



Towards Tipping Points



Switzerland's reputation for innovation, precision, and excellence is reflected in this year's annual report, which highlights the resilience and ingenuity of our network.

In a time of rapid change and global challenges, we remain committed to driving transformative solutions. By fostering collaboration and leveraging collective intelligence, we continue to address critical issues with creativity and impact.

The Swiss Food Ecosystem has experienced significant shifts in recent years. Rising consumer demand for sustainable, ethical food has spurred innovation across the value chain. Start-ups, research institutions, and established players have championed new models focused on circular economies and climate-smart practices. These advancements, coupled with growing awareness of environmental and social challenges, underscore the need for urgent, systemic change.

Towards Tipping Points

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Thank You!

Changes in Our Board

Fabian Wahl has been President of Swiss Food Research for 5 years. During this time, Swiss Food Research has taken decisive steps in networking and fostering Research and Development projects as well as growth among members and partners. Fabian has not only positively shaped the future of the agro-food system, but also every person who has worked with him.

Together with Fabian, Wilfried Andlauer and Valerie Vincent are leaving our Board. Both have enriched our team enormously over many years. Down-to-earth way of thinking has improved our decision-making processes. Steadfastness and ambition have guided us through many years in which we have made a great impact on the Swiss agro-food system.

Changes in Our Team

Peter has served as CEO of Swiss Food Research from the first hours. Creating more holistic projects, thinking outside the box and striving for the next generation were central topics of his career in the food industry and Swiss Food Research. His expertise has made him a popular sparring partner for all members and a valuable support to our team. His generosity, precision and ambition have significantly contributed to the impactful work of Swiss Food Research.

We wish Valerie, Wilfried, Fabian and Peter all the best for the future. We are forever grateful to have had them on our team!
—The whole Swiss Food Research Ecosystem!

Letter from Us



Wolfram Brück
President

Dear Members, Supporters, Friends,

food lies at the heart of global health, environmental sustainability, and societal wellbeing. Swiss Food Research gives all of us the chance to contribute to a pioneering process with far-reaching benefits for people and the planet. The opportunity to work with innovators, researchers, and communities inspires us to seek solutions that not only address today's challenges but also create a resilient and equitable future for all.

— Wolfram Brück



Karola Krell
Board Member

We all need to build bridges between change-makers, scientists and companies. It is inspiring to see how ideas are realised and how legal, economic, and cultural challenges are tackled. One tipping point that needs to be mastered is the regulation of novel foods, which should be designed to promote innovation in order to create sustainable food systems of the future.

The dynamics in the Swiss Food Research environment fill me with confidence. Together with our dedicated team and members, we are committed to strengthening Switzerland as a leading location for sustainable food innovations. The synergies that arise from our collaboration are an impressive demonstration of how we can overcome major challenges together. I would like to thank everyone involved in this success and look forward to continuing to be part of this movement in the future.

— Karola Krell Zbinden

Our Team

Swiss Food Research
Team @ Agro Food
Innovation Forum 2024

back row from left to right:
Stéphane Günter,
Leila Pamingle,
Lucas Grob, Jan Biehl
front row from left to right:
Denise Arpogaus, Helene
Renaux, Corinne Stämpfli,
Peter Braun, Marina Helm-
Romaneschi, Fabian Bättig



We are happy to welcome Leila Pamingle and Fabian Bättig to our team!

Leila is passionate about the intersection of food, innovation, and sustainability. She is dedicated to supporting the development of innovative solutions for a more sustainable future. Fabian combines his expertise in environmental sciences and policy analysis with a passion for fostering sustainable food systems, focusing on the interplay of technological and social innovation.

We're proud to have you both on board and are excited to see where the journey will take us!

Furthermore, we are privileged to announce that Fourfold Foundation has joined our circle of supporters. Reflecting on a fruitful 2024, we move into 2025 with optimism and are buoyed by your unwavering support.

Our Supporters

Avina

AVINA

foundation for the food of tomorrow

AVINA is an independent Swiss foundation focused on nurturing humans and the planet in a circular and balanced manner. As a platform for pioneering minds and forward thinking ideas, they intend to bring about sustainable change to the food system.

SEEDLING Stiftung

Seedling
NURTURE INSPIRE EMPOWER

Seedling is committed to a positive and livable future. As a catalyst, they create space for ideas and support their development and growth. Seedling attaches great importance to working together as partners and acts in accordance with the guiding principle that they have defined for their philanthropic engagement.

Fourfold Foundation

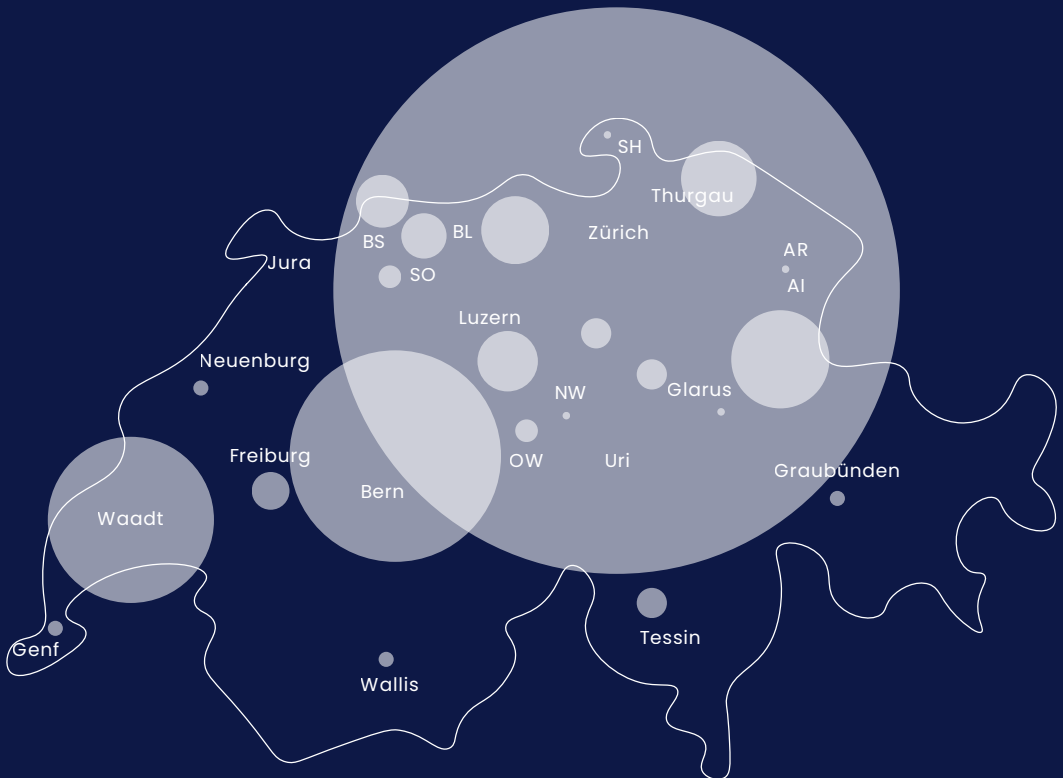
Fourfold

Fourfold Foundation joined mid 2024 Swiss Food Research. The foundation is committed to a healthy and equitable world that respects all forms of life. We educate and empower individuals to make conscious and fact-based decisions for the health and wellbeing of people and planet.

Working Across Switzerland and Across Value Chains

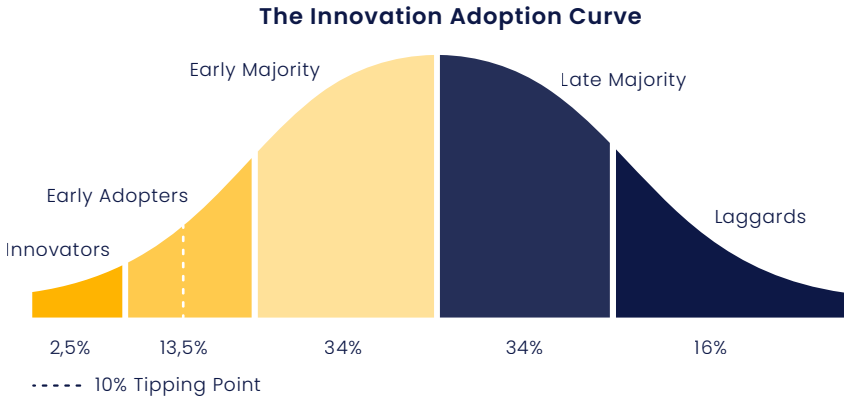
252 Members Across Switzerland

The size of the bubble represents
the number of members in a canton.



OW Obwalden
BL Basel-Landschaft
BS Basel-Stadt
SO Solothurn
AI Appenzell Innerrhoden
AR Appenzell Außerrhoden
NW Nidwalden

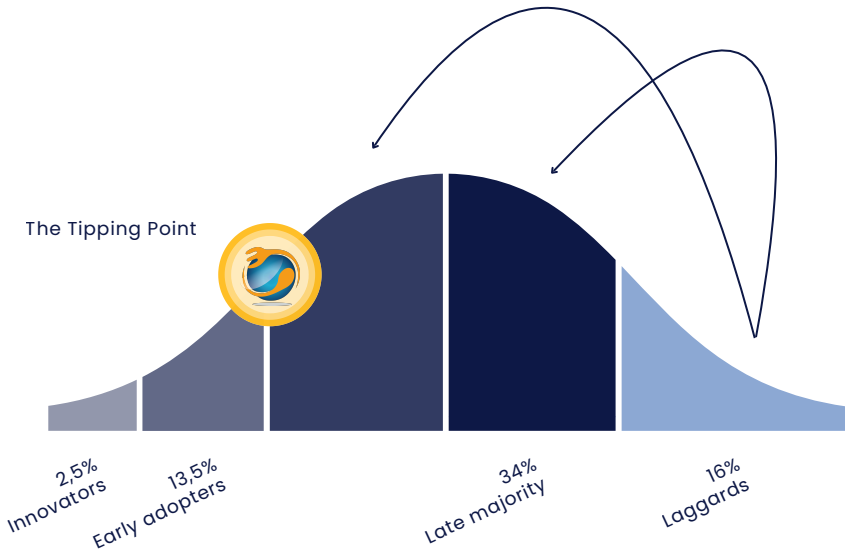
Tipping Points in the Food System



The road to a holistic transformation of our food system.

In environmental science, a tipping point may be understood as a point of no return. In light of current and future challenges, terms such as ocean currents, permafrost, or soil degradation often come to mind, as reaching the tipping point in these systems would lead to irreversible changes in the larger climate system. Similarly, in the world of (food) innovation, the 10% tipping point marks a stage where 10% of the population has adopted a new product or technology. This level of adoption can create a ripple effect, influencing more actors to stock the product, adopt it, or invest in the technology, thus generating momentum for it to become established in the market. Both types of tipping points illustrate how crossing a critical threshold can catalyze transformative change, whether in ecological ecosystems or innovation ecosystems.

Contribution to the Tipping Points



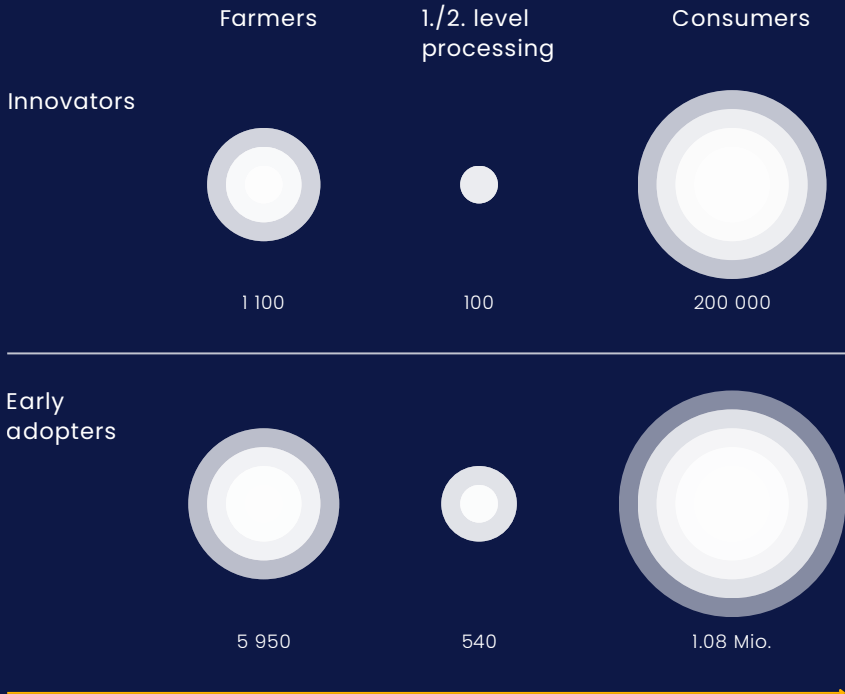
Road to the holistic transformation of our food system.

At Swiss Food Research, we contribute to tipping points in food innovation by driving change across the adoption curve. Through our three core pillars, Education, Innovation, and Business Creation, we support innovation at every stage. Our business creation initiatives empower companies of all sizes to validate markets and reach customers, building momentum toward wider adoption. By partnering with industry leaders, innovative SMEs and start-ups, we take action together with the early adopters and enable them to reach the critical tipping points. Meanwhile, our education programmes prepare the next generation of innovators, nurturing future early adopters who will catalyze change. Through these interconnected efforts, we help food innovations reach critical mass in a sustainable way, fostering lasting transformation in Switzerland's food system and beyond.

What Needs to Happen?

Calculated number of stakeholders to be engaged in order to reach the tipping point.

In order to understand how many actors need to be reached to trigger the tipping points and to drive the transformation in Switzerland further, we have calculated the numbers - based on publicly available data.



"This requires all of us to move out of our comfort zones even more and use more synergies"

Where Are We at the Moment?

Accounting towards the tipping points in different categories and activities.

To visualize the status quo of Swiss Food Research's activities in 2024 in another light the contribution towards the tipping points is calculated here.

	Farmers	1./2. Level Processing	Consumers
Swiss Food Research '24	43 (1%)	875 (22%)	2 000 (0%)

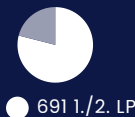
Innovation Boosters:
Swiss Food Ecosystem
Future Food Farming



Future Proof Farming



All Innovation groups



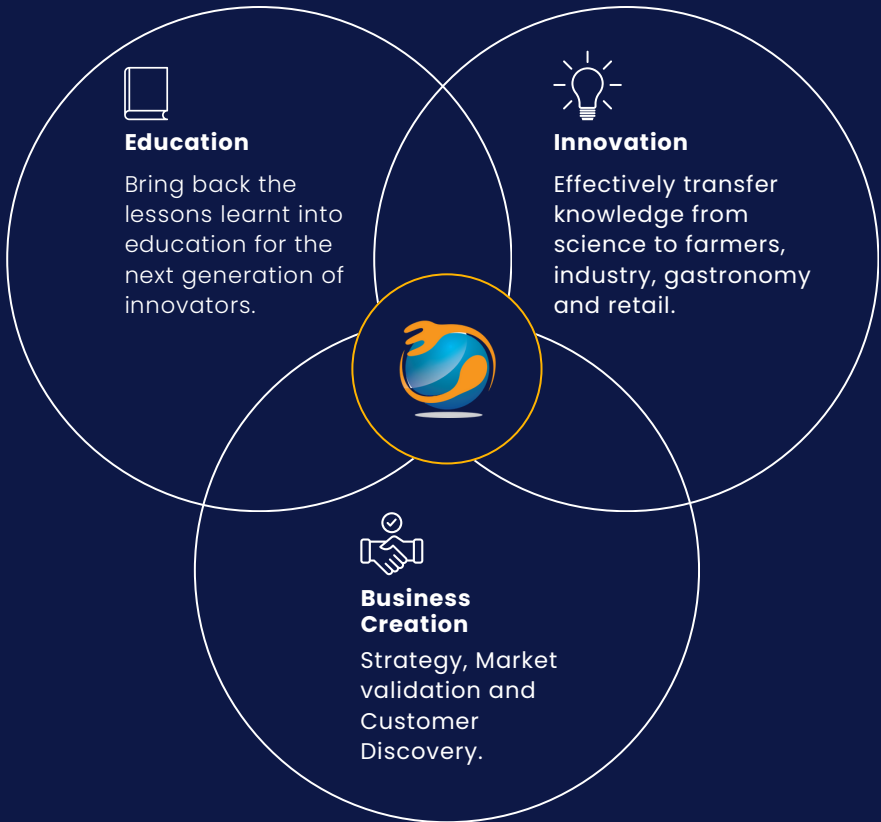
Events (Future Food
Market, SHL, etc.)



"We need to bridge even more the gap
between Farmers and Consumers"

How Do We Want to Proceed?

Create Meaningful and
Content-Driven Connections Between
All Actors of the Ecosystems



Exploring Desirability and Igniting Hands-On Innovation for Students



Pictures from SHL with Yumame products

Example of Activities in Education

The alliance between the SHL Swiss Hotel Management School Lucerne and Swiss Food Research ignites a spark of innovation in the realm of gastronomy, empowering students to immerse themselves in contemporary food trends and the pressing challenges of sustainability. This collaboration bestows upon students the invaluable opportunity to gain practical experience with pioneering food start-ups such as VegiBoss and Yumame Foods AG, where they conjure new culinary creations from extraordinary ingredients. Eliana Zamprogna of Yumame Foods expressed heartfelt appreciation for this partnership, highlighting SHL's spirit of creativity and innovation. Through the esteemed network of Swiss Food Research, SHL students embark on projects that address urgent challenges in food system transformation, enriching their imaginative capacities and honing entrepreneurial acumen, essential skills for the future leaders of the food industry.

This cooperation aims to integrate "food innovation" into SHL's curriculum, merging theoretical and practical approaches. It also provides start-ups with valuable feedback from gastronomy experts, helping boost market acceptance for sustainable products. By involving professional chefs and students early, SHL contributes to the desirability potential of these innovations.



The collaboration between Swiss Hotel Management School Lucerne (SHL) and Swiss Food Research is groundbreaking for the next generation," says Josef Jans, Director of Business Development and Innovation at SHL.

"It will not only provide our students with valuable practical experience, but will also help to further establish Switzerland as an innovation leader in the food and hospitality sector."

— Josef Jans, Director of Business Development and Innovation at SHL

Thank you, Swiss Hotel Management School Lucerne (SHL), for the enriching collaboration! Your enthusiasm, innovation and creativity have impressed us at Yumame Food!

— Eliana Zamprogna,
Yumame Foods AG

Holistic Approaches to Spark Innovation



The European Network of Living Labs iVZW (ENoLL) is an international non-profit association, which aims to promote and enhance user-driven innovation ecosystems

In 2024 we had 21 Innovation group meetings with around 700 participants.



Swiss Food Research Call
Proteins4Future

supported by
Fourfold Foundation

Innovation Groups

Since 2023, our Innovation groups have proudly operated as ENoLL-certified Living Labs. This means we bridge the gap between science and industry, fostering a dynamic exchange of knowledge. By integrating cutting-edge scientific findings with industry insights, our network not only gains access to the latest research but also provides valuable feedback. This feedback shapes future research projects, ensuring they address real-world needs and deliver greater impact. Our Living Labs bring science directly to industry stakeholders, facilitating partnerships, early-stage feedback, and meaningful dialogue. This approach maximizes the potential of applied research, enabling early validation of both technologies and markets to drive innovation forward.

Proteins4Future Call

Together with Fourfold Foundation we we organised a dedicated call for sustainable protein sources and related food applications. The whole Ecosystem was invited to submit breakthrough innovation ideas in the areas of plant-based protein as well as biomass and biotech solutions. Underlined by a strong collaboration mindset we received numerous, highly innovative project proposals out of which two projects were selected to to receive CHF 25,000 in funding. In addition, Swiss Food Research will directly support those projects during their development and implementation phases. Since the quality of applications was very high, also non-selected projects for this specific call will receive further support to move the ideas forward.

Planting the Seed



Innovation Booster Workshops and Future Food P-Act

At Swiss Food Research we spark transformative innovation with our Open Exploration Workshops and the Future Food P-Act, designed to address specific challenges. Participants engage in co-creation, learn open innovation methods, and embrace radical thinking. Tools such as “Eyeless Portraits” and warm-up exercises create a safe, dynamic space for creative exploration, encouraging participants to leave their comfort zones. Improv theater vividly presented food system challenges, leveling understanding and fostering meaningful networking.



Future scenarios drove participants to explore extreme possibilities, identifying barriers to implementing desirable outcomes. Combined with the proven problem-tree methodology, these approaches guide participants to focus on root causes rather than jumping to solutions. By dissecting systemic challenges, the group formulates well-rounded opportunity statements that serve as a foundation for impactful, actionable solutions. Through this blend of creativity, systemic thinking, and collaboration, the programmes of the Innovation Booster set the stage for pivotal change. This year's challenges were about: Resource efficiency, enhancing local supply and actions towards a healthy soil.



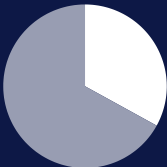
Future Food P-Act Impressions

Innovation Groups on Average

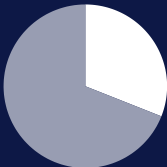
Each year, we define clear goals to keep our focus and ambitions on track. In 2024, we exceeded our goals by 132%!

7 Participants from academia

27 Participants from economy or society



31%
Female speakers, experts, moderators



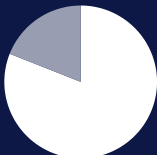
33%
Female participants

4

How many new contacts made?

How relevant do you judge the topic(s) treated by the event?

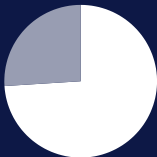
- Very relevant.
- A lot was familiar.



81%

How much did the event help you to get learnings and new ideas?

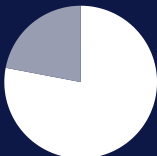
- It helped significantly.
- It did not help much.



74%

How likely are you to recommend this event to friends and colleagues?

- Very likely.
- Not very likely.



78%

Growing the Seed



Innovation Booster
Future Food Farming

The Innovation Booster programme by Innosuisse helps “plant & grow” ideas through open innovation. Since 2021, Cluster Food & Nutrition and Swiss Food Research have partnered to develop and validate this process.



Innovation Booster
Swiss Food Ecosystems

Open Exploration Workshop: 301 participants joined workshops to explore root challenges and map key stakeholders. Cross-disciplinary networking enabled a holistic view. An essential step for submitting proposals and joining Innosuisse’s Innovation Booster programmes.



Total project funding CHF 39,000, comprising:

- CHF 5,000 from the incubation phase grant.
- CHF 30,000 upon favorable jury decision, disbursed in two tranches.
- A cash co-funding contribution of CHF 4,000 from the innovation team.

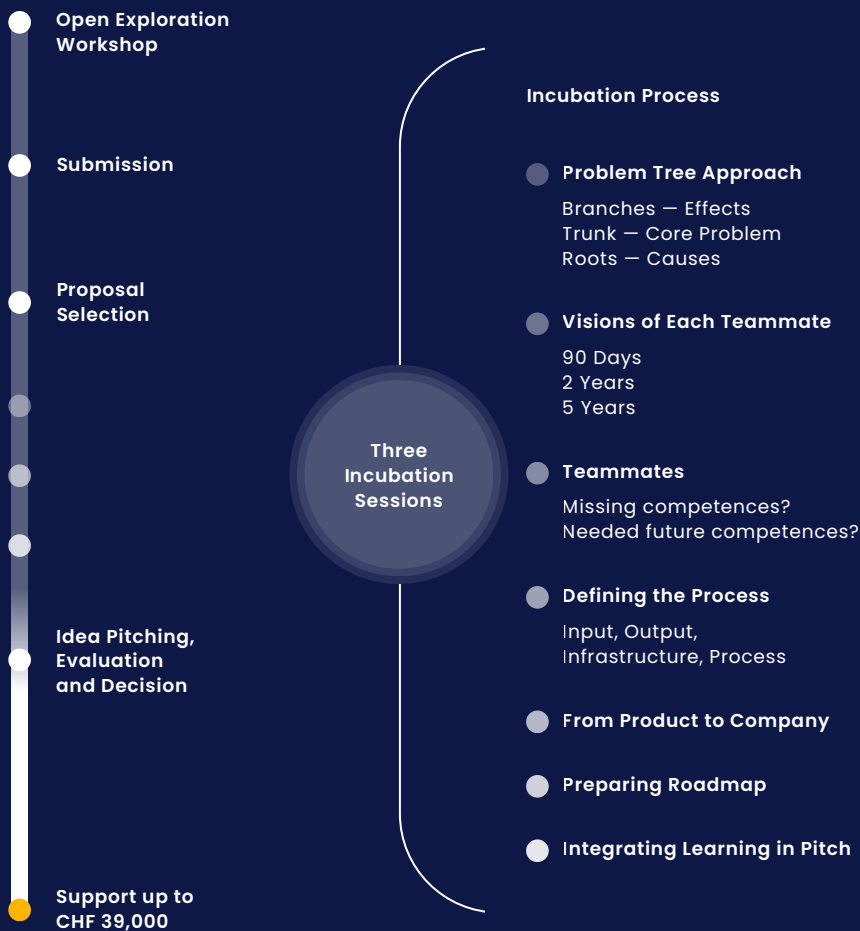
Support provided by
Innovation Boosters

Idea Submission Phase: Following the workshops, 72 individuals and/or teams submitted proposals addressing identified challenges. Solutions that show the potential for changing the status quo towards a more sustainable and healthy agro food system get evaluated.

Incubation Sessions: 31 Selected idea proposals entered a six-week incubation phase, including at least three coaching sessions with experts. This phase focuses on assessing problems, forming competent teams (comprising at least one implementation partner and one research partner), and developing a project proposal that is desirable, viable and feasible.

Pitching Session: After incubation, 25 teams pitched their refined ideas to a jury of experts. The jury evaluates proposals based on innovation degree, radicality, and team competencies. In 2024, 19 projects were sponsored with a total of **CHF 743,000** (CHF 234,000 to be paid in 2025) provided by Innosuisse, the leading house, SATW, and AVINA.

From Problem to Project



"Innovation has to be
in the DNA of the
Innovation Booster."

— Dr. med. Jörg Spieldenner,
Innosuisse Expert

Catalyzing Innovation



KMU und Innovation Zürich is an initiative by the Economic Development Network of the Canton of Zürich, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Zürich to maximize their innovation potential and stay competitive. The programme provides guidance and early-stage consulting for innovation projects, assists in applying for funding, and offers access to a broad network of partners as well as informational and networking events. Swiss Food Research is proud to be the Innovation Partner of “KMU und Innovation”.

Over the past year, Swiss Food Research has supported several projects to guide and consult on the many faces of innovation. In many cases it was realised that already the open exchange and discussion at the start of the programme leads to sharpening ideas, concepts and strategies as well as thinking out of the box by approaching challenges from a different angle. The support can reach from Product and Process Development, developing together IP Strategies to sharpening Business Models.

“KMU und Innovation” provided us with excellent industry knowledge that helped to identify new approaches to develop our innovative products further.”

— Klaus Kienle,
Chief Production Officer,
Food Brewer

* For companies, the protection of IP is a core competence. In order to ensure the best possible protection of our expertise, we wanted to have our strategy mirrored by an expert opinion in order to plan the next strategic steps sequentially, correctly and sensitively.

Within the IP Strategy Development part, the support to identify, analyze and protect innovative technologies, solutions and products was of high value for the partners. Proper IP protection via e.g. patenting does not only enhance the value of the implemented solution but also helps secure business growth for the years to come. In addition, the organisational impact of implementing Innovation Strategies is looked at together with an inside and outside view to anticipate future needs.

"Thanks to the expertise we received under the 'SMEs and Innovation' programme, we can ensure that we optimally protect our IP and therefore provide an important foundation for further growth."

— Silvan Leibacher,
Co-Founder and CEO,
Eggfield *

"We benefitted from the vast experience, the network and the practical approach of the expert. Without the support of the 'SMEs and Innovation programme' this would not have been possible."

— Vladimir Minic
Geschäftsführer,
Straumann Hüppen

Coaching

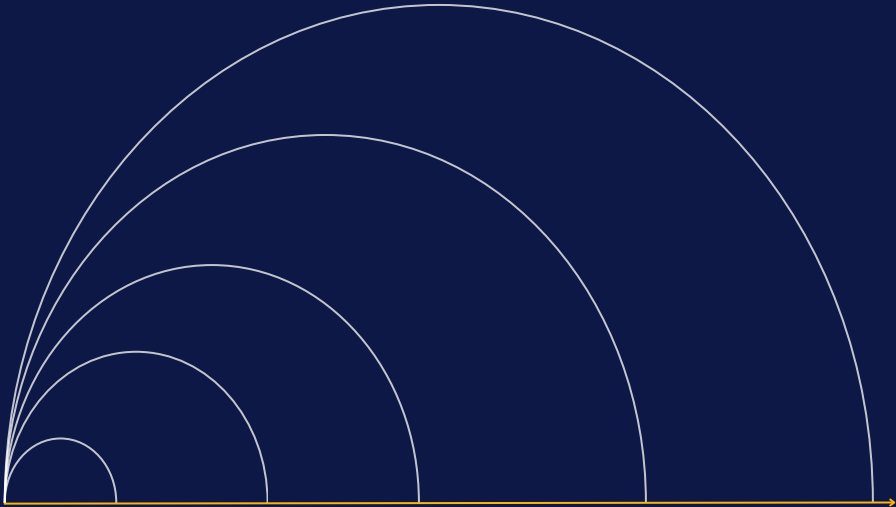
From the start, Swiss Food Research has played a crucial role in our development, seamlessly connecting us with leading industry and academic experts across the Swiss Ecosystem. Their advice and support have been fundamental to our growth. Elevating our collaboration through their formal coaching programme, especially with Jan's unmatched expertise in our sector, has been exceptionally valuable.

— Cultivated

For a bit more than a year, Swiss Food Research is offering direct coaching to start-ups and scale-ups. In a first step, the need for coaching is assessed together in order to define the scope and allocate the fitting expertise within the team. Through a clear commitment from both sides when it comes to expected output as well as resource engagement we were able to deliver impactful and targeted coaching to key partners. Since the scope is co-defined, we can work very specifically on company needs. In a confidential and protected environment, we co-create consumer-centric Information and Referral pipelines, establish and execute a market-discovery plan and challenge the status quo.

This results in a clear direction for innovation strategies, competence plan for the team and management as well as an action plan towards scaling up. In some cases, we also deep-dive into technologies, product formulation, and communication strategies for new products in order to increase the likelihood of success in a highly competitive market.

Coaching Process



Assessment

- Need for coaching?
- Defining the scope
- Allocating fitting expertise
- Determining commitment and resource engagement

Coaching

- Working on specific needs
- Co-creating consumer centric I&R pipelines
- Establishing and executing market discovery plan
- Challenging status quo

Additional topics could be

- Defining needed technologies
- Improving product formula
- Implementing communication strategies for a new product

Outcome

- Innovation strategies
- Competence plan
- Management action plan towards scaling-up
- Increasing probability of success in a highly competitive market

EIT Food Seedbed

"Seedbed has greatly facilitated our market entry into other European countries. With their support, we were able to successfully secure our first customers abroad. Additionally, the programme helped us professionalize our operations and overall approach. I highly recommend Seedbed to any promising foodtech start-up in Europe."

— Marius Semm



Seedbed Kick-Off
in Bilbao

The EIT Food Seedbed Incubator is a six month equity-free programme, which identifies and validates the commercial potential of Europe's most promising IP-backed innovations, to launch scalable and sustainable Agrifood Tech ventures across Europe.

Once more in 2024, Swiss Food Research is running the incubator together with EIT Food and the Seedbed Partners across Europe to scout, evaluate and support key start-up teams across three missions: "Healthier Lives Through Food", "Net Zero" and "Reducing Risk for a Fair & Resilient Food System". Within mission three, we supported and guided six teams on their market discovery and product development journey. Amongst the international team we also had three Swiss start-ups, namely KoraLabs, Niatsu and Tasteomics. Through an intense programme, ranging from a Boot Camp at the very start to pitching sessions, financial training, and more, we help the teams target the right consumer/customer base, sharpen their value proposition and USP, and establish their business cases. All of this culminates in the final event in Paris at the end of the year, where all start-ups come together for a Demo Day to review achievements and embark on the next steps of their respective journeys toward incorporation, launch, or scaling.

Events



Processed Food
im Fokus Keynote

Future Food Market

More advanced and groundbreaking products were showcased at the Future Food Market. A total of 12 start-ups based in the Canton of Zurich, presented their ventures and offered their innovative products at stands or during the aperitif. For the exhibitors, the exchange with interested professionals and the general public was highly valuable for feedback. Overall, the event generated sales of nearly CHF 2,000 for the start-ups. Additionally, for the head chef at Kraftwerk, it was a welcome opportunity to test new products and share direct comments with the founders.



Product tastings

The Future Food Market was embedded in the event: Processed Food im Fokus – organised by SATW, Swiss Food Research, and the Zurich Office for Economic Affairs, explored the trend of highly processed foods under the Food 4.0 initiative.



Booths of members



Tasting lunch with exquisite ingredients from our members.



Listening to exciting keynotes.

Agro Food Innovation Forum

Our yearly event under the motto "Perspective Matters," gathered nearly 100 innovators, start-ups, entrepreneurs, and decisionmakers for an unforgettable day of inspiration, collaboration, and new ideas.

The event concentrated on developing adaptive and innovative capacities, next-generation collaboration and Living Labs to promote innovation. Also in focus: public-private partnerships for innovation, impact investments from foundations and challenges in agriculture, industry and retail.

Ten members show-cased the immense potential of innovative products and new food on the plates – captivating and delicious!



Our mission for 2025 is to connect the dots, inspire change, and reduce the risks and hurdles faced by innovators. By providing critical resources, financial and technical, we aim to empower our members to overcome resistance and drive impactful transformations.