

STARTING UP INNOVATION

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Two years BASEL INCUBATOR

Editorial



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The BASEL INCUBATOR has now been active for two years. Its success has been greater than expected: in total, 16 companies have arrived. Three of them have left the 'Incubator' again – this is within the expected turnover range. Since the start of 2012 we have already welcomed two new start-up companies to our premises at the Stücki Business Center in Basel: Alma BioTherapeutics and Spheroidals.

Alma Biotherapeutics comes from Israel and made a quite conscious decision to settle in Basel. The company implements the research findings of Professor Irun Cohen from the Weizmann Institute in Tel Aviv and is developing medicinal products to treat inflammations. **Spheroidals** comes from Basel University Hospital, from Patrick Hunziker's group, and is developing medicinal products derived from nanomedicine.

On the following pages you can read about the diversity of the other start-up companies in the Incubator, the important developments they are working on and the products they have already marketed.

Since last summer a relative has come to stay at the Incubator's home: **the Technologiepark Basel**. This institution can take on an important role for start-ups in a later phase. The incubator company **BioVersys**, for instance, was able to move into its own laboratories and offices there when it was seen that there would soon be very little space in the Incubator for BioVersys and other start-up research companies.

It is now impossible to imagine the innovative landscape of north-west Switzerland without the BASEL INCUBATOR. The collaboration with the other players, such as i-net Switzerland, the Technologiepark Basel, businesspark Reinach/Laufen and many others, has worked out brilliantly.

The following fact is a clear sign of its success: north-west Switzerland has the most biotech start-ups, as you can see from the Startup Monitor (www.startupmonitor.ch), a tool from ETHZ (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich) and UniSG (University of St. Gallen). We could all profit from this achievement if we commit ourselves to pursuing the course which has been so successful thus far, especially if the start-up companies which have settled with us continue to get broad support from various sources, and above all close monitoring in the form of professional coaching by the 'old hands' in the hard and stony life sciences business.

Precision robots for better surgery, medicines for fatal hospital-acquired infections, and novel remedies for psoriasis or cardiovascular disease, products to guard against viruses in the environment, viruses in foods and even the computer sort of virus, tools for virtual collaboration and creativity at the computer, and also radically innovative medical imaging procedures – BASEL INCUBATOR's start-up companies are working at full pressure on all of these.

Thank you for your interest.

AOT



The AOT team is working on the controls of a **robot whose laser beam can remove bone accurately and with unvarying precision or cut out pieces in it.** The contact-free and vibration-free laser from CARLO, the 'Computer Assisted and Robot-Guided Laser Osteotome' can do these things five times better than the most skilful

surgeon. Even if the patient moves during the operation, CARLO will react within milliseconds. This enables pieces of bone which have to be separated – such as the sternum during heart surgery – to be reunited stably and with an exact fit during healing, as with a zip fastener.

BioVersys AG



Almost 40 % of all antibiotics sold worldwide are used to treat hospital-acquired infections. However, because pathogen resistance is steadily growing, more and more antibiotics are becoming ineffective. The team from Bioversys AG is working on a **switch for the genetic material of the bacteria which enables resistance to be switched off.** The team called this TRIC, for Transcriptional Repressor Inhibitory Compounds. Bioversys has not only managed to demonstrate that

this approach functioned successfully in the animal model, it has also made significant progress with product development. Two projects to combat resistance in hospital-acquired (or 'nosocomial') pathogens are in 'hit-to-lead' development. If all goes well, preclinical safety testing can start at the beginning of 2013 and the first clinical anti-tuberculosis trials in man in 2014.

➤ bioversys.com

Cardiolynx



Cardiolynx focuses on **new methods of treating cardiovascular disease.** At present, the team is investigating three highly promising new active substances for novel medicines which combine two principles of action from current products.

The hope is that this will improve patient outcomes. The European Patent Office has recently protected patents from Cardiolynx – evidence of the innovativeness of this start-up company's highly promising approach to research. ➤ cardiolynx.ch

CELLEC BIOTEK AG



CELLEC BIOTEK sells **bioreactors in which three-dimensional tissues can be cultured.** These tissues are grown not just for direct use in the clinical sector of regenerative medicine, they can also be used for modern active substance testing in the pharmaceuti-

cal industry and for basic research in cellular biology. Cellec has set itself the goal of becoming the international leader in three-dimensional tissue culture.

➤ cellecbiotek.com

ENNAR Pharma

ENNAR PHARMA

ENNAR Pharma is working on the development of a **novel therapy for psoriasis**. The team reached an important milestone when it developed a unique stable presentation for epidermal growth factor. This could

form the basis for innovative therapeutic approaches in the future. Clinical trials using this novel treatment are already in progress in the Dermatology Department of Zurich University Hospital.

HighDim

HighDim is working on the **development of high-resolution and multi-dimensional methods of medical imaging**, such as computed tomography and ultrasound. To this end, the team is developing novel de-

vices and software from first principles. An American medical technology company is one of the first clients to make use of HighDim's research and development expertise. highdim.com

INOFEAINOFEA
Innovative Nanomaterials For Environmental Applications

INOFEA develops and markets novel **nanomaterials which recognize and bind viruses**. Although viruses can be found everywhere they are so tiny that if currently available methods are used it is impossible or immensely difficult to remove them from materials where they are absolutely unwanted,

as from medicines, sterile water and solutions, and foods. Recently, INOFEA has made a licensing agreement with a partner from the university sector. This will allow increased production of the existing products and further advancement of the marketing strategies. inofea.com

joesecurity

Joe Sandbox is the name of Joe Security's product. **It recognizes and analyzes harmful computer viruses, Trojans, worms** and other dreaded malware in all current operating systems. Joe Sandbox makes it possible to simply see through the malware program's mode of action – and

this is one of the most important steps in fighting it. Over the past year, the number of employees and clients of this start-up company has multiplied and the company would like even stronger growth so it can develop more new computer-protection products. joesecurity.org

useKIT

useKIT sells the two products ProBindr and useKit Knowledge. They allow **teamwork across company boundaries** in an immediately comprehensible virtual work environment. The tools need no installation or maintenance and are immediately ready for takeoff, no matter where the members are located. This reduces emails and telephone conversations and gives a clearer overview

of projects in progress. At the end of 2011 the company set up a large KTI project to develop a 'Swiss Secure Data Room' and gain important clients. Continuous further development and expansion of the ProBindr, enhancement of the market presence and the opening up of new markets are the goals for the coming months. usekit.com

vizago

With the vizago technology, clients can **create three-dimensional reconstruction models from an ordinary photograph or picture**. This is important for 3D computer games, avatars, medical simulations, advertising, virtual shopping, or making personalized

greetings cards. TESCO, one of the biggest retail chains in England, is already using this technology successfully. At present, the team is fully focused on marketing and gaining more clients. vizago.ch

Opinion

Prof. Dr. Gerda Huber Trottmann
Head of University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland

The BASEL INCUBATOR is an important scheme, an essential intermediate step in the university-business development-industry sphere. Researchers with a good business idea will find that the environment here allows them to plan the first steps towards becoming entrepreneurs and to do proper 'business'.

The exact cantonal location is essentially irrelevant as long as it is easily accessible from the universities. The important thing is that the premises must be attractive and practical and any mixture of sectors already on site must be a good fit for the needs and network of a start-up company.

I think it is a good thing in principle to have **other facilities besides the BASEL INCUBATOR**, for instance in the technology parks and the innovation centres. More facilities mean more space and wider options for start-up companies at different phases of

development and with varying financial options and support needs. If I could make a wish for start-up companies, I would create a scheme in which start-ups with an attractive idea could draw upon a specific sum of money without recovering outlay in order to finance the setting-up of a business plan which can open more doors for them.

Encouraging innovation, as with the BASEL INCUBATOR or through the EVA, is still indispensable. Many researchers equate innovation with the pure concept of a new technology or application. On the market, however, innovation only means anything if this idea can be implemented and ultimately protected and sold – in other words, if it can be literally turned into a money-maker.

On the long journey there, young researchers need active and vigorous support.

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