



**SWITZERLAND
INNOVATION**
PARK INNOVAARE

Press Release

PARK INNOVAARE: New biotech cluster on the horizon

Highly specialized biotech start-ups at the innovation park at the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI)

Villigen, 6 September 2017 – Step by step, highly innovative biotech spin-offs and start-ups established at PARK INNOVAARE, an innovation park at the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI), are transforming the site into a rising biotech center specializing in structure-based drug discovery. This is an encouraging trend, pointing to the successful translation of the latest scientific findings to market and their commercialization. The new ecosystem will be further developed with the finalization of an extended campus (approx. 35,000 sqm will be added by 2020), paving the way for more biotech and pharmaceutical spin-offs and companies at PARK INNOVAARE.

Since 2015, PARK INNOVAARE has been developing a focused innovation ecosystem providing companies with access to all premises for state-of-the-art research. Located just a stone's throw away from the PSI, a leading research institute for natural and engineering science, and its large research facilities, it offers unique infrastructure for innovative start-ups. Companies active particularly in the field of pharmaceutical research and early-stage drug discovery will benefit from the fast-growing ecosystem. For instance, with the new X-ray free electron laser SwissFEL, recently put into operation at the PSI, scientists can obtain unprecedented information on molecular structures and processes. It is an incredible step forward in basic research and the development of novel pharmaceuticals, and "a completely new age of drug discovery", as Professor Gebhard Schertler, Head of the PSI Division Biology and Chemistry, puts it.

PARK INNOVAARE: building the bridge between research and business

PARK INNOVAARE's primary goal is to foster this successful transfer of technology from research into practice. It offers connections to the world-class researchers as well as space for establishing and developing spin-offs, SMEs and R&D departments of large companies. Its ecosystem also includes a network of industrial partners and service providers. Completed with the entrepreneurial spirit, outstanding scientific expertise, and diversity of funding instruments, this allows PARK INNOVAARE to act as a link between science and the market.

Nils Gebhardt, Managing Director of PARK INNOVAARE, emphasizes the potential of the site and its location in Switzerland, one of the world's most innovative countries: "It is the mix of the world's leading research institutes, international enterprises, innovative start-ups and forward-thinking venture capitalists that creates all the conditions for the further development of drug discovery. This is how PARK INNOVAARE – located at the very center of such an environment – creates value for the global biotech and pharma industry." As such, though still in its starting-up phase, PARK INNOVAARE provides a quality comparable to the world's leading life science clusters such as Boston or Cambridge.

Biotech companies settling down

Four of the nine companies now based at PARK INNOVAARE are from the biotechnology sector. Supported by the PSI Division of Biology and Chemistry, leadXpro AG is working on unlocking more membrane protein targets while InterAx Biotech AG is building a biosensor technology platform enabling a quantitative comparison of drug-induced GPCR (G protein-coupled receptors) signaling pathways. Spin-off Excelsus Structural Solutions (Swiss) AG and the company Crystallise! AG offer

scientific insights and analytical services to the pharma sector. The success of these young companies shows the great potential that PARKINNOVAARE offers for the translation of basic pharmacological research into industrial application. Further biotech companies are to follow.

Innovation campus being expanded

By 2020, more than 35,000 square meters of ultra-modern, highly flexible surfaces for laboratories, clean rooms, workshops and offices will be built in Villigen. In addition to spin-offs, large companies should also find sufficient space and the appropriate infrastructure for their group research centers. Due to its excellent economic conditions, the canton of Aargau, one of 28 Swiss federal states, will be able to exert an additional magnetic effect on companies and the workforce at the site.

Modern Drug Discovery

Today's drug discovery is relying more and more on the results of basic research. Exact information about a molecule's structures in different phases, the effect chemicals have on a human cell, signaling pathways or simply an accurate description of a pharmaceutical mixtures will have a dramatic impact on the future of the industry. Large research facilities, such as PSI's Swiss Light Source Synchrotron SLS or X-ray free electron laser SwissFEL, are helping scientists and corporate R&Ds collect this information. For example, the SwissFEL can provide unprecedented insights into structures as small as an atom and into phenomena as fast as the vibrations of molecular bonds. Thanks to these large facilities, we will be able to find better treatments for cardiovascular, ocular, oncological, immunological diseases. Not only can they help prevent side effects of a drug, but they will also save the industry millions in the developing phase.

More insights into modern drug discovery [here](#).

[Interview](#) with Professor Gebhard Schertler, Head of the Division of Biology and Chemistry at the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI).

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PARK INNOVAARE at the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI) is one location of "Switzerland Innovation". PARK INNOVAARE's main focus is on innovations in the fields of accelerator technology, advanced materials & processes, humans & health, and energy. In order to deliver the best services for industrial research groups and spin-offs, we connect creative minds in large corporations, SME and research institutions, both within Switzerland and internationally. Our mission: connect the right people to enable innovations to be made market-ready faster.