

Press Release

ETH spin-offs: the year in review

Battling climate change and the pandemic

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The breakdown for spin-offs in 2021: 25 new start-ups and about CHF 390 million in capital raised. Faster coronavirus tests, artificial coral reefs and automated insect breeding have found their place in the economy. The proportion of female entrepreneurs has increased significantly.

The 25 ETH spin-offs from the past year highlight once again how ETH expertise provides innovative approaches to global challenges and stimulates the Swiss economy. Most new companies want to achieve advances in medicine or battle climate change – and this includes using digital methods.

Rapid blood tests and 3D-printed bone plates

Medical diagnostics is strongly represented by the new spin-offs. For example, Hemetron specialises in the blood tests used in most of today's medical diagnostics. The company has developed a practical device that can quickly and reliably predict heart attacks or detect Covid-19 infection. Diaxxo also targets the pandemic virus: the company offers an accurate PCR test that takes no more than ten minutes to provide the results. CustomSurg is innovating in an entirely different field of medicine: the ETH spin-off uses tailor-made 3D-printed bone plates to make life easier for both fracture patients and surgeons.

Other spin-offs are using state-of-the-art methods to battle climate change; for example, rreefs has dedicated itself to the construction of artificial coral reefs. For several months now, marine life off the coast of a Caribbean island has been settling into a new home – the world's first 3D-printed "pilot reef". Meanwhile, Restor Eco is harnessing the power of data to advance reforestation projects and network them globally. The founders of SmartBreed have found a way to automate the breeding of insects used for animal feed in order to make animal husbandry both more ecological and economical. Vanessa Wood, Vice President for Knowledge Transfer and Corporate Relations at ETH Zurich, is delighted: "In order to tackle the major challenges facing us today, we have to be able to apply research

findings in practice as quickly as possible. ETH spin-offs are a key instrument in facilitating this transfer of knowledge.”

One quarter of companies founded by women

Six spin-offs were founded by women – a remarkable increase in the percentage of female founders compared with previous years. “We’re on the right track,” says Wood. “I’m so pleased that more and more women are taking the step into entrepreneurship. This benefits the Swiss economy as a whole.” DigitSoil is one of these start-ups founded by two female ETH graduates. Their idea for rapid soil quality tests originated at the [Student Project House](#), an open ideas lab for ETH students, and was directly supported in the implementation with an ETH [Pioneer Fellowship](#).

Established spin-offs making a big difference

While new spin-offs made their mark, the more established ones have also achieved a lot over this past year. The SCION technology developed at ETH has become the core of a new secure data network for the Swiss financial sector, provided by ETH spin-off Anapaya. Two spin-offs in the field of climate technology have been able to expand: in Germany, Synhelion has built a test facility for the industrial production of solar fuels. In Iceland, Climeworks has built the largest facility to date for atmospheric CO₂ capture. Bright Peak Therapeutics reported the most successful round of funding: in June, the company received more than CHF 96 million for the further development of its innovative immunotherapy. ETH spin-offs succeeded in raising capital totalling more than CHF 390 million.

www.ethz.ch/entrepreneurship →

Further information

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ETH spin-offs: a success story

Since 1996, 496 spin-offs have been founded at ETH Zurich. These companies are more productive, create more jobs and are also acquired more frequently than the average Swiss start-up, as a [comprehensive analysis](#) conducted by the University of St.Gallen presented in 2020. An overview of all spin-offs can be found [here](#). The ETH Domain’s [Office of Knowledge Transfer and Corporate Relations](#) helps recognised ETH spin-offs with the founding process and subsequently during the often decisive years that follow by providing advice, licensing of ETH technology and networking opportunities.