

Press Release

New companies

ETH spin-off machine running at full speed

Zurich, 4. January 2019

ETH Zurich can look back on an exceptionally good year for spin-offs: 27 companies were founded in 2018, more than any year previously. Financing rounds totalling over CHF 170 million and the listing of Sensirion on the stock exchange bear witness to the market success of ETH spin-offs.

In 2018, ETH Zurich achieved a new record high for the number of spin-offs founded: a total of 27 founding teams took the plunge into independence. While an average of 15 ETH spin-offs were founded per year from 2000 to 2010*, the following decade has seen an average of 24 per year. For Detlef Günther, Vice President of Research and Corporate Relations, the successive increase in the number of new companies over the past two decades is the best evidence that internal university support programmes pay off: "I am delighted that so many talented young people are displaying the perseverance and courage required to develop their ideas to market maturity, as this ultimately also benefits the Swiss economy and society," he says.

Digital technologies for medicine

The spin-offs cover a wide range of subjects and reflect the breadth of research at ETH Zurich. The largest proportion of new companies – 12 in 2018 – come from the field of information and communication technology. This continues a trend that emerged a few years ago. A trend is also visible in application areas: eight spin-offs from various fields are developing products for the medical sector. For example, some of the young founders are working on a new method of root canal treatment, others on an easy-to-handle and inexpensive PET scanner for the early detection of Alzheimer's.

In the course of the digital transformation, artificial intelligence will also become increasingly important: six of the new companies are working with machine learning methods. The spin-off Scailyte is developing a software that can analyse patterns in huge volumes of data from individual cells and link them to various diseases. This could significantly improve the early detection of a whole range of diseases,

such as cancer. The fact that so many of the new spin-offs are focused on the fields of medicine and data science is unsurprising, as these are two of ETH Zurich's main focus areas.

Success on the market

The young founders possess more than simply a good idea and faith in their own abilities, as is clearly shown by a look at the balance sheets: over the last year, ETH spin-offs were able to attract more than CHF 170 million in capital. For example, the companies Climeworks, Verity Studios and Bee-keeper concluded rounds of financing with over CHF 30 million, CHF 18 million and CHF 13 million respectively. Alongside these investments, acquisitions and an initial public offering (IPO) also showed the success of ETH spin-offs. The IPO of Sensirion in March 2018, for example, was a good fit for the company's growth strategy. This was reflected in a year-on-year increase in revenue of 30 percent in the first six months.

*The average number of spin-offs in 2000-2009 had to be adjusted after the publication of the media release.

Further Information

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All ETH spin-offs at a glance

Since 1996, 407 spin-offs have been established at ETH Zurich. An overview can be found on the [spin-off website](#). Recognised ETH spin-offs are supported by ETH transfer, the technology transfer office at ETH Zurich, with advice, licensing of ETH technologies and contacts. With the help of the [Pioneer Fellowship Programme](#), young researchers can develop innovative products or services based on their academic work at ETH Zurich. The [Innovation and Entrepreneurship Lab](#) (ieLab) brings together young ETH talent and experienced industry entrepreneurs.

In December 2018, ETH Zurich launched a new [podcast](#). The first four episodes deal with various aspects of entrepreneurship at ETH Zurich. In addition to the student project Swissloop, the Entrepreneur Club and the spin-offs Haelixa and ANYbotics will be the focus of an episode.