

The cluster organisations

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The promotion of the life sciences cluster is a task of the cantonal economic policy. Since 2016 the cantons of Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft and Jura have pursued it through Basel Area Business & Innovation, an agency that combines the promotion of inward investment with support for start-ups and innovation. It was formed by combining earlier organisations, among them BaselArea, the regional investment promotion agency, and i-net, a technology network.¹ The agency runs incubation and acceleration programmes for start-ups in the life sciences and in other technologies while marketing the region to foreign companies.

The Switzerland Innovation Park Basel Area, part of the national Switzerland Innovation network created under the federal Research and Innovation Promotion Act, has its main campus in Allschwil, with further sites in the region. The main building in Allschwil, opened in 2022, hosts start-ups, established companies and research units, among them groups of the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute and of the university.² The concentration of biotechnology companies in Allschwil, at the edge of the city, reflects the shortage of space in Basel-Stadt and the more favourable conditions in Basel-Landschaft. It also shows that the cluster crosses the cantonal border created in 1833.

The financing of start-ups, by venture capital funds, business angels, the large groups' corporate venture arms and public instruments, is the subject of Chapter IV. Here it suffices to note that the existence of the large groups creates a supply of experienced researchers and managers who found companies, as well as a demand for licences and acquisitions that offers start-ups an exit. Like Actelion, which was founded by former Roche employees, many of the smaller companies in Allschwil have such roots. The large groups thus act as a school for entrepreneurs and as a buyer of their products.³

1 Notes

1. On the formation of Basel Area Business & Innovation from BaselArea, i-net and the China Business Platform, and on its sponsorship by the cantons of Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft and Jura, see its annual reports. Dates to be verified. ↩
2. On the Switzerland Innovation Park Basel Area and its main campus in Allschwil (opened 2022), and on the legal basis of the Switzerland Innovation parks in Art. 32 ff. of the Research and Innovation Promotion Act (RIPA, SR 420.1), see the publications of the Switzerland Innovation Foundation. To be verified. ↩
3. On the role of large pharmaceutical companies as sources of founders and as acquirers in the Basel biotechnology cluster, see the regional studies by Basel Area Business & Innovation and the Swiss Biotech Report published annually by the Swiss Biotech Association. To be verified. ↩

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