

Press Release

New Swiss centre for space start-ups

ETH Zurich wins competition for ESA start-up programme

Zurich, 14 September 2016

ETH Zurich was awarded the contract by the European Space Agency (ESA) for the ESA Business Incubation Centre Switzerland (ESA BIC Switzerland). The initiative was launched by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). ESA BIC Switzerland, along with numerous partners from industry and research, supports selected young start-ups with a connection to space technologies.

ESA BIC Switzerland focuses on Swiss start-ups that apply innovative space technologies to challenges in other fields. It offers one of the most attractive programmes for young entrepreneurs in Switzerland. Eligible start-ups can receive up to EUR 500,000 of financial backing as well as technological and business support. The programme is currently projected to last for five years and will accept up to 10 start-ups per year. A jury made up of representatives from ESA, ETH Zurich and other partners will select the first start-ups for ESA BIC Switzerland this November.

ETH Zurich made the best bid

SERI and ESA had various high-quality applications to choose from, and ETH Zurich distinguished itself through its numerous national and international industry contacts, among other things. The ETH Zurich consortium consists of a total of more than 50 industry and research partners – a key element of ESA BIC Switzerland's offering. ETH Zurich's excellence in relevant technological areas (e.g. autonomous systems, drones and Internet of Things) that already make use of ESA technology and data (e.g. earth observation data, GPS data) also contributed to the decision. Furthermore, ETH Zurich's application was the only one to view the implementation of ESA BIC Switzerland as a nationwide programme, right from the start.

'We're delighted to have won the bid for ESA BIC Switzerland,' says ETH Vice President Research and Corporate Relations, Detlef Günther. 'This will enable us to offer future-oriented technologies and

start-ups a new platform, and will connect us with other ESA locations across Europe.' There are plans in place for the start-ups sponsored by ESA BIC Switzerland to relocate to Switzerland Innovation Park Zurich in Dübendorf, if entrepreneurs are interested.

A consortium of experts

Along with ETH Zurich, the consortium behind ESA BIC Switzerland includes the Institut für Jungunternehmen (IFJ) and the start-up initiative Venture Kick. These partners have many years of experience in scouting, selecting and supporting start-ups. Also on board is Impact Hub, a global network that helps start-ups establish themselves and connect with others. Impact Hub has more than 80 locations worldwide, including branches in Zurich, Geneva and Bern. AP Swiss, an ESA platform founded in 2012 to promote new applications and commercial uses for satellite data and technologies, will also participate. Fifty other well-known national and international partners from industry and research are also involved with ESA BIC Switzerland, thereby fulfilling all the demands of a public-private partnership.

www.esabic.ch →

Further Information

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ESA BIC Switzerland

ESA BIC is an initiative launched in 2003 by the European Space Agency's Technology Transfer Programme Office (TTPO). Its goal is to support start-ups that deal with space technologies and applications. There are currently 15 ESA BICs across 12 different European countries. Another one will open in 2016, and further ESA BICs are planned for 2017. ESA BIC Switzerland has the capacity to support up to 10 start-ups every year. It collaborates with partners and sponsors to offer young entrepreneurs support for up to two years. In the first phase, the start-ups receive a total of EUR 50,000 and can expect up to EUR 450,000 during a second phase. They also benefit from individual coaching, networking activities and a Europe-wide network of industry and research contacts.