



Swiss Winner chosen for IMAGINE IF! Accelerator for Science Ventures

- > **Innovation Forum Lausanne organizes the Swiss Finals of global IMAGINE IF! Accelerator for Science Ventures**
- > **11 promising deep-tech projects pitch in front of a panel of experts in industry, research and innovation**
- > **Winner is "Skypull" focused on an autonomous tethered drones to capture the immense potential of high altitude winds**
- > **Winner joins global Top 20 projects from 300 applications that will compete at the global finals at the Innovation Leaders Conference, Oxford, UK, and receives CHF2,500 cash prize**
- > **"SunRegen Healthcare AG" awarded special prize of 3 months free membership of StartLab incubator at Biopôle, the first incubator dedicated to life sciences located in the Canton of Vaud**

Lausanne, Switzerland, 03 October 2017

Innovation Forum Lausanne (IFL) today held the Swiss Finals of the second edition of the global IMAGINE IF! Accelerator for Science Ventures at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne EPFL. 11 teams presented their deep-technology projects offering promising solutions to unmet needs in drug development, personalized medicine, rehabilitation, green energy, flight awareness, and high throughput sample screening. Inspiring talks given by **Jean-Philippe Lallement**, Managing Director at Innovation Park EPFL, and **Yann Cotte**, CEO at Nanolive, showed the potential of the Lausanne ecosystem for entrepreneurs and shared the story of a successful start up.

The winner is "**Skypull**" (www.skypull.com) which focuses on autonomous tethered drones to capture the immense potential of high altitude winds that are stronger, more abundant and continuous than the winds that drive conventional wind turbines. By reaching for stronger winds, Skypull is able to significantly reduce energy production costs and hence seriously compete with fossil fuels.

Nicola Mona, Skypull CEO, said: "It's a tremendous honour to be awarded for our idea and technology at IMAGINE IF. We are delighted to be participating in the global IMAGINE IF finals in Oxford and showcase Skypull in such an international and prestigious context."

Jean-Philippe Lallement, Managing Director at Innovation Park EPFL, member of the judging panel, commented: "With a unique deep tech focus, IMAGINE IF truly facilitates the emergence of high potential science based ventures. Innovation Forum is a great asset for the local start up ecosystem."

Beatrice Volpe, President of Innovation Forum Lausanne, observed: "At Innovation Forum we foster the next generation of scientist-entrepreneurs. With IMAGINE IF! we provide tangible help to promising projects with the potential to contribute to a sustainable global future. Promoting innovations that matter is our goal and one way we achieve this is by connecting these young entrepreneurs with a global network of more experienced innovators, investors and industry professionals."

The selected Swiss 11 finalists went through a first step of successful local Swiss selection and an *ad hoc* mentoring phase aimed at providing them crucial advice and skills for their entrepreneurial adventure. Today, a judging panel of experts in industry, research and innovation evaluated the



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science, business and team expertise of the 11 teams. The winner **Skypull** was awarded CHF 2,500 of non-dilutive funding, and participation to the global finals of IMAGINE IF! (Innovation Leaders Conference, Oxford UK, 4th-5th December 2017).

"**SunRegen Healthcare AG**" (<http://www.sunregen.ch/>), **focused on neurodegenerative diseases**, was awarded a special prize of 3 months free membership of the incubator **StartLab at the life science park Biopôle**, Lausanne, the first incubator dedicated to life sciences located in the Canton of Vaud. StartLab offers 700 m² of fully equipped laboratories and 300 m² of shared offices, as a new home for 10-12 start up companies of 35-40 persons in total <https://startlab.biopole.ch/>.

The runners up are offered a second chance to participate to the global final pitching competition: the best projects collected from all the Innovation Forum branches across the world will be included in the shortlist of Top 20 who will be pitching at the global finals together with all the local branch winners.

Full details about the Swiss finals of IMAGINE IF! can be found at:
<http://lausanne.inno-forum.org/imagine-accelerator-2017-science-ventures/>

Full details of the IMAGINE IF! global program can be found at:
<http://inno-forum.org/accelerator/>

About StartLab <https://startlab.biopole.ch/>

StartLab is the first life sciences dedicated incubator in the Canton of Vaud, Switzerland. It offers 700 m² of fully equipped laboratories and 300 m² of shared offices, as a new home for 10-12 start up companies of 35-40 persons in total. It has been designed to maximize the chances of success for aspiring business creators. A key feature is a "pay as you play" flexible pricing model, which requires less funds to get started, reduces risk for investors and lowers dilution for entrepreneurs.

Based at Biopôle, a leading Swiss life sciences park, StartLab's founding sponsors include Retraites Populaires, Losinger Marazzi, Teo Jakob and Milian. Strategic partners are the Canton of Vaud, Innovaud, the University of Lausanne (UNIL) and the Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV).

About Innovation Forum www.inno-forum.org

The Innovation Forum (IF) is a non-profit organisation led by entrepreneurial-minded scientists and young professionals. **Its mission is to foster the next generation of scientist-entrepreneurs.** IF is a **global network** of innovative companies, entrepreneurs, investors, researchers and policy makers with branches located at 16 top universities in Europe and Asia. This gives the organization the **unique ability to think and act in an international, cross-cultural context** and to enable global synergies for members and partners.

Innovation Forum Lausanne (IFL) aims to leverage the current highly interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial ecosystem and to further strengthen the position of Lausanne as a global innovation hub. During 2015 and 2016, its first two years of existence, IFL organised ten events, allowing more than 1,100 people from different generations and with diverse profiles to engage with each other: students, academics, investors, industry representatives, entrepreneurs and policy makers.



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