

Project Switzerland: 20 top entrepreneurs join national initiative to scale the country's next tech leaders

Zürich, Switzerland - January 15, 2026 - **Today marks the launch of Project Switzerland, a national initiative to secure the country's technological sovereignty and long-term prosperity by scaling the next generation of global market leaders. While Switzerland leads the world in innovation, the initiative addresses a critical gap: the specialized expertise required to turn a local success into a global heavyweight.**

The project connects 20 of Switzerland's most successful entrepreneurs - including unicorn founders and serial entrepreneurs - with high-growth scale-ups. This creates a unique environment where peers can spar together and share strategic experiences.

"Switzerland is strong in technical innovation, but we lack a deep bench of operators who know how to scale," says Bettina Hein, Serial Tech Entrepreneur and Project Switzerland Role Model. "Project Switzerland is the place where you learn to scale."

A national task force committed to giving back

The heart of the initiative is a group of 20 "Role Models" behind some of Switzerland's greatest tech successes - individuals who have built companies with unicorn valuations or revenues exceeding CHF 100 million. Among others the lineup includes:

- **Samuel Müller:** CEO and Co-Founder of **Scandit**
- **Bettina Hein:** Serial Tech Entrepreneur
- **Tobias Rein:** Co-Founder of **GetYourGuide**
- **Olivier Gaudin:** CEO and Founder of **SonarSource**
- **Adrien Treccani:** Serial Entrepreneur, Founder of **Metaco**
- **Vincent Bieri:** Co-Founder of **Nexthink**

These leaders provide direct support to help younger companies avoid the expensive mistakes that often derail growth. *"It's important to give back and help others avoid the pitfalls we encountered while driving Scandit to global success",* says Samuel Müller.

Program and nominations

Project Switzerland targets high-potential scale-ups headquartered in Switzerland with the foundations for rapid international expansion.

"We're looking for founders with global ambition and a commitment to learning from those who've done it before", says Michael Sauter, responsible lead for Project Switzerland. *"This is about turning personal lessons into collective strength for the entire Swiss ecosystem".*

The 12-month program includes:

- Direct access to the 20 Role Models (at least two hours of monthly support from role models).
- Curated matchmaking focused on execution challenges like international expansion and high-performance leadership.
- Lifelong access to an exclusive alumni community of exceptional entrepreneurs.

Nominations are open until **February 15, 2026**. Investors, board members, and ecosystem actors can nominate scale-ups at **project-switzerland.ch**. Selected companies will be announced on March 31.

About Project Switzerland

Initiated by the Deep Tech Nation Switzerland Foundation, the project is supported by a coalition including HSG START Accelerator, Swiss Startup Association, SICTIC, Startup Days, Fongit, and Follow the Gradient. The University of St. Gallen provides scientific backing to identify proven patterns for successful Swiss scaling.

For more information visit: project-switzerland.ch & [LinkedIn](#)

About Deep Tech Nation Switzerland

Deep Tech Nation Switzerland Foundation is a private, not-for-profit initiative backed by leading companies, foundations, and universities. Acting as a neutral catalyst, it shapes the future for Switzerland, so that others can create, scale, and invest.

"Switzerland is a world champion in innovation, but our biggest challenge remains the growth gap. We initiated Project Switzerland to bridge the scaling expertise of our most successful entrepreneurs with the next generation of founders, securing Switzerland's technological sovereignty and long-term prosperity." — **Joanne Sieber, CEO Deep Tech Nation Switzerland**

For more information visit: deeptechnation.ch - [LinkedIn](#)

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Additional voices from the initiative:

"It's time for action. Switzerland needs a culture of scale, not just invention. I'm in to contribute forward - let's turn scaling from struggle to momentum." — **Vincent Bieri, Co-founder Nexthink**

"From Switzerland to the world! We believe Swiss innovation deserves global reach. Let's focus on scale, empower our founders with the right support, and turn promising startups into market-leading companies." — **Tobias Rein, Co-Founder GetYourGuide**

"Project Switzerland is the place where ambitious tech founders meet founders that have scaled global companies and realize that they can do it, too." — **Kevin Sartori, Co-Founder Auterion**

The 20 Project Switzerland Role Models

These Unicorn Founders and Serial Entrepreneurs are committed to giving back and supporting the next generation of highly promising Scale-ups.

- Samuel Müller: CEO and Co-Founder of Scandit, Swiss Unicorn
- Bettina Hein: Serial Tech Entrepreneur, founded juli, Pixability, SVOX and START Global
- Samuel Widmann: Former Director at Google
- Olivier Gaudin: CEO and Founder at SonarSource, Swiss Unicorn
- Vincent Bieri: Co-Founder at Nexthink, Swiss Tiple Unicorn
- Jean-Marc Wismer: Former COO at MindMaze, Swiss Unicorn
- Tobias Rein: Co-Founder GetYour Guide, Unicorn
- Dario Fazlic: Founder at nextesy, Co-Founder at wefox, Swiss Unicorn
- Michael Friedrich: Serial Entrepreneur, Former CEO at DistalMotion
- Tjarko Leifer: CEO of multiple exited Silicon Valley Startups
- Thomas Gabathuler: Serial Entrepreneur, CEO at GetMore Brain
- Dorian Selz: Serial Entrepreneur, CEO at Squirro
- Laurent Balmelli: Serial Entrepreneur, GM at Citrix
- Adrien Treccani: Serial Entrepreneur, CEO & Founder at Metaco
- Manoj Harasgama: Serial Entrepreneur, Co-CEO at Crosstown
- Kevin Sartori: Co-founder at Auterion
- Lukas Gysin: Co-Founder at UniqFEED
- David Haber: CEO and Co-Founder at Lakera
- Nicole Herzog: Entrepreneur, angel investor, board member
- Deborah Heintze, Co-Founder Lunaphore, VP Bio-Techne

More extensive profiles of role models are available on request.

Project Switzerland Ambassadors

- Simon Michel, CEO Ypsomed, Member of the Swiss National Council
- Frank Floessel, Head of ETH Entrepreneurship
- Dietmar Grichnik, Vice-President Innovation HSG
- Andy Yen, Founder and CEO at Proton
- Jordi Montserrat, General Manager at Venture Kick
- Andrew Reid, Global Partner Solution Director at Microsoft
- Andreas Göldi, Partner at b2venture
- Thomas Dübendorfer, President at SICTIC
- Toni Schneider, Partner at True Ventures
- Enzo Wälchli, SSA Scale-up Executives Chapter Lead

Project Switzerland Partners

- Deep Tech Nation Switzerland - deeptechnation.ch
- HSG Start Accelerator - hsgstartaccelerator.org
- Swiss Startup Association - swissstartupassociation.ch
- SICTIC - sictic.ch
- startup days - startupdays.ch
- Fongit - fongit.ch
- Follow the Gradient - followthegradient.io

Scale-up Spotlight: The Scandit Success Story

The journey of the Project Switzerland role model Samuel Müller and the company he co-founded, Scandit, serves as a blueprint for the initiative. What began as an ETH Zurich spin-off has transformed into a global leader in smart data capture, powered by computer vision and AI. By scaling internationally and expanding into the US market early on, Scandit grew to have 7 office locations globally with employees in over 15 countries and achieved a valuation exceeding USD 1 billion in 2022. Today, its technology is used on more than 150 million devices by global giants like FedEx, Walmart and Sephora. Müller's participation as a Role Model ensures that his "global vision" and scaling expertise are passed directly to the next generation of Swiss founders.