



Switzerland Innovation Tech4Impact: Six Projects Awarded

Almost 100 project teams responded to the first call for proposals launched by Switzerland Innovation together with partners from the Swiss economy. Six projects were selected based on their degree of innovation, sustainability and technology. The topics addressed by the award-winning projects range from reducing water consumption to renewable heat generation and the improved usability of electronic waste.

The call for proposals was launched with the aim to foster innovative solutions within the Swiss ecosystem that can help meet the Sustainable Development Goals introduced as part of the UN Agenda 2030. This first call for proposals launched by Switzerland Innovation together with its innovation partners from the Swiss economy and in collaboration with EPFL Tech4Impact, prompted a response from 98 project teams, which submitted their ideas addressing one of the six highlighted UN Sustainable Development Goals. From this broad field of applicants, an external and independent jury selected six projects whose novel approaches will now be further developed in one of the five Switzerland Innovation Parks:

Cocoboard smart micro-factory concept : Cocoboard is a natural fiberboard made of coconut shells that can be used in manufacturing furniture and in housing construction. The product, designed by the company NaturLoop, aims to foster integration among coconut farmers and respond to the demand for affordable construction materials in developing countries. Together with the Swiss Smart Factory at Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne, NaturLoop is developing a micro-factory concept that is to be implemented in the Philippines in 2022.

Plastogaz : Plastogaz, a spin-off of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (EPFL), has developed a technology that uses powerful catalysts to selectively convert mixed plastics that cannot be re-cycled into methane. Methane is used as a form of heating gas and in the chemicals industry. The Plastogaz technology has the potential to considerably reduce the greenhouse gases resulting from the disposal of plastic waste (e.g. through incineration).

Circular economy for composites : The composites currently used in shipping, sports, the aerospace industry and in wind turbines are susceptible to cracking, require expensive maintenance and are difficult to recycle. The solution offered by the company CompPair, a spin-off of EPFL, shortens repair times from hours to minutes, extends the product service life and can help make the recycling process more efficient.

Circular Economy in practice by recycling critical METals (CECO-MET) : Electronic waste is one of the largest, growing municipal waste streams in the world. CECO-MET, a spin-off of the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI), is aimed at achieving strong municipal electronic waste disposal so as to recover valuable metals. The patented technology is designed to improve recycling, promote responsible consumption, and make towns and cities more sustainable by introducing a circular-economy approach and "urban mining".

Enerdrape : The technology developed by Enerdrape, a spin-off of EPFL, uses geothermal wall panels to harvest geothermal and excess energy within buildings for heating and cooling. The patented solution helps make existing buildings more energy-efficient and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

WaSteLeSS: The UN forecasts that by 2030, the global water supply will fall 40% short of demand. This is where the WaSteLeSS project launched by the company Droopole comes into play: A network of sensors delivers time-relevant data on hot- and cold-water consumption. The new findings obtained using the patented solution facilitate a better understanding of consumption behavior, allowing hot- and cold-water waste to be reduced.

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A Boost for Innovation Projects

The award-winning project teams are to receive a CHF 85,000 grant. The funds are designed to give the innovation projects a considerable boost, make them ready for market launch or allow them to embark on further development. The subsidies are financed by the following innovation partners: ABB, Credit Suisse, Die Mobiliar, economiesuisse, Interpharma, Schindler, Swiss Re Foundation, Swisscom, UBS and Zurich Insurance.

About Switzerland Innovation Tech4Impact

The Switzerland Innovation Tech4Impact initiative aims to help pioneering innovation projects addressing one of six selected UN Sustainable Development Goals achieve a breakthrough. In order to qualify for a subsidy, the proposed project must be based on an advanced technology that will reach maturity and application within the next three years. More information is available at: <https://sitech4impact.ch/>

About Switzerland Innovation

Switzerland Innovation is a network of five innovation parks across Switzerland based on a joint initiative of public institutions, academia and the private sector with a statutory mandate from the Swiss Federal Council. Switzerland Innovation forms an ecosystem that allows universities and innovative companies to collaborate and use their knowledge and research results for the development of new, marketable products and services. <https://www.switzerland-innovation.com/>

Members of the Jury :

The jury comprised the following personalities: Dr. Christine Bratrich, Director of ETH Sustainability, ETH Zurich; Thierry Duvanel, Director of Collaborative Innovation at Bühler Group at EPF Lausanne; Dr. Peter Morf, Head of Section "Energy Technologies and Resource Efficiency" , Hightech Zentrum Aargau AG, Brugg; Dr. Bram Stieltjes, Head of Research & Analysis Services, D&ICT Department, University of Basel; Dr. sc. nat. Pascale Vonmont, Director at Gebert Rüt Stiftung.

Authors: Aurélie Schick, Raphaël Tschanz

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