### Highlights 2016

The swissnex Network connects the dots between Switzerland and the world in education, research and innovation. In 2016, over 300 events and many other activities took place worldwide. Here is a very small selection of highlights, for more in-depth reports visit our interactive online edition.

In San Francisco, the swissnex team took the motto “Connecting the dots” to a new level. 2016 marked the opening of a new location together with the Swiss Consulate General at Pier 17, offering an open and collaborative office space that inspires and connects academics, creatives, diplomats, entrepreneurs, and innovators.

Switzerland’s excellence in research was highlighted using various platforms around the world, for instance, in the field of robotics: in the USA, the Cambridge Science Festival in Boston featured a robot helping children to learn at school, while a workshop held at IIT Madras’s Center of Innovation in India looked at swimming robots that measure water quality.

2016 was also the year that our S&T Office at the Swiss Mission to the EU in Brussels worked tirelessly towards Switzerland’s reassociation to the EU’s framework program Horizon 2020, by keeping key stakeholders in Switzerland informed about the process, and by illustrating to European partners the many linkages between the Swiss and European research landscapes.

Also inspirational were a number of study visits organized in conjunction with swissuniversities for researchers from Universities of Applied Sciences to other parts of the world: From diving into the future of ageing from the perspective of Asian countries to learning about social innovation in Brazil, the participants connected with and learned from their peers abroad.
Focus: Inspiring Partnerships

Two important aspects of the swissnex mission are to inspire its partners by venturing beyond traditional boundaries and disciplines, and to build on a collaborative business model, resulting in many different types of partnerships.

Since its beginnings in 2013, the partnership with the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), for example, has brought 112 academics and researchers to the various swissnex locations. The programme aims at supporting ZHAW staff members in their international networking and knowledge transfer activities at swissnex locations. One of them was Prof. Michel Guillaume, who was hosted by swissnex Boston in 2016 to explore the future of drones together with peers from MIT, Harvard and local companies.

When it comes to promoting Switzerland’s image abroad, the swissnex Network regularly teams up with Presence Switzerland, part of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. In Brazil, the swissnex in Rio de Janeiro energized the House of Switzerland, among other attractions, by featuring wind-turbines by the ETH Zurich and the Swiss start-up Urban Farmers, a Basel- and now Brazil-based social enterprise. Thanks to swissnex’s partnership with one of the country’s largest NGOs, VivaRio, the showcase container of the Urban Farmers is now part of a new innovation hub in a local favela.

Supporting Swiss start-ups in their efforts to explore and understand foreign markets is also at the core of the long-standing collaboration with the Commission for Technology and Innovation. In the online Annual Report, swissnex India presents an overview of how it has supported Swiss start-ups over the past year.

Finally, the online report also features a video with Yves Daccord, Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, who talks about the ICRC’s partnership with swissnex San Francisco exploring new collaborative forms of humanitarian action with leading innovators and researchers.

From establishing summer schools to student and faculty exchanges and joint innovation programs: Over the past five years, the collaboration between the Canton of Vaud and swissnex China saw several important milestones achieved, thereby expanding the presence of higher education institutions from the Canton of Vaud in China.
The world of education, research and innovation is international in essence: it is a process of give and take, of sharing knowledge and ideas, to which Switzerland is fully committed to and recognized for. The swissnex Network illustrates this commitment by supporting the international outreach of Swiss stakeholders in these fields.

In order to inspire its partners, the swissnex Network aims to cross inter- and transdisciplinary boundaries and help discover new ways of approaching a problem. This is why the network has such a diverse spectrum of partners – from higher education institutions, to start-ups, government agencies, foundations and other Swiss organizations abroad – all sharing the same goal to enhance Switzerland’s presence abroad, as well as its capability to shape the future by fostering innovation and talents.

In order to enhance the visibility of the network, this year’s edition of the Annual Report provides a glimpse into the activities not only of the swissnex locations, but also of a selected number of S&T Counselors and Offices based in Swiss embassies around the world. Let yourself be inspired!

State Secretary Mauro Dell’Ambrogio