approaches were put forward. These suggestions are now being coordinated with the FFA and the FOBL as the owner's representative.

Coordination tasks

In 2025, the Real Estate department of the ETH Board closely coordinated the interests of the institutions of the ETH Domain with those of the Federal Administration in the development of norms, standards and guidelines for the planning, realisation and operation of real estate. Key topics included the further development of structural reforms, the definition of a methodology for the application of Life Cycle Costing in construction projects for the Federal Government, the expansion of digitalisation in real estate management and the safeguarding of the energy supply for energy-intensive teaching and research institutions. Together with its institutions, the ETH Board played a coordinating and defining role in the Federal Government's exemplary function with regard to energy and the environment, including in "Exemplary Energy and Climate" (EEC). Moreover, the ETH Board is a member of the Coordination Conference of Public-Sector Building and Real Estate Authorities (KBOB) and the

Office for University Buildings (FHB) of the University Council of the Swiss University Conference.

Governance
The further development of the long-term management of the ETH Domain's real estate portfolio is of strategic importance. The ETH Board and the institutions launched the "Minimum standards for portfolio management" project for this purpose in 2025. The project formally describes and defines the functionality, objectives, key methods and deliverables. The content is continuously developed and harmonised in the course of workshops involving the institutions and external experts. On the initiative of the President of the ETH Board and the Director of the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics (FOBL), a mandate for real estate cooperation between the ETH Board and the FOBL was issued in 2025. Workshops were held to identify possible fields of action for coordination, exchanges of experience and cooperation between the two building and real estate authorities (BLO) and the institutions of the ETH Domain, and to evaluate their potential. An implementation plan is available. The SFMPs for the 2025–2036 period were reviewed by the FOBL in accordance with the Ordinance on Federal Real Estate Management and Logistics (REMFLO) and brought into force by the President of the ETH Board. The ETH Board intends to enhance and update the minimum standards for real estate projects. To this end, the findings and recommendations available from previous SFAO audits of individual construction projects were analysed in 2025 and supplemented with the expertise of an external expert. On this basis, the ETH Board will work with the institutions to incorporate new best-practice approaches into project management.

Environment and energy

In the 2025–2028 strategic objectives, the Federal Council obliges the ETH Domain to actively support the Federal Government's climate and energy strategy and to develop a plan to achieve net-zero emissions (climate neutrality) by 2040. Following the entry into force of new Federal Council or statutory requirements, such as the Climate and Innovation Act (CIA) and the Federal Government's climate package[2], planning is geared towards setting a binding, long-term reduction path towards net zero. The Federal Government's exemplary role forms the guiding framework for this planning. The institutions are consolidating their strategies in the areas of buildings, energy, mobility, processes and nutrition, and are implementing targeted measures. The cost study to outline measures for the Federal Government's exemplary role regarding energy and the environment, which initially set out measures to reduce direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions in buildings in the ETH Domain, is to be expanded to include measures and investments to avoid CO_2 emissions from teaching and research activities and to estimate indirect Scope 3 emissions. According to the current schedule, the findings of the extended cost study will be incorporated into the 2029–2032 ERI planning.

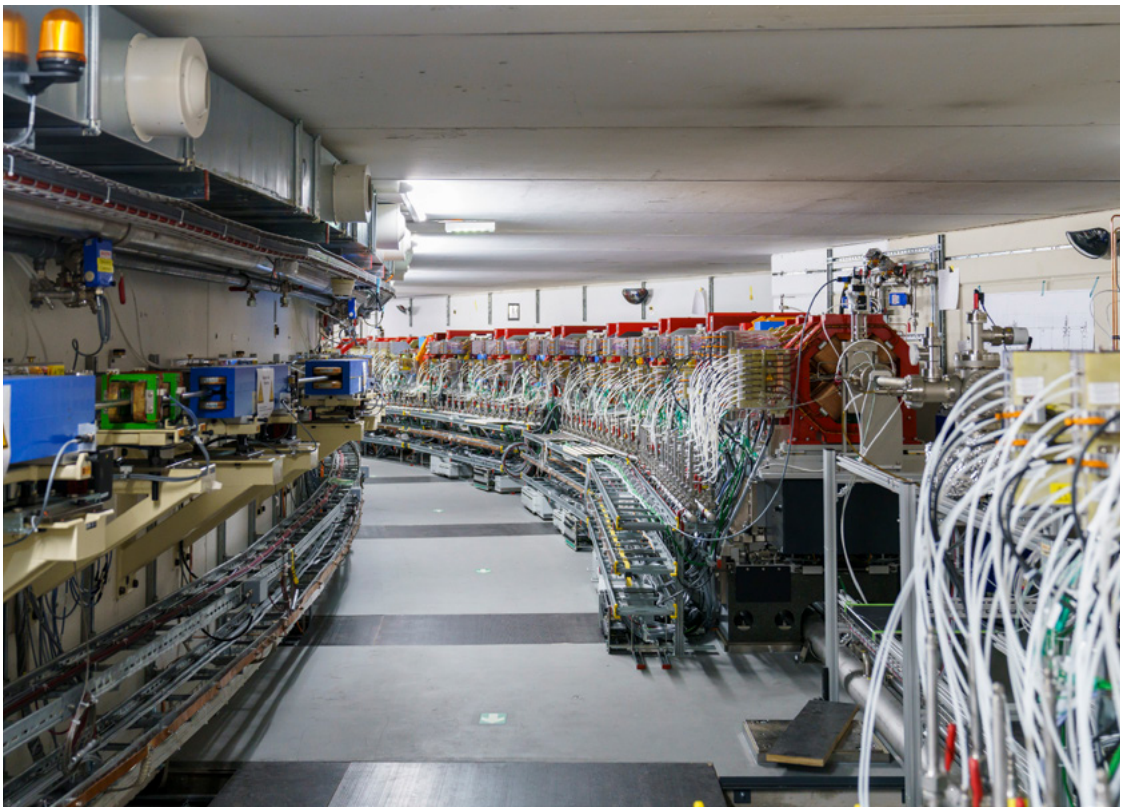
Greenhouse gas emissions and net-zero roadmaps
All six institutions have strategies in place to improve their carbon footprint. With the launch of the "ETH Net Zero" programme, ETH Zurich is pursuing the ambitious goal of reducing direct greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2040. Indirect emissions (Scope 3) are to be reduced by 20 % by 2030, and even to net zero by 2040 if possible. EPFL has set itself the goal of reducing its Scope 2 emissions by 50 % by 2030 compared to 2006. PSI recorded an outstanding performance in terms of direct emissions (Scope 1 and 2), which it limits to 60 kg CO_2eq per FTE per year thanks to the use of waste heat and renewable energy. Empa and Eawag have reduced their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by over 65 % since 2006. WSL has already achieved net zero in the building sector and is now also implementing a comprehensive CO_2 strategy until 2040. The achievement of the institutions' objectives is subject to technical feasibility and financial viability.

Renewable energies and processes
Reducing energy-related emissions remains one of the most important levers in this area. The institutions are making significant progress towards the legally required increase in their own electricity pro-

Strategic real estate management in the ETH Domain

Efficient building infrastructure is a key requirement for enabling the two Federal Institutes of Technology and the four research institutes to achieve their objectives in teaching and research and to meet the required quality standards. The real estate of the ETH Domain is owned by the Federal Government. The investment credit for construction is earmarked annually in the budget. It appears in the state accounts under the Federal Department of Finance (specifically the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics, FOBL). As one of the Federal Government's three building and real estate authorities, the ETH Board assumes the ownership role in a fiduciary capacity. It is responsible for the real estate portfolio of the ETH Domain and consults the institutions on strategic real estate management in order to ensure the functionality of the real estate portfolio in the medium and long term and to preserve its cultural value. Needs-based planning and the timely realisation of new construction projects, conversions and refurbishments are at the heart of its remit. The preservation of value and functionality is the result of needs-based planning geared towards cost/benefit considerations – also in the interests of the owner – as well as corresponding controlling at ETH Board level. The owner is kept informed by way of reports from the ETH Board.

[2] "Federal Act on Climate Protection Targets, Innovation and Strengthening Energy Security": particularly Art. 10 Exemplary role of the Federal Government and the Cantons.



SLS 2.0: the machine sector with permanent magnets – crucial for high efficiency and significant energy savings.
Image: PSI

duction[3]. ETH Zurich intends to transform its heating and cooling supply by 2030. To do so, the Anergy Grid on the Hönggerberg campus is being expanded, and fossil fuels are being replaced by the use of low-temperature waste heat. PSI operates PV systems with a production of over 3 GWh per year, which is already half of the target set for 2034. Empa and Eawag commissioned a seasonal borehole heat exchanger in 2025. Along with other measures still to come, the aim is to achieve complete independence from fossil fuels by 2030. In 2025, EPFL set itself the target of expanding its PV systems by around 823 MWh per year, which corresponds to a surface area of 3,600 m^2. WSL is planning to renovate the last of its older buildings by 2030. At the same time, efficiency programmes are being driven forward at all the institutions. Progress was also made in research. PSI is optimising large-scale plants such as HIPA and SULTAN, while EPFL is introducing new tools for reducing laboratory emissions with its CO_2 calculator for laboratories.

Mobility, nutrition and the circular economy

All the institutions are endeavouring to implement measures to reduce air travel and promote sustainable mobility in commuter traffic. PSI has introduced a binding flight guideline, which includes the obligation to fully offset business-class flights with Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) and aims to reduce air travel by 30% by 2030 in relation to 2019. Empa and Eawag are currently working on a flight guideline in an effort to halve air traffic by 2030. EPFL and ETH Zurich are focusing on a balanced combination of political measures, awareness-raising and the use of electric vehicle fleets. The availability of more vegetarian options is being encouraged in the canteens, food waste is being reduced, and additional nudging measures are being implemented (pricing and order of presentation).

The circular economy is also becoming increasingly relevant as a result of the entry into force of the amended Environmental Protection Act (EPA)[4]. In 2025, ETH Zurich joined the "Charter for Circular Construction" and is implementing various initiatives for the upcycling and reuse of materials. EPFL is preparing a digital reuse platform for 2026 and evaluates its main suppliers according to sustainability criteria. Empa and Eawag have introduced circular construction approaches (wood and clay reuse) and increased the recycling rate of IT resources. PSI has reduced its paper consumption by 16%, while WSL is participating in a laboratory plastic recycling project as a pilot institution.

Biodiversity and climate adaptation

The institutions ensure the further development of the areas of the ETH Domain with different environmental priorities. EPFL is investing in wetland biotopes, biosolar roofs, climate-resistant trees and comprehensive rainwater management. Empa and Eawag are cur-

[3] "Federal Act on a Secure Electricity Supply with Renewable Energies" (revised Energy Act and Electricity Supply Act): particularly Art. 45*b* EnA Utilisation of solar energy in federal infrastructure.
[4] "Federal Act on the Protection of the Environment": Art. 10*h* Conserving natural resources and improving the circular economy.

rently working on a campus masterplan focusing on biodiversity, heat reduction and water management. Projects such as the construction of bird and bat boxes are being realised as part of the masterplan. ETH Zurich is expanding its areas for the promotion of biodiversity, carrying out biodiversity monitoring with apprentices and taking part in the "Photo Contest Biodiversity in Action". WSL has been using meteoric water for irrigation for over 30 years and integrates natural processes into its site strategy. Other climate adaptation measures include a forest fire risk analysis at PSI and a microclimate simulation at ETH Zurich's Hönggerberg campus.

2025 lighthouse project: SLS 2.0 – more efficient, more brilliant, more sustainable

Thanks to the modernisation of the Swiss Light Source (SLS), PSI is setting new standards for large-scale research facilities (see also Objective 3, p. 60). The new electron storage ring provides light for experiments that is up to 1,000 times more intense than before – with around 35 % less energy consumption, which corresponds to savings of around 7 GWh per year.

This is made possible by a series of targeted innovations: instead of current-intensive electromagnets, powerful permanent magnets are used to keep the electron beam on its path. The previous tube-based high-frequency systems have been replaced by efficient semiconductor solutions. The infrastructure and ancillary systems have also been fully optimised. The cooling system utilises groundwater and water from the River Aare, as well as a refrigeration machine with free cooling. Regulated pumps and pressure control improve cooling distribution. The waste heat is fed into a district heating network via a heat recovery system to help implement the heating masterplan.

As part of the roof refurbishment, a photovoltaic system has been installed, which is expected to generate around 900 MWh of solar power per year – enough energy for around 300 average households. The first year of operation of SLS 2.0 is an impressive demonstration of how technological innovation, systematic thinking and sustainability are intertwined: the defined efficiency and climate targets have already been exceeded.

Community awareness-raising and outlook

A large number of programmes in 2025 focused on cultural change and participation. The institutions of the ETH Domain held workshops and campaigns and organised a "Net Zero Day". They expanded their e-learning courses for staff, organised various community events (e.g. Bike to Work, Cleanup Days and PFAS film screenings) and raised awareness about sustainable commuter mobility with mobility campaigns and surveys.

By 2030, the focus will be on defining and gradually implementing the reduction pathways, expanding renewable energies, increasing efficiency, ensuring sustainable mobility and enhancing procurement and laboratory processes. The institutions will continue to deepen their knowledge and experience base, supported by current research and its application, particularly in the relatively untried areas of Scope 3 balancing and negative emissions technology (NET) strategies. With the help of improved monitoring by an enhanced environmental management system, the ETH Domain is consistently focusing its contribution to achieving the national climate targets on the year 2040.

Strategic objective

WORKING CONDITIONS, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND YOUNG SCIENTISTS

9

In 2025, the institutions of the ETH Domain addressed a wide range of topics such as the "Leadership Companion" AI tool, projects for people with disabilities, the prevention of psychosocial risks via the digitalisation of administrative processes, the introduction of electronic personnel files and recruitment via social media.

Respectful behaviour at all hierarchical levels
Inappropriate behaviour can now be reported anonymously at ETH Zurich. The university also organised a conference for university contact and advice centres from the D-A-CH region, during which participants from 40 universities discussed current challenges and solutions. As part of the Respect programme, members of ETH Zurich received training in respectful and inclusive cooperation. The university and its professors delved deeper into the subject of welfare and the duty to act in conflict situations. The "Leadership Companion" AI tool is the ideal individual sparring partner for leadership topics. EPFL created the "Vice-Presidency for Human Development" (VPH) to harness synergies and centralise services for staff, e. g. in the areas of well-being & inclusion. EPFL evaluated the existing system to strengthen prevention and support for coping with psychosocial risks in order to protect individuals. Internal guidelines were revised and a personnel committee was elected. This committee introduced the "Legal Responsibility" e-learning module, supplemented with a face-to-face module.

At both the PSI retreat and the Leadership Day, the topics of dealing with change and promoting a feedback culture were discussed, with internal and external presentations to round off the programme. The subjects tackled by the WSL management included the success factors of leadership, innovation, understanding of roles, and leadership skills of the future. Management training, coaching sessions and workshops were also organised. Various managers from the research institutes completed the CAS Leadership in Science. At Empa, the principles of collaboration are taught online, practical leadership seminars and forums are held, and coaching sessions are provided for managers. Leadership topics are explored in presentations designed specifically for line managers. Eawag further expanded its coaching programmes and offered new training courses in communication techniques and conflict management.

Development, further education and career planning
ETH Zurich promotes continuous learning and personal development with the Lifelong Learning Hub (L3H) and programmes such as "Growth Mindset". It has created the "Leadership in Practice" online format for managers; selected topics such as the "Dialog" staff appraisal were discussed in "Leadership Circles". ETH Zurich supports scientific staff by offering skills development courses as part of the "Managing your Career" programme. Thanks to the creation of the VPH, EPFL is affirming a cross-disciplinary and integrative vision of career support. EPFL's Leadership and Development department (LDEV) comprises the Employability and Development Center and the Language Center. Leadership skills were covered in individual modules of the "Parcours du développement du leadership" programme, with personal leadership skills for staff, team leadership for team leaders, organisational leadership

for managers and strategic leadership for senior managers. The university also offered team coaching and peer group coaching.

The ongoing development of the CAS Leadership in Science training programme for managers at the research institutes continued. This CAS is now integrated into the "lead campus", the joint education centre of the four research institutes of the ETH Domain. In addition to individual development plans, PSI continued the tenure-track process, the Expert Development programme, the Professional Development programme for doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, and the AALP programme for senior staff at the ETH Domain. For the first time, WSL was able to offer 1:1 counselling sessions at the CC4RI Career Center, and gave advice on the application process, interviews and information on Switzerland as a place of work. At Empa, the previous staff appraisal process was replaced with discussions about development, giving priority to professional and personal goals. Measures were developed and introduced to provide individual support for future task fulfilment and to maintain employability. Prospects and development goals were discussed, and opportunities were outlined for training and further education. Eawag raised awareness among its managers and specialists about how to deal with acute psychological stress among employees by offering targeted courses. The Cluster Hire initiative made it possible to create group leadership positions on the tenure track in order to secure research work in the long term. At the same time, the tenure track procedure was adapted to allow for more diverse academic careers and profiles.

Competitiveness through flexible forms of work

ETH Zurich conducted an employee survey in the reporting period. The results regarding leadership, support, compatibility and respect showed that the existing flexible options that enable members of staff to work part-time are highly appreciated. EPFL introduced job sharing for management positions in order to promote a better work-life balance and greater diversity in management positions. The university was recognised as the best employer in 2025 by "statistica R". In the course of the "Walk & Talk" pilot project, meetings were held on foot for the first time to promote well-being and collaboration. PSI adapted its HR processes and structures in 2025. A competence centre for recruitment and employer branding was created in order to meet future trends and strengthen the company's attractiveness and competitiveness. In addition to established options such as part-time work, working from home, job sharing and annualised working hours, WSL offers flexible daily working hours, as well as a breastfeeding and resting room. At Empa, too, operational activities can be carried out at any time and place. Empa managers gave staff room to be creative and established a climate that facilitated unbiased collaboration and mutual trust. In addition to its existing offerings, Eawag created further flexibility for its employees to improve their work-life balance.

Diversity, equality and women in management positions

The institutions' 2025–2028 action plans for Diversity, Equality & Inclusion (DEI) are based on the corresponding strategy of the ETH Domain and the Federal Government's Gender Equality Strategy 2030. They reflect developments in society as a whole, scientific findings and legal requirements that establish equality, anti-discrimination and participation as fundamental principles and aim to systematically enhance DEI. As well as implementing programmes established throughout the ETH Domain such as "Foster. Lead. Promote" (formerly "Fix the Leaky Pipeline") and CONNECT, ETH Zurich has set out its diversity strategy in an action plan. It designed an event series entitled "We do care – Insights for university members with caregiving responsibilities". The "involved@ETH" project addresses the concerns of underrepresented groups. A communication guide with practical tips encourages inclusive and mindful communication within ETH Zurich. EPFL drew up a multi-year action plan for 2025–2028 entitled "Advancing Respect, Equality, Accessibility, Diversity & Inclusion". It sets out 33 measures in three key areas (such as equal opportunities in career development). PSI opened up its mentoring programme for women with leadership ambitions (feM-LEAD) to female employees of Empa, WSL and Eawag. "Portraits Mentees 2025" was a PSI communication initiative to increase the visibility of mentees. The main topics included the promotion of women in management positions, intercultural cooperation, an inclusive working environment and the employment of people with disabilities. WSL also carried out mandatory unconscious bias training courses and, in association with the UND centre of expertise, organised compatibility coaching sessions, internal events on psychological safety and activities during Pride Month to increase the visibility of the LGBTQIA+ community. Empa's focus was on establishing DEI within the organisation, promoting an inclusive culture and communication, creating a safe environment and good leadership practices, increasing the proportion of women at all hierarchical levels, supporting collaboration in intercultural teams and creating inclusive structures. Eawag introduced mandatory workshops focusing on the DEI topics of "Unbiased" and "Microaggressions" in everyday life for staff and Directorate members. It also started working on a "Hiring Guide", which expands the concept of excellence to include the aspects of diversity and inclusion.

Supporting young scientists

The ETH Domain offers young scientists a wide range of online resources (e-learning modules), workshops, coaching options and career centres to promote

careers within academia, industry or as entrepreneurs. ETH Zurich's new format, "Postdoc Career Paths – preparing for your next step", gave postdoctoral researchers the opportunity to address specific individual questions in "Peer Clearings" (support programmes offered by peers). The "Postdoc Career Week" comprised lectures and workshops to inspire and support further career planning. With "Sciencepreneurs", EPFL created a format to support talented young entrepreneurs in the founding phase of start-ups. The "Les sciences, ça m'intéresse!" programme introduces children to STEM subjects and sparks their interest. Student Affairs (SAE), the Postdoc Association and the Career Development Working Group for talented young postdoctoral researchers at EPFL provided skills development support. EPFL is part of REGARD, a network of universities in French-speaking Switzerland that assesses students' potential and offers networking opportunities. To assist the career development of doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, the PSI Career Center was expanded in 2025 to include the four research institutes (CC4RI). A survey was prepared to ascertain the needs of young scientists and obtain a clear picture of their expectations, challenges and career plans. Individual career counselling sessions were held at the same time. In addition, new workshop formats were introduced at PSI, for instance to help students write application letters, understand recruitment processes and prepare for job interviews. At the WSL Research Day 2025, WSL offered CV checks and advice on the application process and interviews. Empa doctoral students were able to obtain support from two supervisors. Regular appraisal interviews were held and assistance was provided with career planning. In order to ensure that there will be sufficient young scientists in the future, all the institutions took part in "Future Day" programmes or carried out summer activities.

Compliance with DORA

All the institutions of the ETH Domain have signed the "San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment" (DORA) and are committed to its implementation. In specific terms, the following measures have been established at ETH Zurich in recent years to ensure compliance with the DORA guidelines:

- Peer review in research funding: applications for internal funding are evaluated by internal experts and, depending on the funding instrument, possibly also by international experts. The evaluation focuses on quality aspects such as scientific excellence, but also on future academic potential. Bibliometric key figures are not used.
- Job advertisements for academic positions are DORA-compliant: advertisements for professorships contain explicit references to DORA, and HR ensures that advertisements for other academic positions are formulated accordingly.
- Qualitative assessment of scientific performance in appointment, tenure and promotion procedures, as well as for ETH Zurich internal research awards. Bibliometric indicators play a minor role.

Inclusive housing: students at ETH Zurich and people with spinal cord injury can live together in Switzerland's first inclusive flat-sharing community.
Image: Nicole Davidson/ ETH Zurich

EPFL is also promoting a more holistic approach to research assessment and has developed a Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) action plan to map existing assessment practices and set measurable goals for the next five years.

Employment of people with reduced capacity to work

All the institutions work with specialised agencies, offer places for professional integration and facilitate work trials. ETH Zurich's Case Management and qualified contact points in the four research institutes promote the retention of jobs for members of staff who have been absent for health reasons by facilitating their reintegration into the workplace. The targeted measures taken include the establishment of structured processes, better cooperation with invalidity insurance and the promotion of labour-market integration positions and transitional employment. A project for the inclusion of people with disabilities was launched at ETH Zurich in 2025. The current situation was analysed in order to assess the need for advice and support. EPFL implemented the "EPFL sans barrières" (ESB) programme. A map for people with visual impairments was installed on campus and a case manager was appointed to assist people with long-term health issues. Promoting the recruitment of people with disabilities is one of the focuses of PSI's DEI action plan for 2025–2028. PSI took part in the "My Ability Talent Programme". Events were organised to draw attention to disabilities in the workplace and to encourage a change of perspective on mental health issues, mobility and visual impairments, and a seminar was held on neurodivergence – and more specifically the autism spectrum.

Training apprentices

ETH Zurich expanded its range of apprenticeships and programmes, for instance by introducing an integration apprenticeship. New occupational fields are constantly being examined and work placements are offered to apprentices from other companies. A talent development concept was introduced to improve the systematic supervision and promotion of apprentices. The aim is to maximise existing potential and to support talented, motivated apprentices in a targeted manner. EPFL will open three new training laboratories (IT, physics and Interactive Media Design) to improve the range of courses available to apprentices. A former PSI apprentice won the gold medal in the electronics category at SwissSkills 2025. The first exchange semester for commercial apprentices in collaboration with EPFL represented another highlight. PSI introduced a career orientation programme for school classes in order to increase the attractiveness of teaching and promote STEM professions. School pupils were given the chance to discover their interests and abilities in a fun way. WSL organised support courses and coaching for apprentices to help them to successfully complete their training. Empa focused on personnel marketing and an increased presence on social media, as well as on the training and professionalisation of vocational trainers. Eawag's training infrastructure ensures sound vocational training and a successful start to apprentices' careers. Eawag created an additional commercial apprenticeship.

External evaluation

Avenir Consulting audited the implementation of the personnel objectives at the institutions for the years 2021–2024 and submitted the final report in 2025. The ETH Domain offered a wide variety of HR support for all the objectives. Both managers and members of staff gave the evaluated topics very high scores. In relation to the external benchmark, the courses were found to be above average in terms of diversity and modernity. The transformation of HR departments from administrators into strategic business partners was also awarded a positive rating. All personnel objectives were met thanks to the introduction of the "lead campus".

Pay system and pay equality analysis

Payroll system and equal pay analysis In association with the external consultancy firm Kienbaum AG, the central components of the payroll system were reviewed in 2025 and recommendations for action were made. According to a well-founded analysis, the current payroll system forms a stable and sustainable basis for the ETH Domain. As a result, the payroll system was consistently adhered to throughout the institutions, and the equal pay analysis concluded with an excellent result. This positive outcome shows that equal pay is observed and that the ETH Domain remains attractive and competitive for both existing and future members of staff as an extremely diverse employer.

Key Figures Personnel 2025

On 31 December 2025, the headcount in the ETH Domain stood at 24,910 employment contracts (ECs), or 20,922.8 full-time equivalents (FTEs) (see Fig. 17, p. 104). The headcount decreased by 85 ECs (–0.3%) while FTEs fell by 20.7 FTEs compared to the previous year.

The scientific personnel, which also includes doctoral students, remains by far the largest role in the ETH Domain with 14,861 ECs (12,184.1 FTEs) (59.7% of the total headcount, see Fig. 17, p. 104), followed by technical staff, which accounts for 4,384 ECs (3,965.8 FTEs) or 17.6% of the headcount.

Of all employees, 17.2% or 4,292 ECs (3,431.8 FTEs) are administrative employees and 1.9% are apprentices.
2025 saw the new appointment of 39 professorships, with the total number of professors now at 907 ECs (875.6 FTEs). They made up 3.6% of the total headcount.

Professors
In 2025, ETH Zurich and EPFL had a total of 718 full and associate professors. In addition, they had 138 assistant professors with tenure track (TT) and 51 assistant professors without TT (see Fig. 18, p. 104).

The proportion of women in these three categories grew from 25.5% to 27.0% in 2025. The figures were 21.3% for full and associate professors, 49.3% for assistant professors with TT and 47.1% for assistant professors without TT.

In 2025, 66.9% of the total of 907 professors came from abroad (2024: 67.0%). 46.3% came from the EU (2024: 45.9%) and 20.6% from other countries (2024: 21.1%) (see Fig. 19, p. 103).

Funding of professorships
Of the 536 professors (515.7 FTEs) employed at ETH Zurich as of 31 December 2025, 456.0 FTEs (88.4%) were financed by the total federal contribution, 18.0 FTEs (3.5%) by SNSF, 0.5 FTEs (0.1%) by government-funded research, 6.2 FTEs (1.2%) by EU research programmes, and 35.0 FTEs (6.8%) by third-party financial research contributions, as well as by donations and bequests.

Of the 371 professorships (359.9 FTEs) at EPFL as of 31 December 2025, 329.1 FTEs (91.4%) were financed by the total federal contribution, 9.1 FTEs (2.5%) by SNSF, 1.0 FTE (0.3%) by government-funded research, 0.6 FTEs (0.2%) by EU research programmes and 20.1 FTEs (5.6%) by third-party financial research contributions, as well as by donations and bequests.

Proportion of women
The proportion of women in the ETH Domain increased to 37.4% in 2025 (2024: 37.0%), although it varies significantly by institution, role and discipline (see Fig. 22, p. 104).

The proportion of women in managerial positions (from function level 10) rose to 26.8% (2024: 25.5%). The two universities, WSL and Eawag made a significant contribution to this increase.

Apprentices
In the reporting period, the ETH Domain offered 466 apprentices an apprenticeship in more than 20 different career paths. Women accounted for 32.4% of apprentices in 2025.

Strategic objective

RISK AND COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT

10

In 2025, the ETH Domain further developed its risk management and made significant progress in compliance management. The gradual introduction of a compliance management system in accordance with ISO 37301, appropriate structures and processes, greater interlocking with risk management and targeted training will strengthen integrity, transparency and institutional resilience in the long term. The risk management process is already based on the ISO 31000 standard.

In 2025, the ETH Domain focused on the further development of compliance management. Based on the review conducted by Deloitte in 2023 and the resulting recommendations for action, the ETH Board decided to push ahead with the implementation of a compliance management system (CMS) within a common framework. The ISO 37301 standard serves as a guide without the need for formal certification. Taking into account their respective size, structure and specific characteristics, the institutions should have aligned their systems with this standard and fully implemented the recommendations for action by the end of 2026. The risk management system (RMS) is already based on the ISO 31000 standard (for information on risk management in the ETH Domain, see also Governance, risk situation and risk management, p. 48).

Integration of the CMS into the organisation
Firmly integrating the CMS into the organisation is a critical aspect. The "Tone from the Top" plays a key role: management assumes responsibility for integrity and transparency, and sets an example with its basic ethical attitude and behaviour. At the same time, compliance office structures are being created or developed and given clear responsibilities and a direct link to the management.

While PSI already has an established compliance organisation, the other institutions are at different stages of implementation. There are however various decentralised managers in these institutions who are already responsible for ensuring compliance with laws, internal directives and contractual provisions in a wide range of areas.

In the coming months, EPFL, WSL, Empa and Eawag will coordinate their implementation plans with their Directorates. At ETH Zurich, the concept and project plan were presented to and approved by the Directorate in June 2025. During the implementation phase, depending on the size and complexity of the institution, compliance obligations identified previously and existing processes were and continue to be taken into account and merged, and synergies are harnessed with the RMS already in place. The aim is not only to establish a functioning compliance culture, but also to create recognisable added value for the entire institution.

Coordination between CMS and RMS

The institutions already systematically identify compliance risks as part of their risk assessments. These risks include violations of laws, third-party funding requirements, internal guidelines or ethical standards. Risks in the areas of IT security, research integrity, conflicts of interest and collaboration with external partners are particularly relevant. The close dovetailing of CMS and RMS means that the recording, assessment and management of these risks is continuously being professionalised (see also Governance, risk situation and risk management, p. 48).

It is also crucial to organise training and to raise staff awareness. As well as offering training courses on specific issues such as research integrity, data protection and contract or procurement management, e-learning formats are increasingly being used. E-learning allows the compliance culture to be integrated into the organisation more widely and efficiently. In addition, codes of conduct provide staff with clear guidance.

Monitoring and reporting have also been strengthened. Breaches of compliance are documented, tracked and regularly reported at management level. Serious cases are escalated to the ETH Board and the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO). This guarantees a systematic overview.

The further development of the CMS is not only intended to minimise risks, but also to strengthen institutional resilience and promote an active compliance culture. At the same time, freedom of research remains unaffected: the CMS should be seen as a supportive framework that provides guidance and reassurance without hindering creative scientific work.

In the coming years, the focus will be on clarifying the institutional and thematic scope of the CMS. In addition, an external audit is planned for 2027 to carry out a full review of the effectiveness of the RMS and CMS.

Reporting

As part of their annual reporting to the ETH Board, the institutions provide information about their activities, progress and focus areas in the CMS; they also describe their core risks, in particular their current status, extent and possible consequences. The reports on the CMS and the core risks are then submitted to the department responsible for the ETH Domain (EAER).

The ETH Board presents the reports on risk and compliance management to the Federal Council regularly once a year, and includes an update on the subject in each year's annual report.

KEY FIGURES

Monitoring table on the strategic objectives set by the Federal Council

Fig. 3: Monitoring table on the strategic objectives set by the Federal Council for the ETH Domain for 2025–2028

	Reference values			Monitoring
Indicators	2017	2021	2024	2025
TEACHING				
Students and doctoral students at ETH Zurich and EPFL (headcount)				
New admissions				
At Bachelor's level	4,756	5,218	6,011	5,488
Students[1]	**25,059**	**29,243**	**33,068**	**33,896**
Proportion of women (%)	30.6	31.9	32.5	32.6
Proportion of foreign nationals (%)	38.4	40.9	45.0	44.5
At Bachelor's level[1]	14,385	16,650	18,553	18,521
Proportion of women (%)	30.6	32.5	33.2	33.3
Proportion of foreign nationals (%)	29.4	34.1	39.0	37.5
At Master's level[1]	8,895	11,741	13,626	14,501
Proportion of women (%)	29.4	30.4	31.0	31.4
Proportion of foreign nationals (%)	45.4	50.0	53.0	53.4
On MAS/MBA programmes	840	852	889	874
Proportion of women (%)	38.8	42.1	39.6	37.0
Proportion of foreign nationals (%)	51.5	48.5	49.5	47.0
Visiting students (incoming)[1]	939	–	–	–
Proportion of women (%)	35.5%	–	–	–
Proportion of foreign nationals (%)	96.5%	–	–	–
Supervision ratio				
Bachelor's and Master's students per professor	28.3	33.2	36.4	37.7
Doctoral students	**6,234**	**6,867**	**6,752**	**6,731**
Proportion of women (%)	30.8	33.9	35.0	35.5
Proportion of foreign nationals (%)	75.0	78.6	79.9	80.3
Supervision ratio				
Doctoral students per professor	7.6	8.0	7.6	7.7
Students and doctoral students[1]	**31,293**	**36,110**	**39,820**	**40,627**
Proportion of women (%)	30.6	32.3	32.9	33.1
Proportion of foreign nationals (%)	45.7	48.1	50.9	50.5
Supervision ratio				
Students and doctoral students per professor	38.0	42.3	45.0	46.4
Degrees				
Bachelor	2,602	3,213	3,824	4,041
Diploma, Master	3,065	3,898	4,398	4,458
MAS/MBA	394	304	270	348
Doctorate	1,258	1,257	1,367	1,366
Teaching and supervision by the research institutes				
Teaching hours	17,992	19,305	24,550	25,392
Bachelor's, Master's and Diploma projects	602	736	829	770
Doctoral students	807	872	1,009	1,084
Proportion of women (%)	39.0	39.0	41.7	44.8
Proportion enrolled in the ETH Domain (%)	67.7	70.8	70.5	69.2
Proportion enrolled at a foreign university (%)	10.3	11.0	11.2	11.1

RESEARCH				
Research contributions, mandates and scientific services (in CHF millions)	**743.2**	**787.7**	**848.1**	**929.2**
of which Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)	260.3	267.8	306.6	330.7
of which Innosuisse	62.6	41.3	46.0	49.8
of which EU Framework programmes for Research and Innovation (EU FPRI), Federal Government's transitional measures	139.2	160.2	146.6	148.5
KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER (KTT)				
Invention disclosures	343	330	282	318
Software notifications[2]	26	39	25	31
Patents	206	213	222	205
Licences[3]	377	181	137	92
Spin-offs	48	60	64	70
STAFF (FTE)				
Professors	823.8	854.6	885.0	875.6
Proportion of women (%)	14.8	20.0	25.6	26.8
Proportion of foreign nationals (%)	67.2	67.7	67.7	67.6
Scientific staff	11,204.4	12,277.4	12,223.4	12,184.1
Technical staff	3,439.8	3,722.3	3,939.6	3,965.8
Administrative staff	2,690.0	3,214.9	3,421.0	3,431.8
Apprentices	473.6	464.6	474.5	465.5
FINANCES/REAL ESTATE				
Total federal contribution (expenditure ceiling perspective) (in CHF millions)	**2,530.8**	**2,600.1**	**2,747.9**	**2,642.1**
of which federal financial contribution	2,377.9	2,373.3	2,448.6	2,470.6
of which investment credit for construction in the ETH Domain	152.9	226.8	299.4	171.5

[1] In 2017–2020, visiting students were reported yearly as a separate student category and counted in the total number of students. Since 2021, visiting students have been reported per semester in a separate table (see Fig. 11, p. 100) and are no longer counted in the total number of students. Without this modification, ETH Zurich and EPFL would have counted a total of 30,294 students in 2021.

[2] Open source software not included.

[3] The definition of licences was revised in 2021. This category no longer includes contracts with prior IP transfer and contracts for software licences of less than CHF 1,000. This should be taken into account when comparing with the figures for previous years. Without this change, the total number of licences would have been 406 in 2021.

Indicators and counting methods for the monitoring table and the academic achievement report

If not specified in more detail, the term "students" is always understood to mean students at Bachelor's and Master's levels, as well as students in Master of Advanced Studies and Master of Business Administration (MAS/MBA) continuing education programmes. Doctoral students are defined as a separate category. Students and doctoral students are counted in numbers of persons (headcount). These figures may differ from those which ETH Zurich and EPFL enter in their respective annual reports, as there are different counting methods.

As of 2021, visiting students are no longer included in the total number of students. Incoming visiting students (students who are enrolled at another university and study for at least three months or 20 ECTS at one of the two Federal Institutes of Technology) and outgoing visiting students (students who are enrolled at one of the two Federal Institutes of Technology and study for at least three months or 20 ECTS at another university) are now listed in a separate table for each semester. Foreign students and doctoral students form two sub-categories: foreign-educated foreign nationals who resided abroad while obtaining the relevant necessary qualifications, and Swiss-educated foreign nationals who resided in Switzerland while obtaining the relevant necessary qualifications.

The employment level of all staff is counted in terms of full-time equivalents (FTEs). Professors, both full and associate, as well as assistant professors, including recipients of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Eccellenza professorial fellowship who are employed at one of the two Federal Institutes of Technology, are taken into account in the calculation of the supervision ratio. Senior scientists and Maîtres d'enseignement et de recherche (MER) from both Federal Institutes of Technology correspond to the academic staff in management roles or senior management staff. Some of them are adjunct professors. To determine the "expanded" supervision ratio, the Senior Scientists and MER of both Federal Institutes of Technology are added to the professors. The teaching hours delivered by the research institutes do not include preparation time, only the time spent in the presence of students.

Academic achievement report

Fig. 4: Students and doctoral students by discipline

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Δ 2024/2025	
												in %
Architecture	**3,030**	**3,047**	**3,041**	**3,090**	**3,035**	**3,169**	**3,254**	**3,404**	**3,560**	**3,700**	**140**	**3.9**
ETH Zurich	1,771	1,823	1,855	1,904	1,923	2,031	2,136	2,204	2,293	2,416	123	5.4
EPFL	1,259	1,224	1,186	1,186	1,112	1,138	1,118	1,200	1,267	1,284	17	1.3
Civil and Geomatic Engineering	**2,860**	**2,791**	**2,777**	**2,716**	**2,700**	**2,641**	**2,576**	**2,517**	**2,517**	**2,526**	**9**	**0.4**
ETH Zurich	1,701	1,688	1,667	1,614	1,646	1,606	1,537	1,486	1,510	1,508	−2	−0.1
EPFL	1,159	1,103	1,110	1,102	1,054	1,035	1,039	1,031	1,007	1,018	11	1.1
Engineering Sciences	**8,069**	**8,398**	**8,699**	**9,081**	**9,577**	**9,795**	**10,045**	**10,380**	**10,803**	**11,125**	**322**	**3.0**
ETH Zurich	4,993	5,135	5,224	5,467	5,851	6,053	6,202	6,217	6,457	6,735	278	4.3
EPFL	3,076	3,263	3,475	3,614	3,726	3,742	3,843	4,163	4,346	4,390	44	1.0
Information and Communications Technology	**3,033**	**3,261**	**3,648**	**4,031**	**4,529**	**4,929**	**5,417**	**5,857**	**6,154**	**6,242**	**88**	**1.4**
ETH Zurich	1,536	1,753	1,991	2,246	2,560	2,776	3,021	3,281	3,508	3,660	152	4.3
EPFL	1,497	1,508	1,657	1,785	1,969	2,153	2,396	2,576	2,646	2,582	−64	−2.4
Exact and Natural Sciences	**5,442**	**5,595**	**5,810**	**5,940**	**6,290**	**6,412**	**6,689**	**7,040**	**7,362**	**7,669**	**307**	**4.2**
ETH Zurich	3,352	3,505	3,691	3,794	4,039	4,063	4,238	4,417	4,648	4,831	183	3.9
EPFL	2,090	2,090	2,119	2,146	2,251	2,349	2,451	2,623	2,714	2,838	124	4.6
Human Medicine[1]	**–**	**99**	**192**	**286**	**296**	**311**	**302**	**314**	**313**	**314**	**1**	**0.3**
ETH Zurich	–	99	192	286	296	311	302	314	313	314	1	0.3
Life Sciences	**4,216**	**4,312**	**4,500**	**4,624**	**4,859**	**4,864**	**4,942**	**5,030**	**5,235**	**5,299**	**64**	**1.2**
ETH Zurich	3,162	3,218	3,326	3,433	3,566	3,595	3,658	3,667	3,732	3,844	112	3.0
EPFL	1,054	1,094	1,174	1,191	1,293	1,269	1,284	1,363	1,503	1,455	−48	−3.2
System-oriented Natural Sciences	**2,411**	**2,437**	**2,520**	**2,538**	**2,569**	**2,542**	**2,447**	**2,411**	**2,331**	**2,246**	**−85**	**−3.6**
ETH Zurich	2,411	2,437	2,520	2,538	2,569	2,542	2,447	2,411	2,331	2,246	−85	−3.6
Management, Technology, Economics	**972**	**973**	**966**	**954**	**937**	**962**	**965**	**979**	**1,020**	**1,004**	**−16**	**−1.6**
ETH Zurich	571	583	573	560	566	571	574	553	561	571	10	1.8
EPFL	401	390	393	394	371	391	391	426	459	433	−26	−5.7
Humanities, Social and Political Sciences[2]	**318**	**380**	**378**	**382**	**443**	**485**	**479**	**505**	**525**	**502**	**−23**	**−4.4**
ETH Zurich	318	366	358	351	406	435	425	442	455	430	−25	−5.5
EPFL	–	14	20	31	37	50	54	63	70	72	2	2.9
Total students and doctoral students	**30,351**	**31,293**	**32,531**	**33,642**	**35,235**	**36,110**	**37,116**	**38,437**	**39,820**	**40,627**	**807**	**2.0**
ETH Zurich	19,815	20,607	21,397	22,193	23,422	23,983	24,540	24,992	25,808	26,555	747	2.9
EPFL	10,536	10,686	11,134	11,449	11,813	12,127	12,576	13,445	14,012	14,072	60	0.4
Women	**9,091**	**9,587**	**10,167**	**10,675**	**11,280**	**11,660**	**12,027**	**12,572**	**13,110**	**13,435**	**325**	**2.5**
ETH Zurich	6,164	6,563	6,917	7,304	7,768	7,995	8,194	8,353	8,667	8,974	307	3.5
EPFL	2,927	3,024	3,250	3,371	3,512	3,665	3,833	4,219	4,443	4,461	18	0.4
Foreign nationals	**13,615**	**14,290**	**15,160**	**15,993**	**16,799**	**17,368**	**18,387**	**19,404**	**20,288**	**20,503**	**215**	**1.1**
ETH Zurich	7,563	7,972	8,433	8,876	9,438	9,808	10,371	10,731	11,241	11,664	423	3.8
EPFL	6,052	6,318	6,727	7,117	7,361	7,560	8,016	8,673	9,047	8,839	−208	−2.3

Since 2021, visiting students have no longer been counted in the student totals. This should be taken into account when comparing figures from previous years.

[1] ETH Zurich introduced a Bachelor's degree in Human Medicine in 2017.

[2] EPFL introduced a Master's degree in Digital Humanities in 2017.

Fig. 5: Students and doctoral students by academic level

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Δ 2024/2025	
												in %
Bachelor's programmes	**14,727**	**14,385**	**14,792**	**15,243**	**15,983**	**16,650**	**16,995**	**17,888**	**18,553**	**18,521**	**–32**	**–0.2**
ETH Zurich	9,309	9,262	9,517	9,895	10,355	10,642	10,665	10,948	11,304	11,520	216	1.9
EPFL	5,418	5,123	5,275	5,348	5,628	6,008	6,330	6,940	7,249	7,001	–248	–3.4
Master's programmes	**8,662**	**8,895**	**9,517**	**10,163**	**11,143**	**11,741**	**12,329**	**12,870**	**13,626**	**14,501**	**875**	**6.4**
ETH Zurich	5,861	6,158	6,590	7,037	7,790	8,206	8,641	8,916	9,414	10,030	616	6.5
EPFL	2,801	2,737	2,927	3,126	3,353	3,535	3,688	3,954	4,212	4,471	259	6.1
MAS/MBA	**828**	**840**	**827**	**809**	**816**	**852**	**817**	**842**	**889**	**874**	**–15**	**–1.7**
ETH Zurich	635	646	635	626	644	675	673	703	739	739	0	0.0
EPFL	193	194	192	183	172	177	144	139	150	135	–15	–10.0
Visiting students (incoming)[1]	**–**	**939**	**1,004**	**1,060**	**695**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**
ETH Zurich	–	449	480	467	317	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
EPFL	–	490	524	593	378	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total number of students[1]	**24,217**	**25,059**	**26,140**	**27,275**	**28,637**	**29,243**	**30,141**	**31,600**	**33,068**	**33,896**	**828**	**2.5**
ETH Zurich	15,805	16,515	17,222	18,025	19,106	19,523	19,979	20,567	21,457	22,289	832	3.9
EPFL	8,412	8,544	8,918	9,250	9,531	9,720	10,162	11,033	11,611	11,607	–4	–0.0
Doctoral programmes	**6,134**	**6,234**	**6,391**	**6,367**	**6,598**	**6,867**	**6,975**	**6,837**	**6,752**	**6,731**	**–21**	**–0.3**
ETH Zurich	4,010	4,092	4,175	4,168	4,316	4,460	4,561	4,425	4,351	4,266	–85	–2.0
EPFL	2,124	2,142	2,216	2,199	2,282	2,407	2,414	2,412	2,401	2,465	64	2.7
Total students and doctoral students[1]	**30,351**	**31,293**	**32,531**	**33,642**	**35,235**	**36,110**	**37,116**	**38,437**	**39,820**	**40,627**	**807**	**2.0**
ETH Zurich	19,815	20,607	21,397	22,193	23,422	23,983	24,540	24,992	25,808	26,555	747	2.9
EPFL	10,536	10,686	11,134	11,449	11,813	12,127	12,576	13,445	14,012	14,072	60	0.4

[1] In 2017–2020, visiting students were reported yearly as a separate student category and counted in the total number of students. Since 2021, visiting students have been reported per semester in a separate table (see Fig. 11, p. 100) and are no longer counted in the total number of students. Without this modification, ETH Zurich and EPFL would have counted a total of 30,294 students in 2021.

Fig. 6: New admissions at Bachelor's level at ETH Zurich and EPFL

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Δ 2024 / 2025	
												in %
Architecture	569	437	450	468	498	550	546	576	636	568	−68	−10.7
Civil and Geomatic Engineering	488	366	370	383	403	384	336	316	358	336	−22	−6.1
Engineering Sciences	1,518	1,350	1,303	1,353	1,327	1,333	1,401	1,621	1,782	1,675	−107	−6.0
Information and Communications Technology	679	582	662	708	780	799	897	896	907	715	−192	−21.2
Exact and Natural Sciences	1,108	985	928	952	1,074	1,091	1,162	1,276	1,231	1,185	−46	−3.7
Human Medicine[1]	–	100	100	100	100	99	99	104	102	99	−3	−2.9
Life Sciences	778	635	696	725	719	659	620	624	756	686	−70	−9.3
System-oriented Natural Sciences	372	288	307	259	326	288	219	232	214	207	−7	−3.3
Management, Technology, Economics[2]	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Humanities, Social and Political Sciences	19	13	11	18	18	15	15	15	25	17	−8	−32.0
Total	**5,531**	**4,756**	**4,827**	**4,966**	**5,245**	**5,218**	**5,295**	**5,660**	**6,011**	**5,488**	**−523**	**−8.7**

[1] ETH Zurich introduced a Bachelor's degree in Human Medicine in 2017. New admissions in this discipline are limited to 100 and will therefore remain stable over the years.
[2] ETH Zurich and EPFL do not offer a Bachelor's degree in Management, Technology, Economics.

Fig. 7: Percentage of women among students and doctoral students at ETH Zurich and EPFL

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
% at Bachelor's level	30.0	30.6	31.6	31.9	32.0	32.5	32.4	33.0	33.2	33.3
% at Master's level	28.5	29.4	29.6	29.8	30.3	30.4	30.9	30.9	31.0	31.4
% at Bachelor's and Master's level	29.4	30.1	30.8	31.1	31.3	31.6	31.8	32.1	32.3	32.5
% on MAS/MBA programmes	37.9	38.8	40.6	40.3	42.6	42.1	41.7	38.4	39.6	37.0
% at doctoral level	31.0	30.8	31.4	32.8	33.6	33.9	34.0	34.6	35.0	35.5

Fig. 8: Supervision ratios at ETH Zurich and EPFL

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Supervision ratio										
at Bachelor's/Master's level	29.2	28.3	29.7	30.6	31.7	33.2	33.6	35.1	36.4	37.7
at doctoral level	7.7	7.6	7.8	7.7	7.7	8.0	8.0	7.8	7.6	7.7
Extended supervision ratio										
at Bachelor's/Master's level	19.8	19.2	20.0	20.7	21.5	22.5	22.8	23.9	24.6	25.5
at doctoral level	5.2	5.1	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.2

Fig. 9: Percentage of foreign nationals among students and doctoral students at ETH Zurich and EPFL

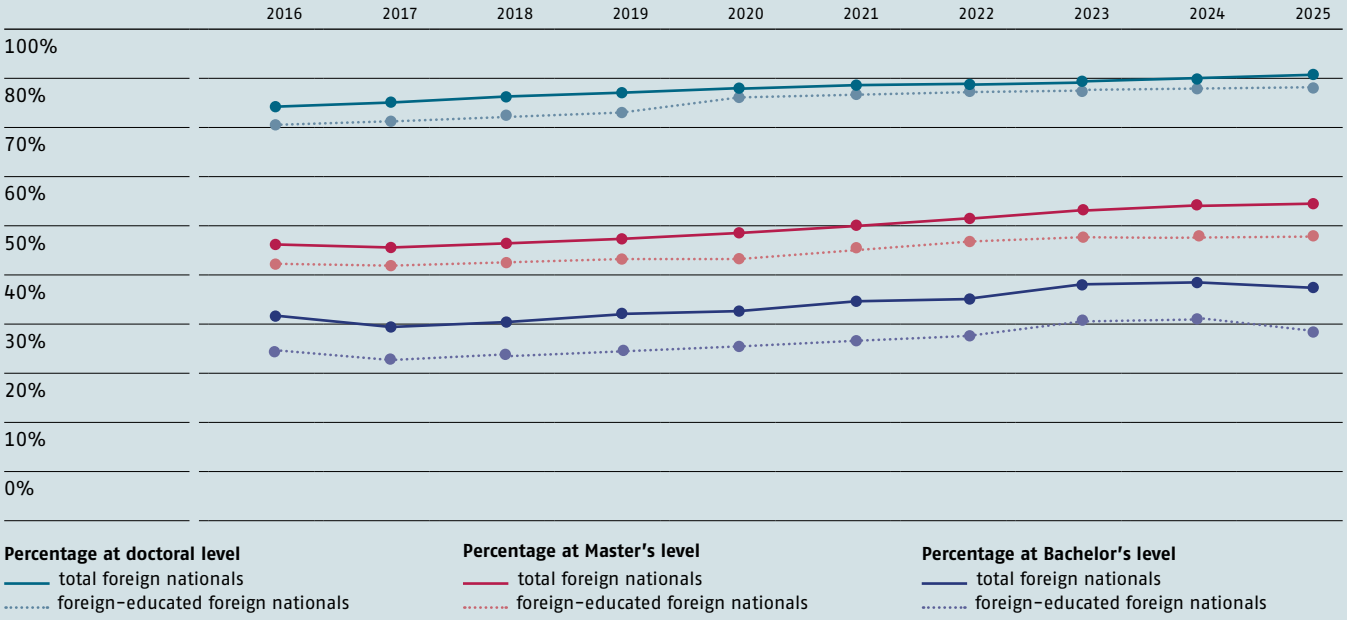


Fig. 10: Degrees awarded by academic level

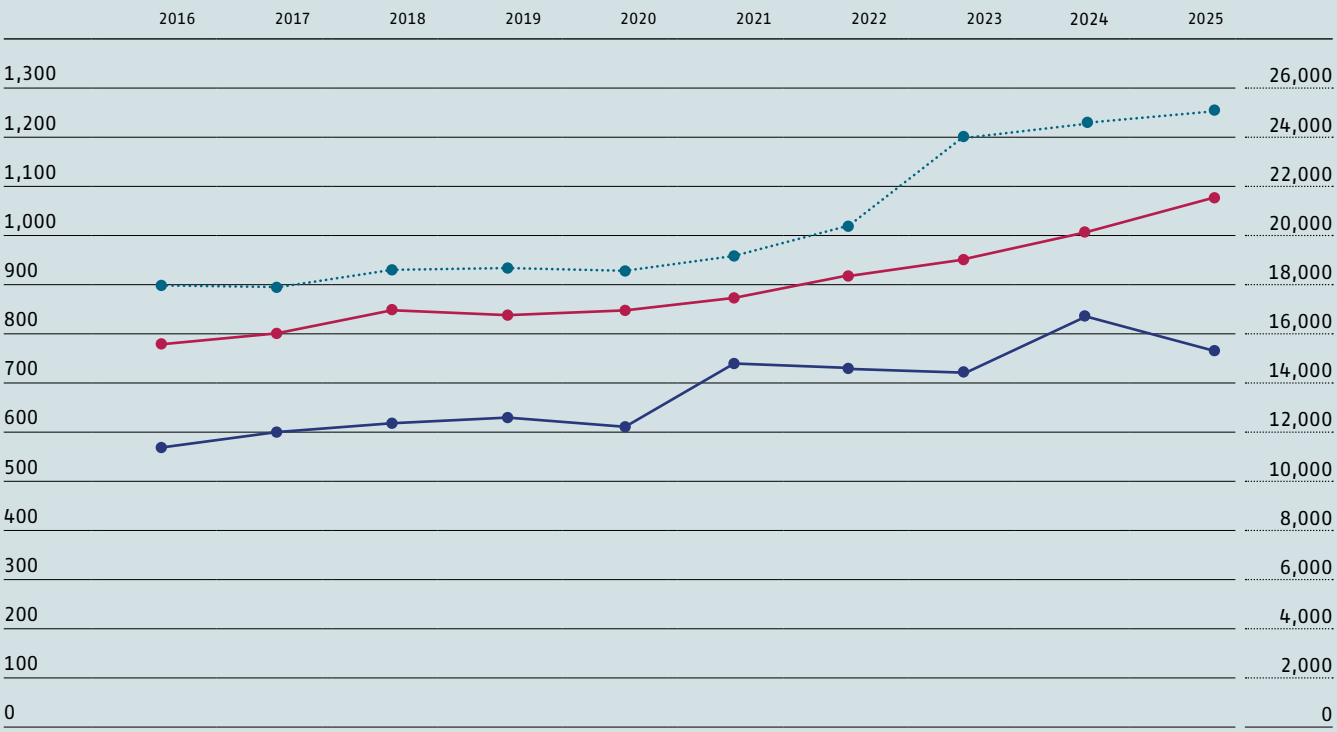
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Δ 2024/2025	
												in %
Bachelor	**2,500**	**2,602**	**2,686**	**2,876**	**3,007**	**3,213**	**3,148**	**3,356**	**3,824**	**4,041**	**217**	**5.7**
ETH Zurich	1,571	1,606	1,678	1,758	1,843	2,084	1,934	2,034	2,337	2,460	123	5.3
EPFL	929	996	1,008	1,118	1,164	1,129	1,214	1,322	1,487	1,581	94	6.3
Master	**2,989**	**3,065**	**3,240**	**3,368**	**3,344**	**3,898**	**3,760**	**3,998**	**4,398**	**4,458**	**60**	**1.4**
ETH Zurich	2,015	2,072	2,196	2,335	2,260	2,723	2,512	2,754	3,029	3,088	59	1.9
EPFL	974	993	1,044	1,033	1,084	1,175	1,248	1,244	1,369	1,370	1	0.1
MAS/MBA	**303**	**394**	**343**	**324**	**249**	**304**	**318**	**309**	**270**	**348**	**78**	**28.9**
ETH Zurich	203	272	232	245	160	219	236	236	208	275	67	32.2
EPFL	100	122	111	79	89	85	82	73	62	73	11	17.7
Doctorate	**1,256**	**1,258**	**1,209**	**1,290**	**1,171**	**1,257**	**1,458**	**1,403**	**1,367**	**1,366**	**–1**	**–0.1**
ETH Zurich	851	827	802	866	781	820	1,005	939	933	916	–17	–1.8
EPFL	405	431	407	424	390	437	453	464	434	450	16	3.7

Fig. 11: Visiting students

	2021		2022		2023		2024		2025	
	Spring Semester	Autumn Semester	Spring Semester	Autumn Semester	Spring Semester	Autumn Semester	Spring Semester	Autumn Semester	Spring Semester	Autumn Semester
Incoming										
at ETH Zurich	287	460	401	385	339	286	287	247	230	277
at EPFL	552	622	786	629	763	575	673	770	771	675
Outgoing										
from ETH Zurich	76	154	228	255	261	241	253	259	292	285
from EPFL	264	396	373	460	446	466	466	461	460	523

Since 2021, visiting students have no longer been counted in the student totals and now figure only in the table above per semester. It should be noted that the figures given per semester cannot be added together to obtain an annual total without counting students present during the two semester twice.

Fig. 12: Teaching and supervision by the research institutes



Left axis: Number of Bachelor's, Master's and Diploma projects supervised
Right axis: Number of teaching hours per year

Number of doctoral projects supervised
Number of Bachelor's, Master's and Diploma projects supervised
Number of teaching hours per year

Knowledge and technology transfer

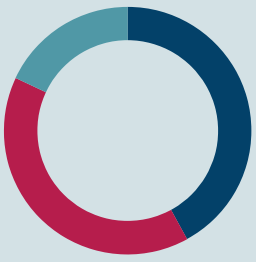
Fig. 13: Knowledge and technology transfer in the ETH Domain

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Invention disclosures[1]	**–**	**343**	**358**	**329**	**310**	**330**	**310**	**314**	**282**	**318**
ETH Zurich	–	171	205	159	165	169	142	172	141	125
EPFL	–	134	119	132	107	121	138	115	121	151
Research institutes	–	38	34	38	38	40	30	27	20	42
Software notifications[1,2]	**–**	**26**	**36**	**40**	**32**	**39**	**37**	**26**	**25**	**31**
ETH Zurich	–	20	19	26	18	24	28	11	15	15
EPFL	–	6	13	13	14	12	6	11	8	14
Research institutes	–	0	4	1	0	3	3	4	2	2
Patents	**230**	**206**	**230**	**224**	**217**	**213**	**227**	**187**	**222**	**205**
ETH Zurich	109	84	109	102	115	99	104	87	107	98
EPFL	100	95	95	98	75	88	95	86	90	84
Research institutes	21	27	26	24	27	26	28	14	25	23
Licences[3]	**353**	**377**	**341**	**324**	**338**	**181**	**180**	**156**	**137**	**92**
ETH Zurich	78	82	87	62	43	27	29	31	49	37
EPFL	58	50	39	50	53	40	43	45	36	36
Research institutes	217	245	215	212	242	114	108	80	52	19
Spin-offs	**50**	**48**	**55**	**59**	**66**	**60**	**54**	**69**	**64**	**70**
ETH Zurich	25	25	27	30	34	25	26	43	37	24
EPFL	20	15	25	23	25	32	21	21	24	39
Research institutes	5	8	3	6	7	3	7	5	3	7

[1] Invention disclosures and software notifications were introduced in 2017 as additional KTT indicators.
[2] Open source software is not included.
[3] The definition of licences was revised in 2021. This category no longer includes contracts with prior IP transfer and contracts for software licences of less than CHF 1,000. This should be taken into account when comparing with the figures for previous years. Without this change, the total number of licences would have been 406 in 2021.

Licences

92



ETH Zurich	37
EPFL	36
Research institutes	19

Invention disclosures

318

Software notifications

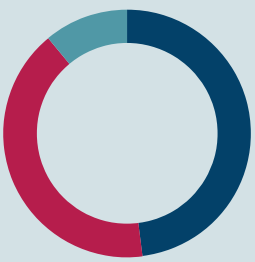
31

Spin-offs

70

Patents

205



ETH Zurich	98
EPFL	84
Research institutes	23

Fig. 14: Collaboration with the private and public sector

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Collaboration contracts with the private sector	**507**	**594**	**570**	**610**	**585**	**566**	**496**	**576**	**556**
of which financed by the private sector	**316**	**415**	**404**	**388**	**396**	**390**	**327**	**401**	**412**
ETH Zurich	122	149	163	143	172	171	138	191	188
EPFL	99	120	125	95	94	120	95	103	93
Research institutes	95	146	116	150	130	99	94	107	131
of which financed by Innosuisse/ EU FPRI*	**191**	**179**	**166**	**222**	**189**	**176**	**169**	**175**	**144**
ETH Zurich	57	74	55	72	72	62	59	58	54
EPFL	66	49	61	56	45	41	44	61	40
Research institutes	68	56	50	94	72	73	66	56	50
Collaboration contracts with the Swiss public sector	**285**	**261**	**278**	**262**	**272**	**281**	**263**	**245**	**286**
ETH Zurich	88	100	88	92	94	87	77	82	94
EPFL	54	43	51	47	46	42	29	43	36
Research institues	143	118	139	123	132	152	157	120	156

Number of new cooperation agreements (research agreements and scientific services) with the private and Swiss public sector involving a volume of at least CHF 50,000 per contract. These indicators were introduced in 2017.
* EU FPRI: European Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation.

KTT indicators and counting methods

The patents correspond only to first filing, and the licences also include technology transfer agreements. The invention disclosures and software notifications correspond to the reports and notifications submitted in writing to the Technology Transfer Offices of the institutions of the ETH Domain in the reporting period. They reflect activities in the early phases of the innovation process, thereby supplementing the other KTT indicators. Open source software is not included.

In order to reflect the cooperation between the institutions, and private enterprises and the public sector, only recently concluded cooperation agreements are included. These are only research contracts and scientific services with a volume of at least CHF 50,000 per contract.

Cooperation with the private sector is divided into two categories: projects that are directly financed by industry in Switzerland or abroad, and those funded by Innosuisse or the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation (EU FPRI). Cooperation with the public sector includes contracts with public sector institutions in Switzerland, but not those with national or international research funding organisations and foundations.

Rankings observed worldwide (see Fig. 15 and 16)

The universities are assessed and ranked by institutions and businesses using various methods. In 2023, the THE (Times Higher Education World University Rankings) and QS (QS World University Rankings) rankings significantly changed their methodology. This must be taken into account when making comparisons with previous years.

THE uses 17 key performance indicators for teaching (29.5% weighting), research environment (29%), research quality (30%), international outlook (7.5%) and financing by the industry (4%). QS focuses mainly on reputation (with a 30% weighting on academic reputation and 15% on employer reputation), followed by citations (20%), internationality (15%) and the student-teacher ratio (10%), while ARWU (Academic Ranking of World Universities of ShanghaiRanking Consultancy) makes use of performance indicators based on the academic performance or research output – in particular Nobel Prizes or Fields Medals – of graduates, staff and highly cited researchers from the institutions assessed.

The publication activity of an institution is also judged based on the number of articles that have been published in a select group of the most respected journals, and the ratio between the number of publications and the number of researchers employed at an institution. **CWTS Leiden** (Centre for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking) is based solely on the publication activity of the universities, using this to calculate the indicators to assess research performance. The CWTS Leiden World and Europe rankings of both Federal Institutes of Technology (see Fig. 15) are based on the proportion of publications that are among the top 10% of most cited publications (PP (top 10%)) in the relevant subject area worldwide. CWTS publishes two versions of the rankings. Both versions are based on the same indicators of scientific performance. The Tradition Edition uses data from the Web of Science database, while the Open Edition of the rankings, introduced in 2024, is characterised by the exclusive use of open data and a completely transparent methodology.

University rankings

Fig. 15: Rankings of ETH Zurich (blue) and EPFL (red) according to the THE, QS, ARWU and CWTS Leiden rankings in 2025/2026

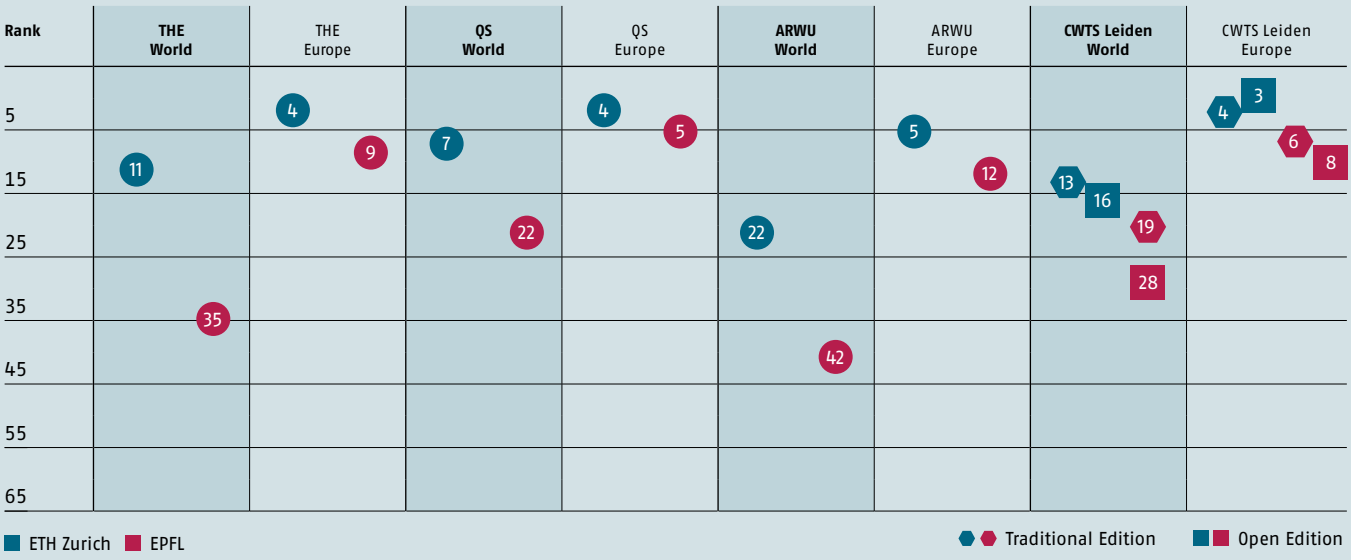
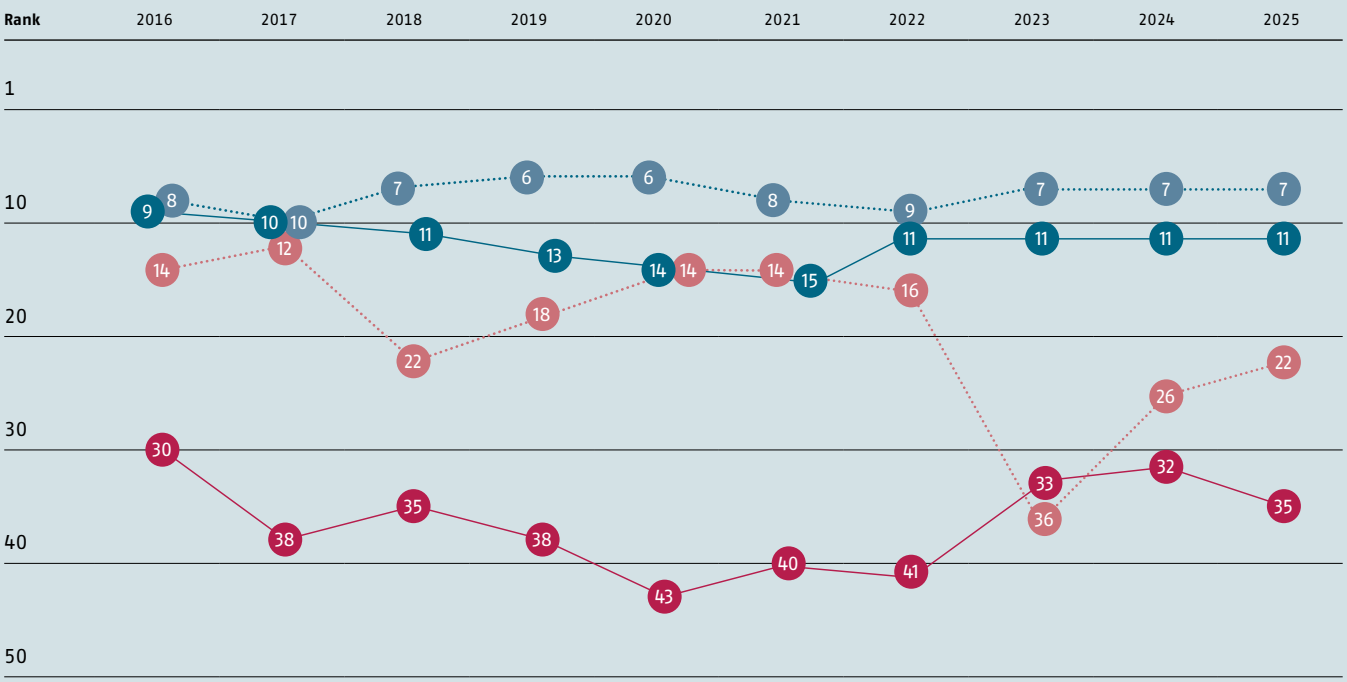


Fig. 16: Rankings of ETH Zurich (blue) and EPFL (red) according to the THE and QS World rankings 2016–2025



THE **Times Higher Education World University Rankings** from TES Global Limited, London
QS **QS World University Rankings** from Quacquarelli Symonds Limited, London
ARWU **Academic Ranking of World Universities** from ShanghaiRanking Consultancy
CWTS Leiden **CWTS Leiden Ranking** from the Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) of the Leiden University, Netherlands; indicator used: PP (top 10%) (see box, p. 102)

Personnel

Fig. 17: Headcount and employment level by function group

	Men			Women			ETH Domain		
2025	EC	FTE	ø EL %	EC	FTE	ø EL %	EC	FT	ø EL %
Professors (F/A)	565	544.3	96.3%	153	143.7	93.9%	718	688.0	95.8%
Assistant professors with tenure track	70	70.0	100.0%	68	68.0	100.0%	138	138.0	100.0%
Assistant professors without tenure track	27	26.8	99.3%	24	22.8	95.0%	51	49.6	97.3%
Scientific personnel	9,804	8,138.1	83.0%	5,057	4,046.0	80.0%	14,861	12,184.1	82.0%
of whom senior scientific personnel	674	649.9	96.4%	145	134.6	92.8%	819	784.5	95.8%
Technical personnel	3,373	3,142.0	93.2%	1,011	823.8	81.5%	4,384	3,965.8	90.5%
Administrative personnel	1,452	1,240.9	85.5%	2,840	2,190.9	77.1%	4,292	3,431.8	80.0%
Apprentices	315	314.7	99.9%	151	150.8	99.9%	466	465.5	99.9%
Total	**15,606**	**13,476.8**	**86.4%**	**9,304**	**7,446.0**	**80.0%**	**24,910**	**20,922.8**	**84.0%**

Headcount (employment contracts, EC) and employment level (EL) of men, women and the entire ETH Domain by function group. Senior scientists, maîtres d'enseignement et de recherche (MER) and other senior personnel are counted separately, but nevertheless are still included under scientific personnel. A total of 6,731 doctoral students are enrolled at the two Federal Institutes of Technology. Of these, all who are employed in the ETH Domain are included under scientific personnel.

Fig. 18: Development in the numbers of female and male professors

	2025			2024			Changes		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men in %	Women in %	Total in %
Professors (F/A)	565	153	718	581	145	726	–2.8%	5.5%	–1.1%
Assistant professors with tenure track	70	68	138	71	67	138	–1.4%	1.5%	0.0%
Assistant professors without tenure track	27	24	51	30	22	52	–10.0%	9.1%	–1.9%
Total professors	**662**	**245**	**907**	**682**	**234**	**916**	**–2.9%**	**4.7%**	**–1.0%**

Change in the number of professors according to: full and associate professors, assistant professors with tenure track and assistant professors without tenure track. The three last columns show the percentage change since the previous year.

Professorial categories

The various professorial categories differ with regard to status and employment conditions. Full (F) and associate (A) professors, and assistant professors with and without tenure track (TT) teach and undertake research at both Federal Institutes of Technology. Professors with TT can become permanently employed as full or associate professors if they meet a certain performance target. Full and associate professors are appointed permanently, while assistant professors sign employment contracts for four years. The latter can be renewed for a maximum of another four years; in the case of parenthood or for any other just cause, it is possible to renew the employment contacts for up to another year.

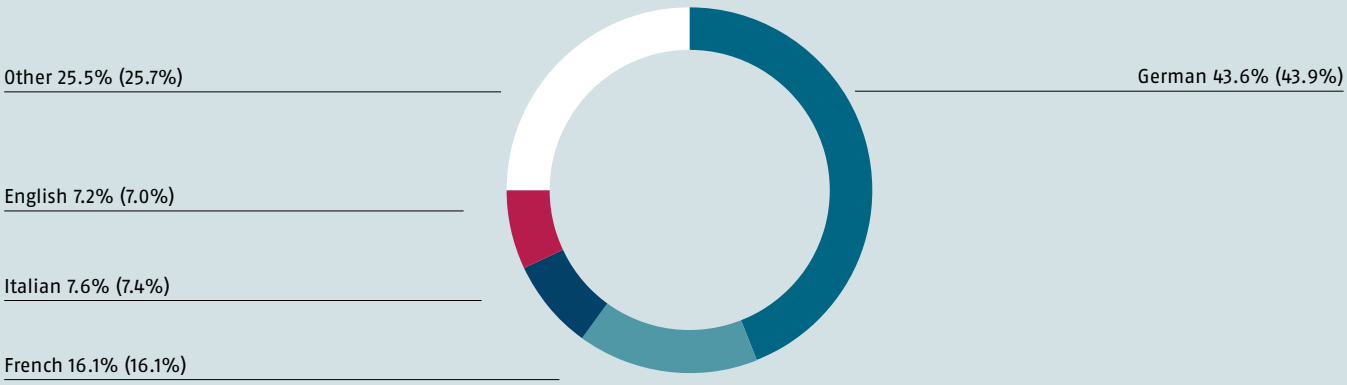
In the context of cooperating with other universities and research institutes, there is the option of a dual professorship and the appointment of affiliated professors with a low FTE level.
In recognition of outstanding performance in teaching and research, the title of adjunct professor may be conferred on senior scientific staff (senior scientists/Maîtres d'enseignement et de recherche, MER). Since 2022, the ETH Board has been able to award the title of Professor of Practice to external persons who have extensive professional experience and have excelled in their field. They take on teaching duties.
The ordinance concerning professors does not apply to these persons.

Fig. 19: Country of origin of male and female professors

	Switzerland			EU			Other		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Professors (F/A)	217	53	270	256	74	330	92	26	118
Assistant professors with tenure track	9	11	20	40	24	64	21	33	54
Assistant professors without tenure track	5	5	10	14	12	26	8	7	15
Total professors	**231**	**69**	**300**	**310**	**110**	**420**	**121**	**66**	**187**

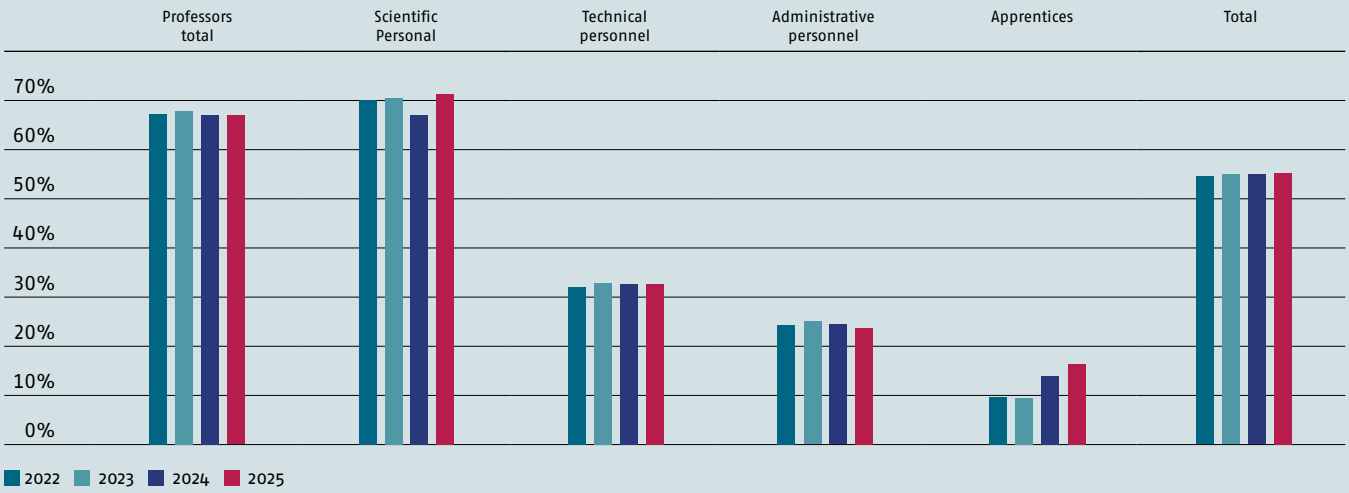
Number of professors broken down by origin: Switzerland, the EU and other countries.

Fig. 20: Employees' native languages 2025



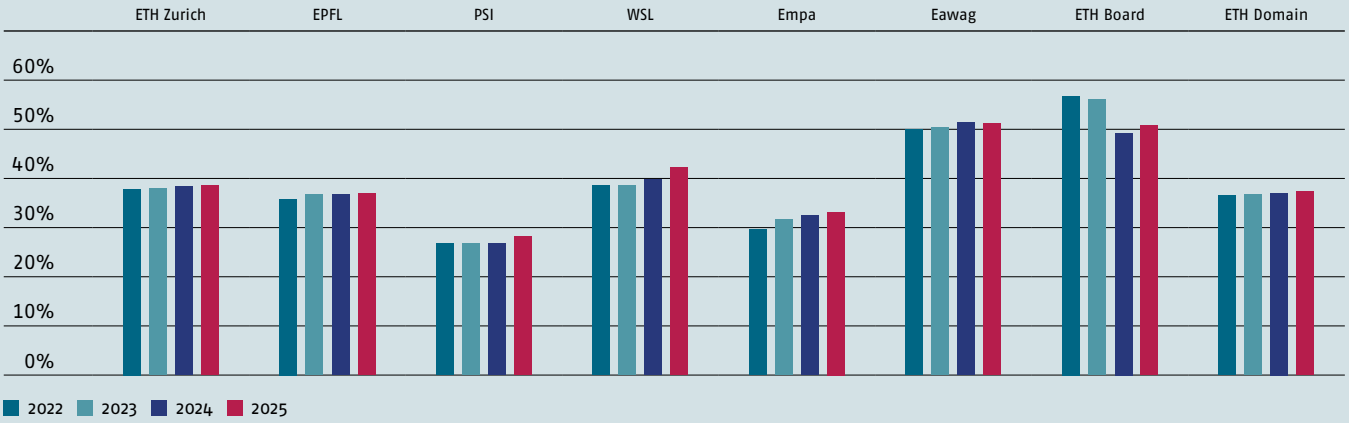
Native languages of employees in the ETH Domain in 2025. Figures for the previous year are shown in brackets.

Fig. 21: Development in the proportions of foreign employees by function group



Development in the proportions of foreign employees in the ETH Domain by function group (in relation to the number of employment contracts, EC).

Fig. 22: Development in the proportion of women by institution



Development in the proportion of women by institution over the past four years (in relation to the number of employment contracts, EC).

Fig. 23: Development in the proportion of women in management positions in the ETH Domain

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Management positions	2,643	2,697	2,745	2,767	2,793	2,810	2,853	2,897	2,928	2,982	3,049	3,061	3,065	3,071	3,088
Women	413	445	464	492	507	521	561	576	610	644	693	733	760	783	829
Men	2230	2252	2,281	2,275	2,286	2,289	2,292	2,321	2,318	2,338	2,356	2,328	2,305	2,288	2,259
in % of women	**15.6**	**16.5**	**16.9**	**17.8**	**18.2**	**18.5**	**19.7**	**19.9**	**20.8**	**21.6**	**22.7**	**23.9**	**24.8**	**25.5**	**26.8**
in % of men	84.4	83.5	83.1	82.2	81.8	81.5	80.3	80.1	79.2	78.4	77.3	76.1	75.2	74.5	73.2

Development of the proportion of women in management positions in figures and percentages, i e. function level 10 to 15 and professorship (with employment contracts, EC)

Fig. 24: Source of funds by function group

Function group		Professors (all)	Scientific personnel	Technical personnel	Administrative personnel	Total FTEs
Source of funds						
Total federal contribution Federal financial contribution	2024	788.5	5,856.5	3,191.5	2,962.8	12,799.3
	2025	785.1	5,619.6	3,201.7	2,962.4	12,568.8
	Δ 2024/2025	−3.4	−236.9	10.2	−0.4	−230.5
Third-party resources Research funding (SNSF, Innosuisse, other), government-funded research and EU research programmes	2024	35.5	4,325.3	277.8	93.6	4,732.2
	2025	35.4	4,536.0	300.5	97.1	4,969.0
	Δ 2024/2025	−0.1	210.7	22.7	3.5	236.8
Industry-oriented research, donations/bequests	2024	61.0	2,041.9	470.5	364.1	2,937.5
	2025	55.1	2,028.5	463.6	372.3	2,919.5
	Δ 2024/2025	−5.9	−13.4	−6.9	8.2	−18.0
Total	2024	885.0	12,223.7	3,939.8	3,420.5	20,469.0
	2025	875.6	12,184.1	3,965.8	3,431.8	20,457.3
	Δ 2024/2025	−9.4	−39.6	26.0	11.3	−11.7

Source of funds according to function groups (in FTEs) in 2025 compared to 2024. Δ (delta) shows the absolute change compared to the previous year. Figures exclude apprentices (465.5 FTEs) and trainees.

Real estate

Fig. 25: Source of funds for ETH Domain construction (in CHF millions)

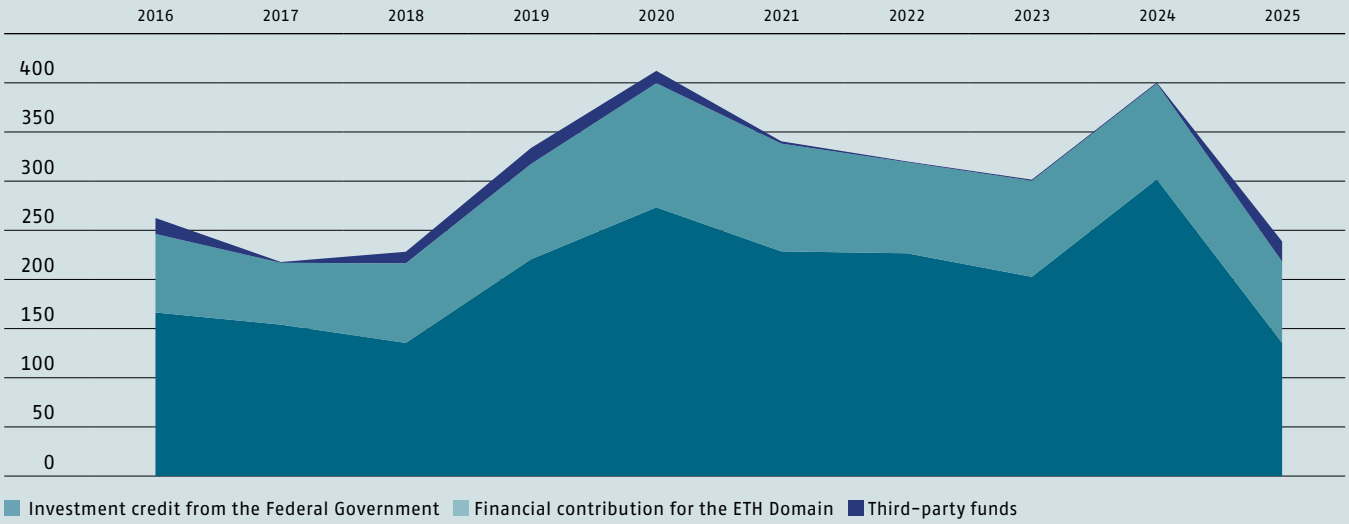
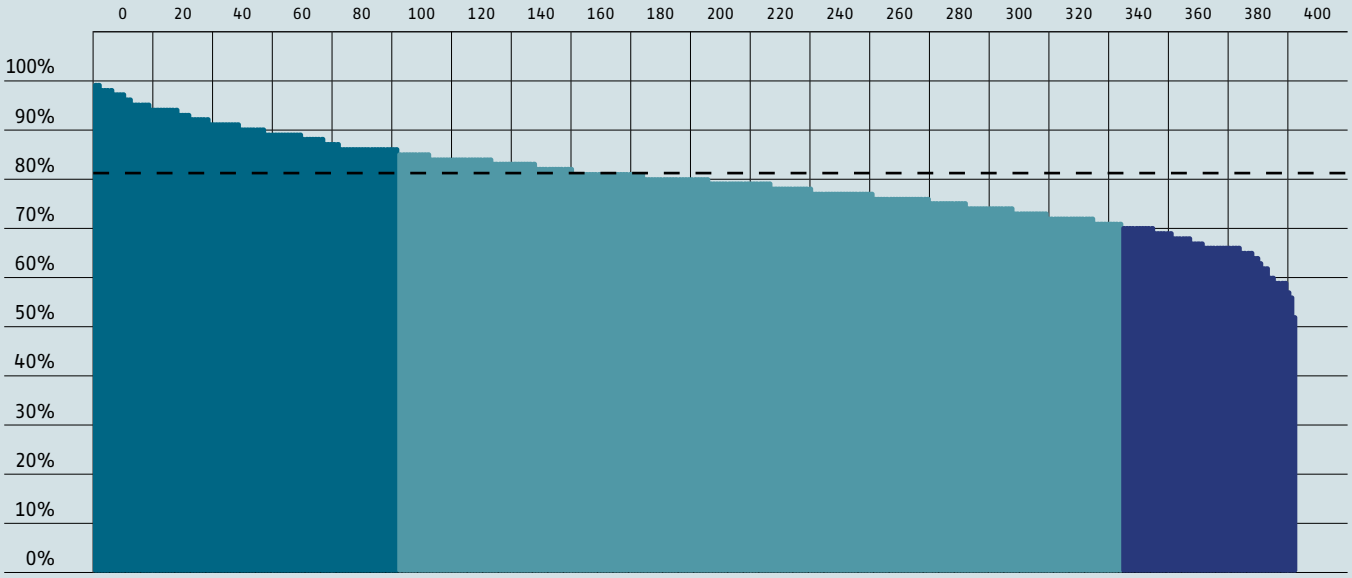


Fig. 26: Condition value as of 31 December 2025



Number of properties recorded: 387

- Very good condition, as new
- Good condition, no measures needed
- Average weighted by original value of properties: 81%
- Average condition, measures to be planned and implemented
- Poor condition, measures needed

Fig. 27: Development of the main usable area by institution in %

Fig. 28: Mix of areas (in 1,000 m²)

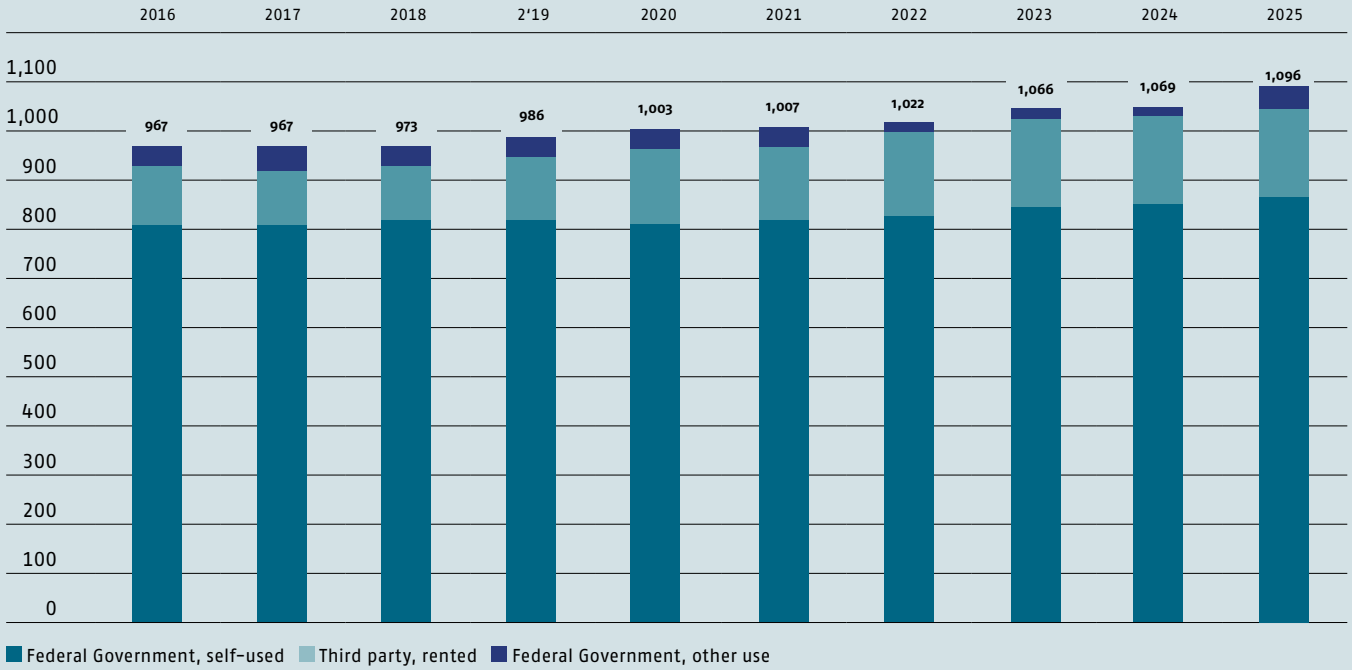


Fig. 29: Quantity structure of the ETH Domain portfolio

CHF millions	ETH Zurich	EPFL	PSI	WSL	Empa	Eawag	Total
Buildings							
Quantity	123	78	132	22	27	15	397
Original value	4,105	1,930	650	113	457	131	7,385
Book value	1,559	856	171	42	141	58	2,826
Plots							
Quantity	55	19	10	16	4	4	108
Book value	684	243	30	24	63	10	1,054
Book value of installations under construction	266	68	63	2	1	4	405
Building rights (not valuated, in compliance with regulations)							0
Total assets (book value real estate)	**2,509**	**1,168**	**263**	**67**	**205**	**72**	**4,285**
Provisions (e.g. for polluted sites, asbestos, radioactive waste)							226

Quantity and value of all government-owned real estate allocated to the institutions of the ETH Domain.

Fig. 30: Investments

CHF 1,000	ETH Zurich	EPFL	PSI	WSL	Empa	Eawag	Total
Investment credit from Federal Government	68,000	46,000	15,800	2,010	2,000	720	134,530
of which for new or replacement constructions	15,251	11,185	13,374	0	94	1	39,905
of which for maintenance of value and functionality	52,749	34,815	2,426	2,010	1,906	719	94,625
Financial contribution investments (for user-specific construction)	51,750	14,414	9,988	300	3,419	1,795	81,667
Third-party resources	20,000	0	0	0	546	0	20,546
Construction expenses of the Institutions	139,750	60,414	25,788	2,310	5,965	2,515	236,743
Main usable area (m²)	553,110	306,420	127,550	18,920	70,440	19,530	1,095,970
Construction expenses per m² main usable area (CHF/m²)	253	197	207	122	85	129	217

2025 investments in the ETH Domain portfolio, based on the main usable area (in m²). This is the part of the usable area that is directly allocated to the core task of teaching and research. Because the research institutes themselves do not provide teaching, a figure for the area across the entire Domain – for example in relation to the number of students – would not be very informative.

Environment and energy

Fig. 31: Environment and energy data

		ETH Domain 2023	ETH Domain 2024	ETH Zurich	EPFL	PSI	WSL	Empa	Eawag	ETH Domain Trend 2025[1]
BASIC DATA										
Energy reference area (ERA)[2]	m²	1,560,271	1,558,243	774,716	437,046	175,552	27,032	109,665	34,232	1,599,483
Full-time equivalent[3]	FTE	43,436	44,477	25,401	13,909	2,191	1,027	1,186	763	44,851
ENERGY[4]										
Final energy, net[5]	**kWh/a**	**435,062,741**	**435,637,167**	**208,418,366**	**85,515,659**	**115,042,972**	**4,507,556**	**18,636,016**	**3,516,598**	**449,185,782**
Electricity, net (not incl. self-produced)	**kWh/a**	**356,480,689**	**358,859,304**	**157,342,938**	**72,263,314**	**108,925,992**	**3,382,712**	**13,728,558**	**3,215,790**	**307,153,956**
Consumption of uncertified electricity	kWh/a	65,063,000	65,478,314	0	65,478,314	0	0	0	0	
Consumption of certified electricity	kWh/a	289,373,667	291,170,641	156,580,000	6,552,000	108,645,000	3,259,112	13,079,659	3,054,870	
Electricity (without naturemade star)	kWh/a	277,133,430	272,533,617	152,580,000	0	108,394,281	812,066	10,747,270	0	
Photovoltaic naturemade star	kWh/a	329,898	2,223,091	0	1,896,000	250,719	0	0	76,372	
Hydro power naturemade star	kWh/a	14,167,404	14,081,544	4,000,000	4,656,000	0	2,447,046	0	2,978,498	
Wind naturemade star	kWh/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Sale of electricity	kWh/a	−2,257,065	−2,332,389	0	0	0	0	−2,332,389	0	
Heat	**kWh/a**	**78,863,262**	**77,408,700**	**51,257,156**	**13,270,887**	**6,223,120**	**869,014**	**5,417,375**	**371,148**	
Fuel oil	kWh/a	5,395,955	1,950,202	1,345,730	251,000	268,120	65,781	0	19,571	
Natural gas, biogas	kWh/a	45,794,032	46,589,832	30,407,000	10,975,000	0	0	4,856,255	351,577	
District heating	kWh/a	48,008,879	48,551,007	39,990,000	2,044,887	5,955,000	0	561,120	0	
Woodchip	kWh/a	688,145	803,233	0	0	0	803,233	0	0	
Sale of heat	kWh/a	−21,023,749	−21,485,574	−21,485,574	0	0	0	0	0	
Fuels (own vehicles)	**kWh/a**	**1,762,812**	**1,579,512**	**581,210**	**214,458**	**174,852**	**379,430**	**138,982**	**90,580**	
Energy: additional information										
Energy costs, electricity and heat6	CHF/a	126,899,519	112,466,263	53,144,355	34,644,404	19,405,452	931,908	3,395,704	944,440	88,341,961
Self-generated renewable electricity	kWh/a	2,044,022	2,210,349	762,938	233,000	280,992	123,600	648,899	160,920	
Total sale to third parties	kWh/a	−22,988,065	−23,817,963	−21,485,574	0	0	0	−2,332,389	0	
WATER (DRINKING WATER)	m³	682,417	490,323	254,532	144,913	57,536	9,223	18,115	6,004	609,287
MATERIALS										
Paper	**kg**	**180,390**	**157,419**	**59,500**	**73,450**	**14,963**	**3,450**	**3,924**	**2,132**	**136,037**
Paper, new fibre	kg	41,049	29,202	4,000	16,401	8,177	285	274	65	23,442
Paper, recycled	kg	139,341	128,217	55,500	57,049	6,786	3,165	3,650	2,067	112,595
KEY FIGURES: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT										
Primary energy[7]	**kWh/a**	**627,898,422**	**629,269,909**	**238,149,824**	**219,160,079**	**138,496,498**	**5,649,040**	**23,245,894**	**4,568,573**	
Proportion of renewable energies	**%**	**72**	**72**	**64**	**17**	**77**	**84**	**70**	**92**	
CO_2 emissions[8]	**t CO_2/a**	**23,492**	**22,475**	**10,493**	**9,941**	**477**	**208**	**1,209**	**148**	

[1] Provisional figures for the year under review (trend), as at: start of March 2025.
[2] The energy reference area is the sum of all gross floor areas, above and below ground, which must be heated or air-conditioned in order to be used.
[3] The FTE (full-time equivalent) value listed here was supplemented by the number of students with an FTE value of 0.68 to produce the consumption per person.
[4] The key figures indicated for electricity and heat show the total consumption of both for buildings, as well as for teaching and research activities.
[5] Final energy is the portion of the primary energy that is left after losses due to energy conversion and transmission, after it is supplied via the consumer's domestic connection. The final energy basically corresponds to the energy that is purchased.
[6] The key indicator "energy costs" shows all expenditure (cash out) for the provision of energy (heat and electricity).
[7] In energy economics, one refers to primary energy as the energy that is available using the original forms or resources of energy, such as fuel (e. g. coal or natural gas), as well as energy carriers such as sun, wind or nuclear fuels.

FINANCES

* Extract from the Financial Report 2025.

Financial Report:
www.ethboard.ch/financialreport2025

Consolidated financial statements

Table 1: Statement of financial performance of the ETH Domain (consolidated)

CHF millions	Notes	Budget 2025	Actual 2025	Actual 2024	Change to Actual absolute
Federal financial contribution		2,471	2,471	2,449	22
Federal contribution to accommodation		211	211	203	8
Total federal contribution	**7**	**2,682**	**2,682**	**2,652**	**30**
Tuition fees, continuing education	**8**	**64**	**70**	**61**	**8**
Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), regular research funding		314	292	278	14
Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), transitional measures Confederation		n/a	39	29	10
Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse), regular research funding		50	49	45	5
Swiss Innovation Agency (Innosuisse), transitional measures Confederation		n/a	1	1	–1
Special federal funding of applied research, regular research funding		98	99	87	12
Special federal funding of applied research, transitional measures Confederation		n/a	8	10	–3
EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation (EU FPRI), regular research funding		141	50	65	–16
EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation (EU FPRI), transitional measures Confederation		n/a	99	81	18
Industry-oriented research (private sector)		148	157	142	15
Other project-oriented third-party funding (incl. cantons, municipalities, international organisations)		104	137	110	27
Research contributions, mandates and scientific services	**9**	**854**	**929**	**848**	**81**
Donations and bequests	**10**	**181**	**141**	**131**	**10**
Other revenue	**11**	**135**	**159**	**169**	**–10**
Operating revenue*		**3,916**	**3,981**	**3,862**	**119**
Personnel expenses	5, 12, 29	2,661	2,646	2,622	24
Other operating expenses	13	1,023	967	1,044	–77
Depreciation	21, 22, 24	328	393	328	65
Transfer expenses	14	106	63	63	–
Operating expenses		**4,117**	**4,068**	**4,057**	**12**
OPERATING RESULT		**–201**	**–88**	**–195**	**107**
NET FINANCE INCOME/EXPENSE*	**15**	**8**	**27**	**37**	**–10**
Share of surplus/deficit of associated entities and joint ventures *	20	–	39	14	25
SURPLUS (+) OR DEFICIT (–)		**–193**	**–21**	**–144**	**123**
Total revenue*		3,924	4,047	3,913	134

Table 2: Balance sheet of the ETH Domain (consolidated)

CHF millions	Notes	31.12.2025	31.12.2024	Change absolute
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash and cash equivalents	16	548	633	−85
Current receivables from non-exchange transactions	17	789	775	14
Current receivables from exchange transactions	17	51	54	−4
Current financial assets and loans	23	1,433	1,401	32
Inventories	18	16	13	3
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	19	82	77	5
Total current assets		**2,918**	**2,953**	**−35**
NON-CURRENT ASSETS				
Property, plant and equipment	21	1,782	2,137	−354
Intangible assets	21	33	64	−31
Non-current receivables from non-exchange transactions	17	1,781	1,242	539
Non-current receivables from exchange transactions	17	–	–	–
Investments in associated entities and joint ventures	20	308	267	40
Activated rights of use	22	816	–	816
Non-current financial assets and loans	23	87	84	3
Co-financing	24	116	100	16
Total non-current assets		**4,923**	**3,894**	**1,028**
TOTAL ASSETS		**7,840**	**6,847**	**993**
LIABILITIES				
Current liabilities	25	185	223	−38
Current financial liabilities	26	59	152	−93
Accrued expenses and deferred income	27	209	213	−4
Short-term provisions	28	107	98	9
Short-term liabilities		**560**	**687**	**−126**
Dedicated third-party funds	30	2,494	1,942	552
Non-current financial liabilities	26	830	239	591
Net defined benefit liabilities	29	173	596	−422
Long-term provisions	28	514	511	2
Long-term liabilities		**4,011**	**3,289**	**722**
Total liabilities		**4,572**	**3,976**	**596**
EQUITY				
Valuation reserves		809	392	417
Reserves from associated entities	20	308	267	40
Donations, grants, co-financing		1,082	1,050	32
Reserves with internal/without dedication		916	941	−25
Accumulated surplus (+)/deficit (–)		154	221	−67
Total equity		**3,269**	**2,871**	**397**
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		**7,840**	**6,847**	**993**

Total federal contribution

There are two views of the total federal contribution in the ETH Domain: according to the statement of financial performance and according to the expenditure ceiling.

The **statement of financial performance** on page 112 shows the surplus (+) or deficit (–) of the ETH Domain in accordance with IPSAS, i. e. all revenue and expenses shown therein are recognised on an accrual basis. In the statement of financial performance, the total federal contribution is made up of the federal financial contribution credit (A231.0181) and the federal contribution to accommodation credit of the ETH Domain (A231.0182) (see Fig. 32 on the right: Credits in the statement of financial performance). The federal financial contribution funds the operation of the ETH Domain, and the accommodation contribution covers the costs for the use of federally owned real estate, which are recognised in the same amount as other operating expenses. In the reporting period, the total federal contribution in the statement of financial performance amounted to CHF 2,682.0m.

The ERI Dispatch contains the annual expenditure credit for the ETH Domain in the four-year **expenditure ceiling**. This is made up of the federal financial contribution credit (A231.0181) and the investments in buildings of the ETH Domain credit (A202.0134) (see Fig. 33 on the right: Credits in the expenditure ceiling). In the reporting period, the total federal contribution attributable to the expenditure ceiling totalled CHF 2,642.1m.

An explanation of the total federal contribution from the perspective of the credits approved annually by Parliament is provided below.

The ETH Domain's expenditure ceiling for the 2025–2028 period

In order to implement its Strategic Plan for 2025–2028, the ETH Board requested average annual growth of 3.2% (incl. 0.7% inflation) for the ETH Domain in its projected financial requirements (see ERI Dispatch 2025–2028 of 8 March 2024, FedD 2024 900). This corresponded to an expenditure ceiling for the period 2025–2028 of a maximum of CHF 12,222m.

Due to the financial planning of the Federal Government and the priorities defined in the ERI area, this request was not met. In the ERI Dispatch 2025–2028, the Federal Council requested an expenditure ceiling of CHF 11,116m for the ETH Domain for the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2025–2028.

The expenditure ceiling for 2025–2028 was increased by CHF 50m and a total amount of CHF 11,166m was approved by the Federal Parliament in FedD 4 concerning ERI Dispatch 2025–2028 on 24 September 2024 (FedD 2024 2531). This corresponds to average annual nominal growth of 1.3% (based on the proposed 2024 budget of CHF 2,747.9m). This includes the costs of CHF 11m per year for the dismantling and disposal of the accelerator facilities at PSI.

Approved credits in 2025

As part of its financial assessment for the 2025 budget, the Federal Council decided on a one-off reduction of CHF 100m in the ETH Domain and a further across-the-board budget cut of 1.4% from 2025 onwards. The budget nevertheless also includes CHF 20m in third-party funding from co-financing for investments in federally owned real estate.

In FedD Ia for the 2025 budget, the Federal Assembly increased the two credits that count towards the expenditure ceiling by CHF 12.5m and approved a total of CHF 2,642.1m. Compared with the 2024 financial statements (CHF 2,747.9m), this corresponds to a decrease of CHF 105.8m (excluding co-financing from third-party funding: decrease of CHF 125.8m).

The federal financial contribution (credit A231.0181) amounted to CHF 2,470.6m and the investment credit to CHF 171.5m.

The ETH Domain made use of the possibility of forming reserves in the federal government's parent company. This involves an application under Art. 32*a* FHG in the amount of CHF 17m, which is related to delayed construction projects at ETH Zurich and at Eawag. The Federal Parliament will decide on the application in its 2026 summer session.

For this reason, the ETH Domain received a total of CHF 2,625.1m in funding from the federal government in 2025 (2024: CHF 2,747.9m). The 2025 national accounts show an investment credit of CHF 154.5m that was received or used.

Fig. 32: Credits in the statement of financial performance

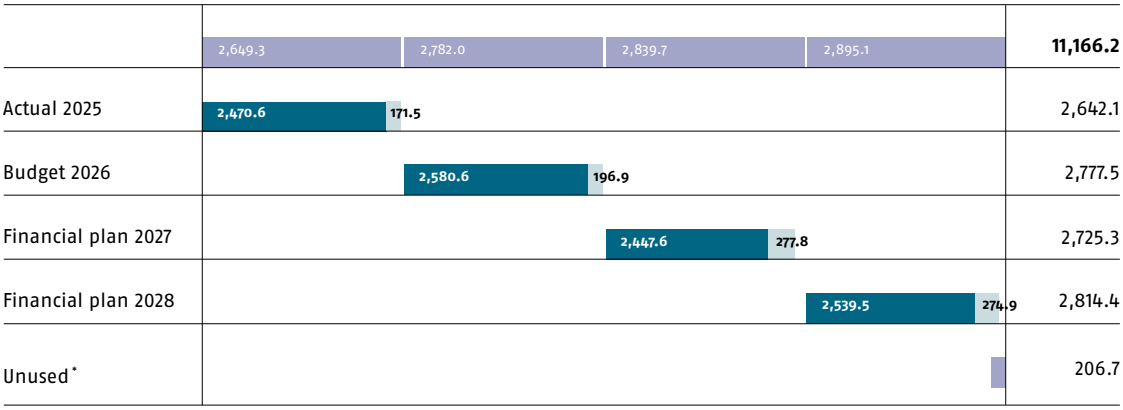
CHF millions	
Federal financial contribution (A231.0181)	2,470.6
Federal contribution to accommodation for the ETH Domain (A231.0182)	211.4
Total federal financial contribution, financial performance view	**2682.0**

Fig. 33: Credits in the expenditure ceiling

CHF millions	
Federal financial contribution (A231.0181)	2,470.6
Investments in buildings of the ETH Domain (A202.0134)	171.5
Total federal financial contribution, expenditure ceiling view	2,642.1

Fig. 34: Expenditure ceiling and credits for the ETH Domain in the 2025–2028 ERI period

CHF millions



* The anticipated utilisation of the expenditure ceiling for the 2025–2028 period amounts to CHF 10,959.4m. This corresponds to an average annual growth rate of 0.6%, compared with 1.3% planned for the expenditure ceiling. These figures also include CHF 30m in third-party funding from co-financing in federal real estate.

A231.0181 Federal financial contribution
A202.0134 Investments in buildings of the ETH Domain

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- the members of the ISP Group of the ETH Domain (Implementation of Strategic Planning),
- the members of the ETH Domain ComTeam (Heads of Communication and their staff),
- the departmental heads and employees of the ETH Board staff and of the institutions of the ETH Domain.

ETH BOARD

The ETH Domain consists of the two Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology ETH Zurich and EPFL, as well as the four federal research institutes: the Paul Scherrer Institute PSI, WSL, Empa and Eawag. Appointed by the Federal Council, the ETH Board is the strategic governing and supervisory body of the ETH Domain.

www.ethboard.ch

The Institutions of the ETH Domain:

ETH Zurich
Around 515 professors, approx. 26,900 undergraduate and doctoral students, approx. 3,400 technical and administrative staff members and around 6,520 scientific employees from about 130 countries: they all research, teach, learn and work at ETH Zurich. Networked globally with the scientific community, and rooted in Switzerland via National Centres of Competence in Research. Over 7,000 young people graduate every year, bringing the latest knowledge to Swiss companies. Or they found one of the dozens of spin-offs established each year in industries with a promising future such as nanotechnology, medtech, cyber security or IT. www.ethz.ch

EPFL
With its dynamic community of over 20,000 people, EPFL has created a unique spirit of curiosity and an atmosphere of open dialogue. It provides its students with solid technical knowledge while encouraging them to develop their imagination, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit in interdisciplinary projects. At its various locations, EPFL has a strong research community that works on topics such as data science, personalised health and robotics. Knowledge and technology transfer ensures that this research finds its way into society. EPFL is an important driver of innovation in Switzerland and offers solutions to climate change and the ageing population – for the benefit of humanity as a whole. www.epfl.ch

PSI
The Paul Scherrer Institute PSI is the largest research institute for natural and engineering sciences in Switzerland. Its research is focused on four main topics: future technology, energy and climate, health innovation and fundamentals of nature. PSI develops, builds and operates complex, large-scale research facilities. Every year, more than 3,000 researchers from Switzerland and all over the world come to conduct experiments at the unique facilities that are not possible anywhere else. www.psi.ch

Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research WSL

WSL
As Switzerland's leading research institution for terrestrial environmental systems, WSL addresses global challenges arising from land use change, climate change, biodiversity loss, altered biogeochemical cycles and urbanisation, as well as their interactions. WSL develops scientifically sound solutions for forests, landscapes, biodiversity, natural hazards, snow and ice in a changing world. Together with partners from research, practice and the public, WSL is committed to a future based on sustainability. www.wsl.ch

Materials Science and Technology

Empa
Empa is the interdisciplinary research institute of the ETH Domain for materials science and technology. On the basis of its research, it develops innovative solutions to meet the biggest challenges currently facing industry and society, and therefore plays a significant role in reinforcing the innovative capacity and international competitiveness of Swiss industry in an increasingly competitive environment. www.empa.ch

aquatic research

Eawag
Eawag is one of the world's leading water research institutes. Its strength and success are based on the combination of research, teaching and further education that it has provided for 90 years, along with consultancy and the transfer of knowledge. The combination of natural sciences, engineering and social sciences enables comprehensive research to be conducted into water in relatively untouched rivers and lakes, right through to wastewater management systems. www.eawag.ch

Cover page

The "tree doctor" Valentin Queloz from WSL is responsible for "area monitoring", a nationwide early-warning system designed to protect Swiss forests from harmful invasive organisms (see report on p. 27 et seq.).

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