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News Release

Strategic partnership

ETH and UBS launch partnership to promote innovation and entrepreneurship

ETH Zurich and UBS are launching a strategic partnership. Over a period of 10 years, UBS will invest up to CHF 20 million in two joint initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and innovation, and raise interest in STEM subjects. UBS will also make a donation of up to CHF 20 million to support the construction of a new ETH building on the Hönggerberg campus.

Zurich, 25 August 2022 – Innovation is crucial to Switzerland’s prosperity, with a zest for science and entrepreneurship playing a key role. It is only when research results or good ideas find their way into the market that new jobs are created, or solutions are developed for social and technological progress. That is why ETH Zurich and UBS are aiming to boost entrepreneurship in Switzerland and inspire schoolchildren to study STEM subjects (STEM = Science Technology Engineering Mathematics).

“These initiatives are being supported by two Swiss institutions with a great deal of expertise: the number of ETH spin-offs being formed is growing constantly. Almost 500 successful companies have been established in this way since 1996. By combining our expertise in teaching and research with the well-established economical know-how and networking capabilities of UBS, we can advance Switzerland as a business location,” says Joël Mesot, President of ETH Zurich.

Collaboration with research, the encouragement of training and further education, and support for entrepreneurship in Switzerland all have a long tradition at UBS. “With this partnership, we aim to boost the long-term development of entrepreneurship and innovative capabilities in Switzerland, and to promote the next generation of entrepreneurs. This is something that is very close to our heart. We are looking forward to working together with ETH and firmly believe that our joint efforts will achieve a great deal,” says Sabine Keller-Busse, President UBS Switzerland. UBS has more than 120,000 corporate clients in Switzerland – every other medium-sized and large company is a client of the bank. For years now, it has been involved in successful joint ventures in the field of tech and innovation.

Promoting entrepreneurship

The two partners aim to use the joint initiative to provide students and young entrepreneurs with the necessary toolkit, along with helpful contacts, for them to successfully implement their ideas and innovations and bring them to market. This will complement the assistance ETH Zurich already provides start-ups with. For example, a series of events will give young entrepreneurs the opportunity to meet experienced business leaders at ETH, where they can share information, network and learn from them. Interested students will be able to find out more about financing, preparing business plans and managing a company at various events. ETH and UBS intend to support this noteworthy expansion of the existing entrepreneurship eco-system, both with in-person offerings and on digital channels.

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Encouraging STEM subjects

Investing in education and developing young talent are core aspects of Switzerland's success. Alongside promoting entrepreneurship, ETH Zurich and UBS aim to encourage more enthusiasm for science, technology, engineering and mathematics among primary and secondary school students in a second initiative. Particular attention will be paid to target groups that have been less accessible so far. This will involve developing new communication channels, based on existing formats such as CYBATHLON@school. ETH will benefit from the experience of UBS and its broad network in this respect.

A creative and innovative place to meet

In addition to those two initiatives, a new ETH building will be constructed on the Hönggerberg campus. A place where students can implement projects together, and budding entrepreneurs can share ideas with executives and experts. UBS will make a donation of up to CHF 20 million towards the new building. Further financing sources will include already made and additional donations. The building will be the new home of the VSETH student association and the Student Project House. Its purpose is to have student initiatives and projects, ETH entrepreneurship and several spin-offs all under one roof. In addition to flexible-use offices, the welcoming timber construction will accommodate event and multi-purpose rooms, together with a large maker space for building prototypes. This will make the new building on the Hönggerberg into a melting pot for students where they can experience the joy of experimenting and entrepreneurial buzz.

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