

Press Release

25 new ETH spin-offs

Building their own companies with timber and robots

Zurich, 9 January 2016

There were 25 spin-offs founded at ETH Zurich last year – equalling the record number from 2015. The university's broad range of research topics is also reflected in these new companies.

ETH Zurich can once again look back on a successful year of spin-offs: as in 2015, a total of 25 new companies were incorporated in 2016. This is thus the tenth time in a row that over 20 spin-offs have been founded at ETH in a single year – a unique achievement in Switzerland's higher education landscape. Furthermore, ten of the newly founded ETH spin-offs were created through the Pioneer Fellowship programme. For Detlef Günther, Vice President Research and Corporate Relations, the consistently high number serves as proof that ETH Zurich is following the right path by providing support to students from an early stage. "A university's greatest achievement is to help young people put their ideas into practice. We have students who, as Pioneer Fellows in 2016, have already founded a company during the course of their Master's degrees. This takes conviction, commitment and courage, as the path to success can be a long one," says Günther.

The topical focus of the 25 new spin-offs reflects the entire breadth of research at ETH Zurich. With eight new companies, the field of information and communications technology is once again well represented. There was also a welcome increase in the field of mechanical engineering, where no fewer than six new spin-offs were founded – twice as many as in the previous year. In the field of biotechnology, four spin-offs were founded, matching the figure for 2015.

From research project to new company

Among the newly founded spin-offs, two companies offer solutions in the field of timber engineering. This is not by chance; on the contrary, the startup Swiss Timber Solutions emerged from the House of Natural Resources project. This unique building, owned by ETH Zurich, is used for testing innovative technologies and new structural parts made from Swiss hardwood. The spin-off deals with questions relating to the fire protection, structural design and maintenance of timber structures. The second spin-off, Swiss Wood Solutions, develops and markets high-quality timber products around the world. For Detlef Günther, these are impressive examples that demonstrate how knowledge transfer works at ETH Zurich: "When we inaugurated the House of Natural Resources a year ago, we were fascinated

by the possibilities that our researchers discovered in timber construction. Now, these findings are already leading to the establishment of new companies.”

Robotics is another stand-out area among last year's new startups. With the companies Aerotainment Labs, ANYbotics and Wingtra, renowned walking and flying robots from ETH are poised to make the leap into independence. These robots vary widely and can be used for inspection tasks on difficult terrain, for monitoring tasks in the agricultural sector, or even for animation and entertainment.

Further information

ETH Zurich
Professor Detlef Günther
Vice President of Research and
Corporate Relations
Tel.: +41 44 632 20 39
detlef.guenther@sl.ethz.ch

ETH Zurich
Franziska Schmid
Media Relations
Tel: +41 44 632 89 41
franziska.schmid@hk.ethz.ch

Overview of ETH spin-offs

Since 1996, around 355 spin-offs have been founded at ETH Zurich. Over the years, the startups have gone on to create over 2,500 jobs. In addition, experience has shown that around 92 percent of ETH spin-offs make it through the first five years. Their survival rate is therefore 40 percent higher than that of other startups in Switzerland. They encompass a wide range of fields and business ideas. A good overview can be found on the [spin-off website](#). [ETH transfer](#), ETH Zurich's technology transfer unit, supports recognised ETH spin-offs with advice, licences and contacts upon foundation and during their first years of operation. Numerous stories and background information on the ETH spin-offs can also be found in the current edition of the [Globe](#) magazine.

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Another spin-off record

((Alternativer, kurzer Lead:))
There were 25 spin-offs founded at ETH Zurich last year, covering a broad range of research topics.