

SATW Transferkolleg 2007

From idea to concrete project



Transposing scientific findings into marketable products is a challenging undertaking. With the Transferkolleg, the SATW helps new ideas find their way to practical application.

Once again, it proved a rewarding exchange: this fourth edition of the SATW Transferkolleg, organised jointly by the SATW and the Swiss Confederation's Innovation Promotion Agency (CTI), was devoted to the theme of industrial biotechnology. Companies and research institutions had been invited to submit ideas for new products and processes. A total of 16 proposals were selected by the organisers of the Transferkolleg. The successful teams were given not only financial support, but also the opportunity to present their ideas to the other project teams and to external experts over the course of a two-day workshop.

Precious insights

With the Transferkolleg, the SATW bridges a major gap in the field of technology transfer, namely the rift between academic research and industrial development.

On the one hand, application-oriented research is usually not funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). The SNSF only supports projects at a pre-competitive stage. In turn, the development of new products is promoted by the CTI. However, ideas whose implementation is not yet quite predictable struggle to find any corresponding encouragement.

This is precisely where the Transferkolleg comes in: the sum paid out to the teams – amounting once again to 16'000 Swiss Francs per project – allows them to substantiate their ideas and carry out the necessary preliminary assessments. Importantly, discarding a project is not viewed as a failure. The realisation that an idea is not suited to a CTI project can also be of value to the concerned parties. At any rate, the

scheme prevents good ideas from being discarded too early because of initially uncertain prospects.

The Transferkolleg is also conceived as a platform for dialogue. On the one hand, industry complains that academia gives too little weight to its requirements; academia in turn points out that industry does not communicate these requirements. Here again, the Transferkolleg bridges a gap, bringing together potential partners from different institutions.

Of interest also to large companies

The fact that large companies also take part in the Transferkolleg proves that the scheme answers a real need. An evaluation of the 2005 Transferkolleg showed that, one year after the workshop, around half of the ideas presented had developed into concrete projects of respectable size. The SATW and the CTI are thus convinced that the scheme should be pursued. Preparations for the Transferkolleg 2008 are hence already in full swing.

Scrutinising new ideas

Interview with Oreste Ghisalba



Scrutinising new ideas

The SATW Transferkolleg answers a real need, reckons Oreste Ghisalba, member of the Committee for a Transferkolleg and Head of CTI Biotech. The scheme encourages the transfer of technology, facilitates valuable contacts and provides important stimuli in promising fields.

Mr Ghisalba, the fourth edition of the Transferkolleg, organised jointly by the SATW and the CTI, took place in late November 2007 in Muttenz. Are you happy with the event?

Absolutely. The event is getting better from year to year. The collaboration between the SATW and the CTI runs very smoothly, last but not least due to the close personnel ties. We furthermore benefitted from the support of the Swiss Biotech Association and Biotechnet Switzerland. Workshop participants also provided us with highly positive feedback.

Which aspects are particularly well-received?

What is valued most is the opportunity to critically reconsider projects within the groups. Project partners receive valuable suggestions as to how to implement their projects in the best possible manner. At the Transferkolleg, participants also get to know new partners and are thus able to strengthen their network. The intensive discussions which characterise the workshops are however only made possible by the fact that all involved parties agree beforehand to be bound by confidentiality.

And now?

I am convinced that several of the ideas presented will give rise to concrete projects. This time, remarkably, Biotechnet Switzerland has spontaneously decided to organise a follow-up workshop in February, allowing initiated discussions to be pursued in more depth. This is ideal, as many participants of the Transferkolleg regret not having more time for discussions. The SATW would not be able to organise such a follow-up workshop for reasons of personnel alone.

«The opportunity for critical discussion is particularly valued.»

The Transferkolleg 2007 addressed the issue of industrial biotechnology. Why was this specific topic chosen?

In this country, science does not give great weight to industrial biotechnology anymore. Yet this field is of great importance for industry. Other countries, particularly Germany, strongly encour-

age it. Switzerland must take care not to fall behind.

Each edition of the Transferkolleg engages with a different theme. Which are the criteria guiding its selection?

Arrangements for the Transferkolleg always begin at the start of the year. A core group determines the theme of the coming edition. In doing so, we always deliberately settle on a field which holds great potential for the future. Ideally, the corresponding industry sector can provide well-functioning networks which can support us in our efforts. The core group also decides who is to take over the event's coordination. It is crucial that the person should be able to call upon a strong network.

Is it difficult to secure enough high-quality project submissions?

Advertising is an important aspect. We call the attention of potentially interested parties to our event in a targeted manner. Over 27 ideas were submitted at the Transferkolleg 2007 – all, by the way, good to very good propositions. Of those, we selected and funded 16.

SATW Transferkolleg 2008

«Industrial Photonics»

This year's Transferkolleg will focus on the topic of «Industrial Photonics». With the Transferkolleg, the SATW and the CTI aim to encourage the exchange of knowledge between academia and industry, as well as to bring to the fore at an early stage those research findings with market potential. Specialists from the fields of science and industry are invited to submit according projects by the end of July.

www.satw.ch/taetigkeiten/projekte/transferkolleg/index_EN

Committee on Ethics and Technology

Converging Technologies

The SATW and EMPA have launched the debate on the ethical aspects of converging technologies. Around 30 experts gathered in mid-November in order to discuss the convergence of «nano-bio-info-cogno» and the ethical issues that come with it – such as the question of human «improvement» and the conditions under which it is permissible. A report on the topic is available on the EMPA website.

www.empa.ch/plugin/template/empa/1086/66743/---/L=1

Committee on Technology and Society

Sportech 2008

At Sportech, pupils, teachers and parents learn in an interactive manner about the influence of science and technology on sports, exercise and everyday life. In late January, 28 workshops were on offer at the

Nationales Jugendsportzentrum Tenero, supervised by experts from research and educational institutions as well as companies. Over the course of two days, a total of 1'600 secondary school pupils attended Sportech 2008. The event was also open to the public for one day.

www.sportech2008.ch

SATW Congress 2008

Mobility 2030

The time has come to think, rethink and act! The SATW invites representatives from the fields of research, industry and politics, as well as the general public, to join in a discussion of mobility in 2030 at the Technical College Yverdon in late August. The SATW Convention conveys the newest findings relating to resources, climate issues and technological innovations. Lectures of general interest, a student round-table and a discussion with politicians are furthermore provided for the general public. At a mobility fair, all participants will be able to view and test drive energy-efficient vehicles – including «future concept cars».

www.satw.ch/aktuell/kongress08_EN

Technology Day 2008

Energy Efficiency

This year's Technology Day will be extended to a Technology Week in November 2008 and aim to increase public awareness as regards the efficient use of energy. Companies and organisations are called upon to present their commitment to a considerate use of resources to a wide public through events such as open

days, specialist lectures, panel discussions, moderated forums, training courses etc.

www.tag-der-technik.ch

SATW Secretariat

New Secretary-General

Dr. Rolf Hügli has been heading the SATW Secretariat since March 2008 as its newly appointed Secretary-General. He takes over from Dr. Hans Hänni, who relinquished the position he held for the past six years due to health reasons. Rolf Hügli studied electrical engineering at the ETH Zurich and completed his doctorate at the Laboratory for Microwaves. Amongst others, he worked at Balzers Hochvakuumtechnik as Product and Sales Manager, at the SRG as Head of Multimedia Management and at the Telekurs Group as Head of Business Management. Most recently, he held the position of Head of Payment at Swisscom AG. With a reduced workload, Hans Hänni will remain available to the SATW as a Senior Consultant.

Technoscope

Information Technology

Simulations, software and sensor technology – these are the issues covered in the latest edition of the SATW's technology magazine for youngsters and young-at-hearts. Technoscope 1/08 thus slots in perfectly in the «Year of Information Technology 2008». The magazine is available for download from the SATW website and a print version can be ordered from the SATW Secretariat.

www.satw.ch

TechDay@KSL

Science? Technology? Of course!



For one entire day in late October 2007, everything at the Kantonsschule Limmattal (KSL) revolved around science and technology. It was the first time the SATW and the KSL carried out a technology day, aiming to balance out the curriculum which gives little weight to the technical and natural sciences.


How much noise can our sense of hearing tolerate? How do the rays find my mobile phone? How do 100 CDs fit on my iPod? The TechDay@KSL gave pupils the opportunity

to follow up on such questions and assemble their class schedule from a selection of 45 different modules. Personalities from academia and industry, members of the SATW and parents of KSL pupils with a technical background conducted the modules. The feedback from pupils, module supervisors, observers and school management was enthusiastic, making the SATW keen to carry out technology days together with further secondary schools.

www.satw.ch/aktuell/Techniktag

SATW

Schweizerische Akademie der Technischen Wissenschaften
Académie suisse des sciences techniques
Accademia Svizzera delle Scienze Tecniche
Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences

 Member of the
Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences

Agenda

SATW General Assembly 2008

10 April 2008, 2:30-7:00pm, Berne

SATW Evening Activity

Company visit: V-Zug

22 April 2008, 4:00-8:00pm, Zug

SATW Transferkolleg 2008

«Industrial Photonics»

Application deadline: 31 July 2008

SATW Convention 2008

Mobility 2030

29/30 August 2008, Yverdon-les-Bain

SATW Ceremony 2008

4 September 2008, Lausanne

Technology Day 2008

Energy Efficiency

3-9 November 2008, whole of
Switzerland

Further information

www.satw.ch

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