GREATER ZURICH AREA

Europe's leading robotics hub

Why global robotics leaders choose to build and scale from Switzerland

About the whitepaper

Geared toward international robotics and automation companies considering European expansion, this whitepaper highlights why the Greater Zurich Area in Switzerland provides an ideal base for robotics companies that want to scale physical AI.

It combines data-driven insights with perspectives from experts across the robotics ecosystem, offering a view on industrial integration, talent, and commercialization.

Table of Content:

Experts:

Prof. Dr. Yulia Sandamirskaya
ZHAW

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EY-Parthenon

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Declan Shine
ETH Robotics Club

Section 1

Switzerland as a leading business location

Scaling globally successful tech companies requires an environment that supports long development cycles, protects intellectual property, and enables reliable deployment.

Switzerland's unique combination of political and economic stability, strong IP protection, world-class talent, and a business framework built for long-term innovation creates an environment where robotics companies can develop, validate, and deploy complex systems with confidence.

Switzerland's strucutral strengths are consistently reflected in global rankings:

#1	in the Global Innovation Index for 15 consecutive years
#1	in IMD World Digital Competitiveness
#1	in patent applications per capita in Europe (EPO
#1	in the IMD World Talent Ranking
#1	in Global Reputation Ranking

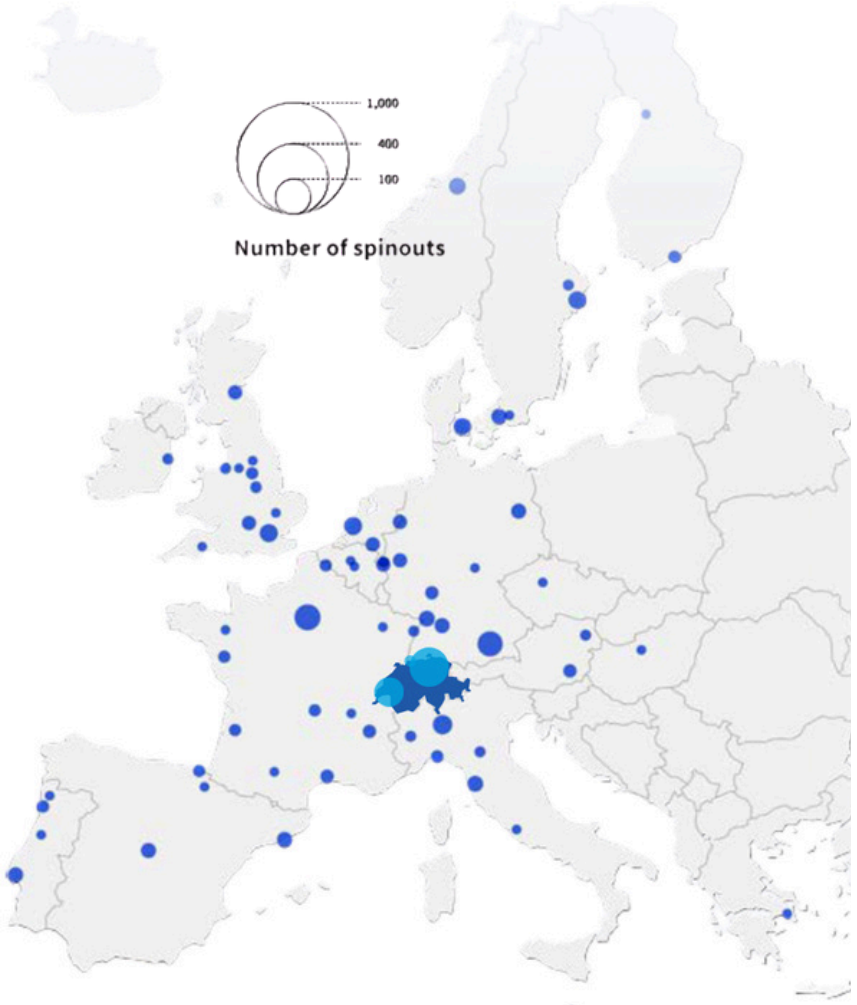
Sources: WIPO 2025 , IMD World Digital Competitiveness Ranking 2025, EPO Patent Index 2024, IMD World Talent Ranking 2025), Reputation Lab 2025

Switzerland combines a liberal economic framework with operational efficiency in the heart of Europe.

Moderate taxation, low administrative complexity, and direct access to decision-makers allow companies to operate with speed and predictability. Regulatory clarity and a pragmatic approach reduce friction, making Switzerland one of Europe's most reliable locations for innovation-driven companies.

Why companies scale from Greater Zurich:

- Liberal economy with moderate corporate and individual taxation.
- Stable political and economic environment providing long-term planning security.
- Efficient, low-bureaucracy administration with fast and transparent processes.
- Direct access to decision-makers, enabling fast coordination and execution.
- One of Europe's most reliable locations for innovation-driven companies.



Number of European robotics spinouts by institute of origin

© European Spinouts Report 2025 by Dealroom, p. 71, (edited)

Companies in Greater Zurich benefit from:

→ **A high-performance IP environment**
Europe's leader in patent intensity, providing a strong foundation for protecting and scaling defensible robotics systems.

→ **A globally competitive talent environment**
Consistently ranked among the world's best locations for attracting, developing, and retaining skilled professionals.

→ **A stable base for long-cycle deep tech**
Political stability, regulatory clarity, and precision engineering culture accelerate complex system development over time.

One of the world's most concentrated deep tech hubs

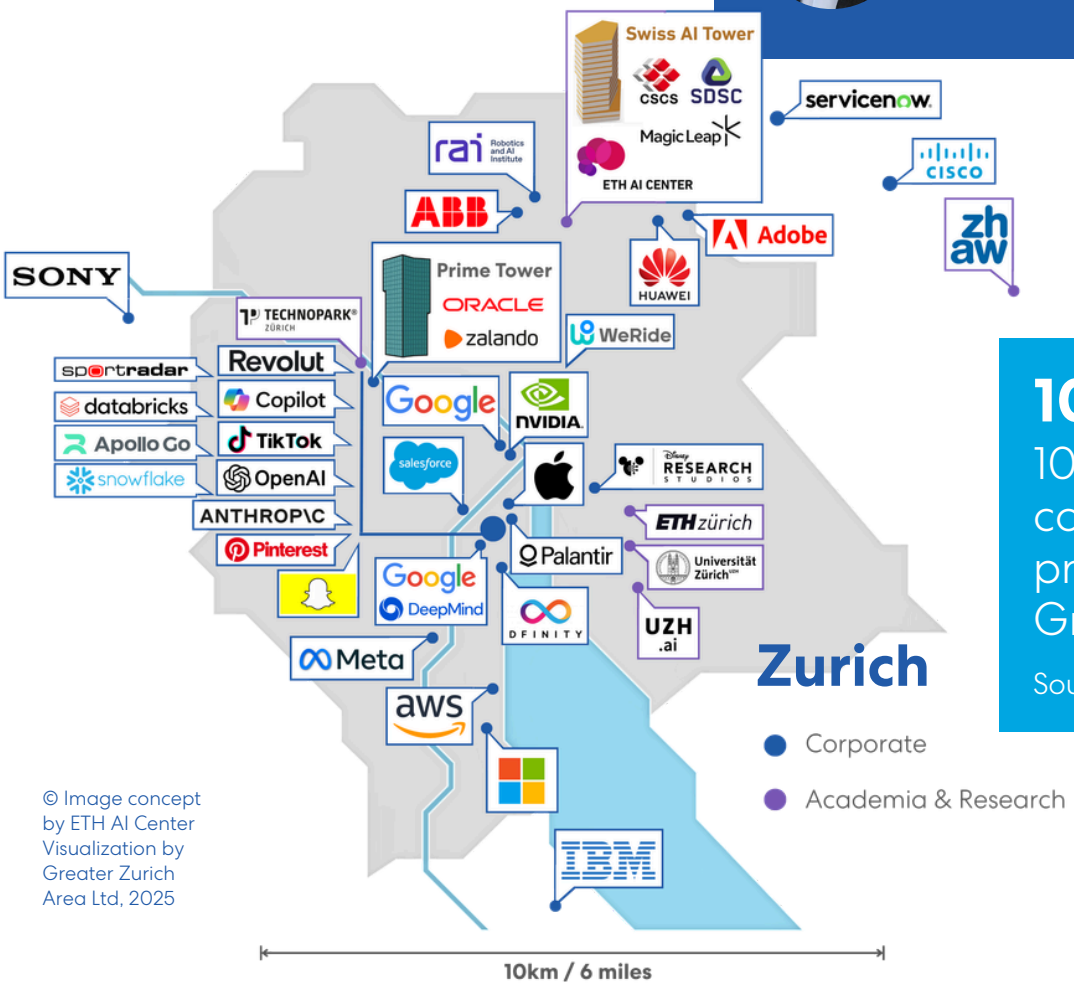
Greater Zurich brings together global technology companies, leading research institutions, and high-growth startups in one of the most concentrated deep tech hubs worldwide.

This density enables rapid collaboration, knowledge transfer, and access to both cutting-edge research and real-world deployment expertise.

Download the map

> "Global companies use the region as a proven gateway into Europe to localize, partner, and scale. The Greater Zurich Area stands out for its strong ecosystem, uniting innovative local startups, global industrial leaders, top research institutions, and skilled talent. This depth has long attracted international players."

Götz von Steynitz
Partner; EY-Parthenon



© Image concept by ETH AI Center
Visualization by Greater Zurich Area Ltd, 2025

10 out 10

10 out of the Top 10 AI companies have a presence in the Greater Zurich Area.

Source: AI Magazine

Section 2

The Silicon Valley of Robotics is in Switzerland

A dense and fast-growing ecosystem for robotics and autonomous systems

The Greater Zurich Area covers the full spectrum of robotics and autonomous systems development within a compact region.

From industrial robotics and inspection systems to autonomous driving, drones, medtech, and AI-driven components, all critical technologies required to build and deploy real-world robotics systems are concentrated in one place.

Explore the Robotics & Autonomous Systems map of the Greater Zurich Area.

Discover over 100+ key players shaping the future of robotics – from leading research hubs to real-world deployment across air, land, and sea, and the platforms and networks that connect them.

The map highlights only a selection.

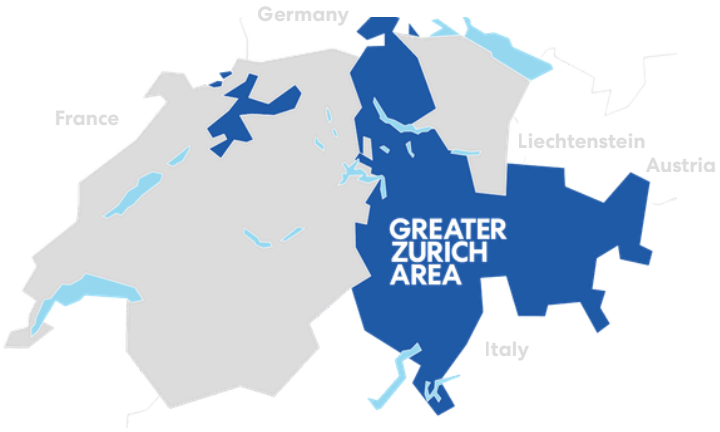
Download the full interactive map

This concentration of actors across research, development, and application has positioned Greater Zurich among Europe's most advanced robotics hubs – widely referred to as the **Silicon Valley of Robotics.**

Section 2

Top robotics research hubs in the Greater Zurich Area

A uniquely dense concentration of robotics labs across leading institutions – spanning the full stack from AI and perception to hardware, control, and real-world robotic systems.



ETH Zurich

Institute of Robotics and Intelligent Systems (IRIS):
e.g. Autonomous Systems Lab (ASL), Robotic Systems Lab (RSL), Soft Robotics Lab (SRL), Multi-Scale Robotics Lab (MSRL) Mobile Robotics Lab (MRL), Sensory-Motor Systems Lab (SMS), Rehabilitation Engineering Lab (Re Lab) Biomedical and Mobile Health Technology Lab, Medical Microsystems Lab (MML), Robotic Materials Lab

Institute of Visual Computing (IVC):
e.g. Computer Graphics Laboratoty (CGL), Computer Vision and Geometry Group (CVG), and more

Dept. of Information, Technology and Electrical Engineering (D-ITET)
e.g. Computer Vision and Geometry Lab, Interactive Visualization & Intelligence Augmentation Lab (IVIA) and more.

Agentic Systems Lab and more
ETH Robot X Center for Robotics
Institute of Neuroinformatics (UZH/ETH)
Max Planck ETH Center for Learning Systems (CLS)

University of Zurich

Departments of Informatics:
e.g. Robotics and Perception Group (RPG), Autonomous Sequential Learning and Predictive Intelligence Lab (ALPI), Visualization and MultiMedia Lab (VMML), Data Systems and Theory Group (DAST), Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Group (AIML), Software Evolution and Architecture Lab (SEAL), Human Aspects of Software Engineering Lab (HASEL) Database Technology Group (DBTG), Human-Centered Information Systems Engineering (HISE), Dynamic and Distributed Information Systems Group (DDIS), Interactive Visual Data Analysis Group (IVDA), Zurich Empirical Software Engineering (ZEST)

Digital Society Initiative
Institute of Neuroinformatics (UZH/ETH)

ZHAW

Dept. of Life Sciences and Facility Management:
- Institute of Computational Life Sciences (ICLS): Research Centre for Cognitive Computing in Life Sciences (incl. research groups for Advanced Signal Analytics, for Computational Environment, for Neuromorphic Computing, for Predictive Analytics) and Research Centre for Digital Labs and Production
- Institute of Facility Management (IFM)

School of Engineering:
CAI – Centre for Artificial Intelligence; MINDLab – Mutual Human-Robot Interaction Development Laboratory; Safety Critical Systems Research Lab; Institute of Mechatronic Systems (IMS): e.g. Laboratory for Robotics and Mechatronics, Swiss Digital Learning Factory SmartPro 4.0, Laboratory for Drive Systems and Power Electronics;

Inter-departmental projects:
ZHAW RobotCare – Network for Robots who care,
ZHAW RobotHub - The ZHAW Hub for Robotics

Empa

- Empa – Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology
- Empa – Drone Hub at NEST (Next Evolution in Sustainable Building Technologies)
- Competence Center for Sustainability Robotics

- Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences – Robotics & Automation
- Dalle Molle Institute for Artificial Intelligence USI-SUPSI (IDSIA), Focus on Autonomous Robotics
- National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) Robotics and NCCR Automation
- CSEM
- Switzerland Innovation Park Ticino incl. Swiss Drone Competence Center
- New Mobility Lab Innovation Booster

This overview highlights selected institutions, laboratories, and research groups and is not intended to be exhaustive.

Section 2

Key players in the region


ABB Robotics


mimic Robotics


Roboa


Voliro

Tethys Robotics

Global players

ABB Robotics, Anthropic, Apple (Vision Lab), Disney Research Studios, Google / Deepmind, Huawei, Logitech, Magic Leap, Maxon, Meta, Microsoft Research, NVIDIA, Open AI, Pinterest, Sensirion, Siemens, Sony, Sony AI, UiPath

Flagship startups and scaleups

Aerotain, Aithon Robotics, Amazon RIVR, Anavia, ANYbotics, Ascento, Auterion, Avientus, Avision, Binabik AI, BOTA Systems, CDDS, Destinus, Drone Harmony, Duatic, Dufour Aerospace, Embotech, ENS Dynamics, Eta Robotics, Fixposition, FLARM Technology, Flink Robotics, Flexion Robotics, Forgis, Fotokite, Gravis Robotics, Impact Build, Klepsydra, MagnebotiX, Matternet, MicroAGI, Mimic Robotics, Nanoflex Robotics, Nautica Technologies, No Touch Robotics, Nunu AI, Pointcloud, P8S, Roboa, Robolem, Saeki, Scewo, Skydio, SMYZE, Suind, Sulzer Schmid, Sunflower Labs, Sudo AI, swissdrones, Tethys Robotics, Tinamu, Toggle Robotics, Verity, Voliro, Witty Machines, Wingtra, Yuneec

National platforms and networks

Alpine Drone Consortium, Creative AI Foundation, CSEM, Drone Industry Association Switzerland, ESA Business Incubation Centre Switzerland, ETH Robotics Club, Federal Office of Civil Aviation FOCA, Innosuisse, LINA (Large-scale Intelligent Networked Automation), NCCR Automation (National Centre of Competence in Reserach), Skyguide, Swiss Aerospace Cluster, Swiss Drone Competence Center at Switzerland Innovation Park Ticino | Site of Park Zurich, Swiss Federal Railways, Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research Robotics, Swiss Transit Lab, Switzerland Innovation Park Zurich, Wyss Zurich, Zug Alliance Thinking Energy & Mobility Forward, Innovation Booster Robotics by Innosuisse

Section 2

Key players in adjacent regions

1 – **Swiss Cobotics Competence Center (S3C)**
part of Switzerland Innovation Park Biel, Swiss Hub for collaborative robotics in industry

2 – **Swiss Smart Factory Center**
part of Switzerland Innovation Park Biel for smart and sustainable manufacturing

3 – **EPFL**
BioRobotics Lab, Computational Robot Design & Fabrication Lab, Distributed Intelligent Systems and Algorithms Lab, Laboratory of Intelligent Systems, Laboratory of Sustainability Robotics, Learning Algorithms and Systems Lab, MicroBioRobotics Laboratory, Mobile Robotics Systems Group, Reconfigurable Robotics Lab, REHAssist Group, Systems Control and Multiagent Optimization, Translational Neural Engineering Lab, Visual Intelligence for Transportation Lab

Gravis Robotics, Picture by Ryan Luke John

Section 3

Where robotics goes from research to reality

Applied collaboration across engineering, AI, and industry by default

> A tight-knit ecosystem where robotics is developed through direct collaboration across disciplines, industries, and real-world applications

©SMYZE

©NEURA Robotics

The Greater Zurich Area combines AI, software, hardware engineering, and application domains in a tightly connected environment that accelerates the development and deployment of real-world robotics systems.

Robotics systems are developed in direct interaction with industry partners and end users, enabling continuous feedback from early prototyping to deployment.

This cross-sector setup reduces iteration cycles and ensures systems are designed for real-world performance from the outset.Systems are developed in close collaboration between research, engineering, and application partners resulting in faster time to market and more reliable outcomes.

Together, this creates one of Europe's most effective environments for developing competitive next-generation intelligent systems.

Section 3

Lighthouses

Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW)

ZHAW is one of Switzerland's leading applied sciences universities bringing robotics, AI, and system engineering into real-world environments.

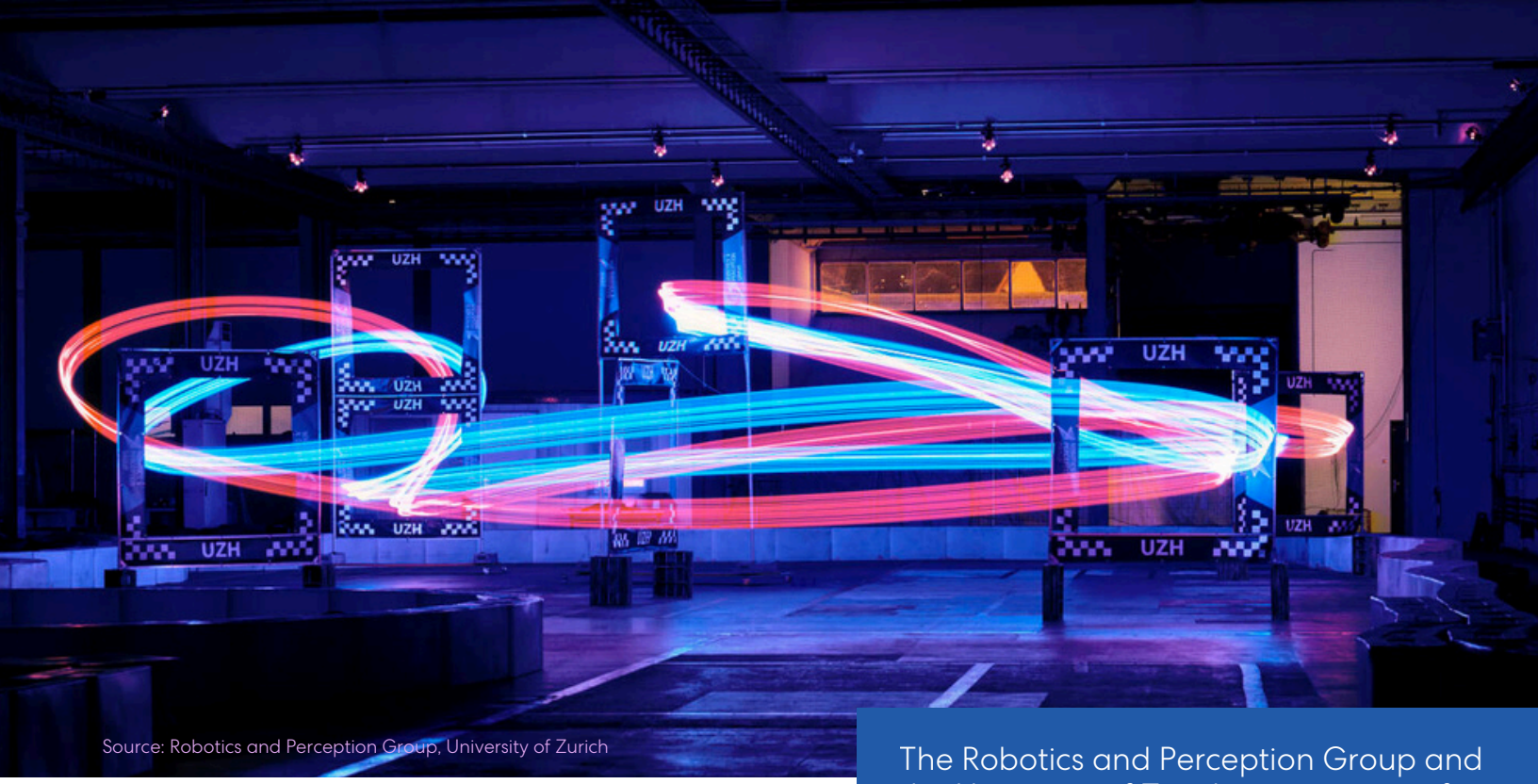
Its institutes combine expertise across engineering, software, and application domains to develop and test robotics systems in areas such as healthcare, industrial automation, and environmental monitoring in close collaboration with industry partners.

This applied, cross-sector approach ensures robotics systems are designed for real-world deployment from the outset while significantly strengthening the region's applied robotics talent base.

©ZHAW

"The Greater Zurich Area has an impressive concentration of technology developers – University labs, robotics startups, and AI companies. Moreover, many of its enterprises, e.g. elderly care facilities and hospitals, are eager to deploy robots to support their personell and improve quality of services and logistics. This applied cross-sector collaboration drives true innovation with impact."

Prof. Dr. Yulia Sandamirskaya
Professor for Cognitive Technology in Life Sciences, ZHAW



Source: Robotics and Perception Group, University of Zurich

The Robotics and Perception Group and the University of Zurich present one of the world's largest indoor drone-testing arenas.

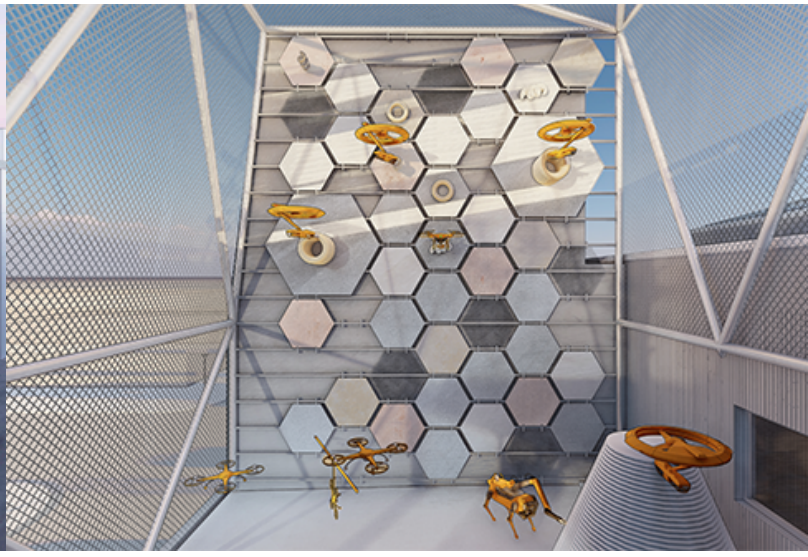
Section 3

Lighthouses

The DroneHub at NEST

The DroneHub at NEST (Next Evolution in Sustainable Building Technologies) is a real-world test environment for aerial and autonomous robotics, developed by Empa with EPFL and Imperial College London. It enables companies and researchers to develop and validate systems for inspection, repair, and construction directly on infrastructure.

The Drone Hub at NEST | Picture: ROK Architects



The Aerial additive manufacturing façade on top of the Drone Hub.

Section 4

Why top robotics talent stays

The Greater Zurich Area not only develops and attracts robotics talent, it retains it long term. In a global market for top engineers, retention becomes a structural advantage.

#1 Switzerland leads globally in AI researchers and inventors per capita.

Source: 2026 Artificial Intelligence Index report.

The Greater Zurich Area continuously expands its deep tech talent base by simultaneously educating the next generation of robotics specialists while attracting top-tier talent from abroad.

Though robotics and AI experts at the highest level enjoy global optionality, much of it chooses to stay in the Greater Zurich Area.

The result is not just easy access to top talent, but a compounding base of expertise across the entire ecosystem.

Stable teams, deep domain expertise, and the continuous transfer of knowledge across the ecosystem continuously reinforce this advantage over time.

This has created one of world's highest concentrations of AI talent, with dense pools of specialists in perception, autonomy, and intelligent systems.

Section 4

Why top robotics talent stays

Global by default

- Highly international talent base, attracting skilled professionals worldwide
- Diversity Nearly 40% of Switzerland's population has a foreign background
- English is the primary working language in the tech ecosystem
- Multicultural teams enable seamless collaboration across borders
- Ranked among the most welcoming tech destinations worldwide for expats.

Exceptional quality of life that retains

- Ranked among the world's most livable cities, including #3 globally with top scores in healthcare and education
- Safe, clean urban environment with high-quality infrastructure
- Direct access to nature and balanced living conditions
- The country consistently ranks among the world's best for livability and attractiveness.

Built for seamless global connectivity

- Zurich Airport ranked Europe's leading airport for 22 consecutive years
- Direct flights to more than 200 global destinations
- Strong public transport and urban mobility infrastructure

Hear for yourself in this video

"Good people want to go where other good people are, right?"

Alessandro Curioni
Vice President Europe and Africa & Director of IBM Research Europe

©ETH Robotics Club. | at the Switzerland Innovation Park Zurich


Source: ETH Zurich | ethz.ch

Section 5 From top talent to global robotics companies

ETH Zurich – Europe's #1 robotics powerhouse

#1

University for robotics spinouts in Europe

Most VC-backed robotics spinouts (41)

Ranked top European universities for deep tech spinout value creation (2026)

$1B+

Most deep tech unicorns and $1B+ exits (5)

$2.4B

Highest combined enterprise value

$784.6M

Highest total VC funding

Section 5

From top talent to global robotics companies

Greater Zurich is one of Europe's most effective environments for turning robotics talent into venture-backed deep tech companies.

A dual deep tech founder pipeline: Greater Zurich doesn't just attract and produce talent. It systematically turns it into deep tech companies.

ETH Zurich sits at the core of this pipeline. Its graduates build one of Europe's most productive streams of robotics and deep tech ventures, leading in spinouts, funding, and enterprise value.

At the same time, global technology companies in the region act as talent accelerators, that attract top talent with hands-on experience in building and scaling real-world systems globally.

As these alumni advance their careers, they don't leave the ecosystem, but become founders themselves, who reinvesting their expertise into new deep tech ventures within the region.

The result is one of Europe's most powerful robotics company pipelines, a self-reinforcing system built by founders who combine cutting-edge research with real-world scaling experience.

Google Switzerland alumni have created more than ~ 210 companies and 2600 jobs since opening their R&D office in 2004.

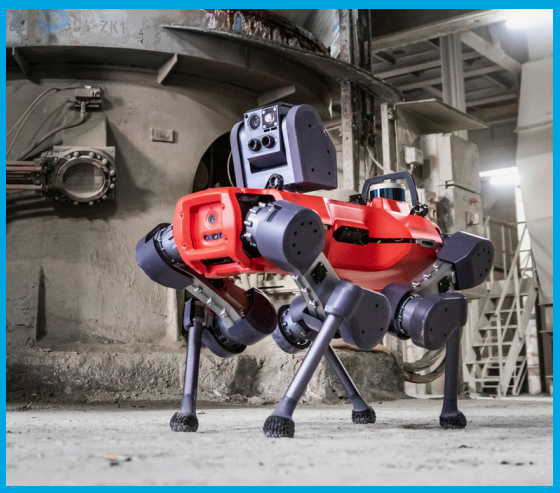
Source Christine Antlanger-Winter - Country Director Google Switzerland at GZA Spotlight 2026

Section 5

Lighthouses

"The trust associated with 'Made in Switzerland' and a strong safety-by-design culture create the foundation for transforming cutting-edge robotics innovations into scalable products deployed worldwide."

Kateryna Portmann
Senior Product Manager, ANYbotics



© ANYbotics

ANYbotics

ANYbotics develops AI-driven autonomous robots deployed globally in energy, oil & gas, and industrial environments – performing thousands of inspections every week.

Spun out of ETH Zurich, the company has turned cutting-edge robotics research into systems operating in complex, real-world conditions.

Amazon RIVR

Amazon RIVR deploys autonomous last-mile delivery robots built for real-world environments. Founded as an ETH Zurich spinoff in the Greater Zurich Area and acquired by Amazon, it builds large-scale Physical AI systems that continuously improve through real-world deployment.

Discover how it started

© Amazon RIVR

Section 5

Too tired to read? **Watch the explanation in this video**

A self-reinforcing deep tech ecosystem

A compounding robotics ecosystem in which talent, research, and real-world deployment continuously reinforce one another, making the region stronger with every cycle.

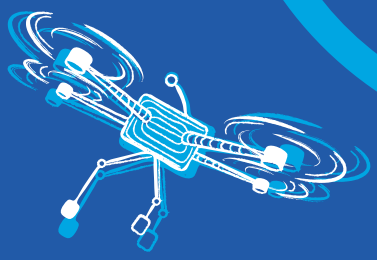
1 **Strong foundation**
Political stability, strong institutions, and high quality of life make the region attractive to global talent

2 **Building, attracting and retaining top talent**
Engineers, researchers, and founders from around the world choose to live and work in the region

3 **Research and company creation**
Talent drives world-class research, startups, and deep tech spinouts – often in close collaboration with industry

4 **Industrial adoption and growth**
Robotics companies scale, partner with industry, and deploy solutions in real-world environments

5 **Investment and ecosystem expansion**
Successful companies attract investment, strengthen the ecosystem, and increase global visibility



"My bet is on Switzerland. Great companies will be built here in the next 20 years."

Declan Shine
President, ETH Robotics Club

Section 6

Are you ready to expand your business?

As the official investment promotion agency of the economic region of Zurich, we support companies with the process of setting up in the Greater Zurich Area - personalised, confidential and free of charge

Discover our free services

How we support

Introductions to key contacts in industry, academia, and government agencies

Facilitating contact to potential research partners at universities and research institutes.

Support in location evaluation, introduction to service providers, and advice on regulations.

Reach out for expert support!

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