

# Highlights

2019



**GGB<sup>a</sup>**  
Invest  
Western  
Switzerland

3

5

10

25

**Editorial**

**2019 in figures**

**Highlights 2019**

**About the GGBa**

# Editorial

Dear reader,

In 2019, the GGBa and its partners pursued their investment promotion and prospecting activities in a particularly volatile international environment. They specifically targeted high-potential companies in promising sectors such as life sciences, robotics, fintech and nutrition.

Uncertainty has become the new certainty, with the rise of unilateralism and increased commercial and geopolitical tensions, but the results from 2019 confirm the appeal of Western Switzerland.

Our region remains an extraordinary crossroads at the heart of Europe, which continues to attract foreign companies thanks to its unique framework conditions, competitive taxation, dynamic and diversified economic fabric, availability of talent and unparalleled quality of life.

I invite you to discover our 2019 highlights.

Enjoy your reading,



**Thomas Bohn**  
Executive director

## The GGBa celebrates 10 years in 2020

10 years during which the world has changed dramatically and during which we have had to constantly reinvent ourselves and adapt to new paradigms.

10 years at the service of a great region, for which a team of women and men throughout the world, never ceased to reach out to entrepreneurs sharing common values to accompany them in their development projects.

Follow the GGBa on LinkedIn and Twitter to keep abreast of the initiatives organized as part of #GGBa10!



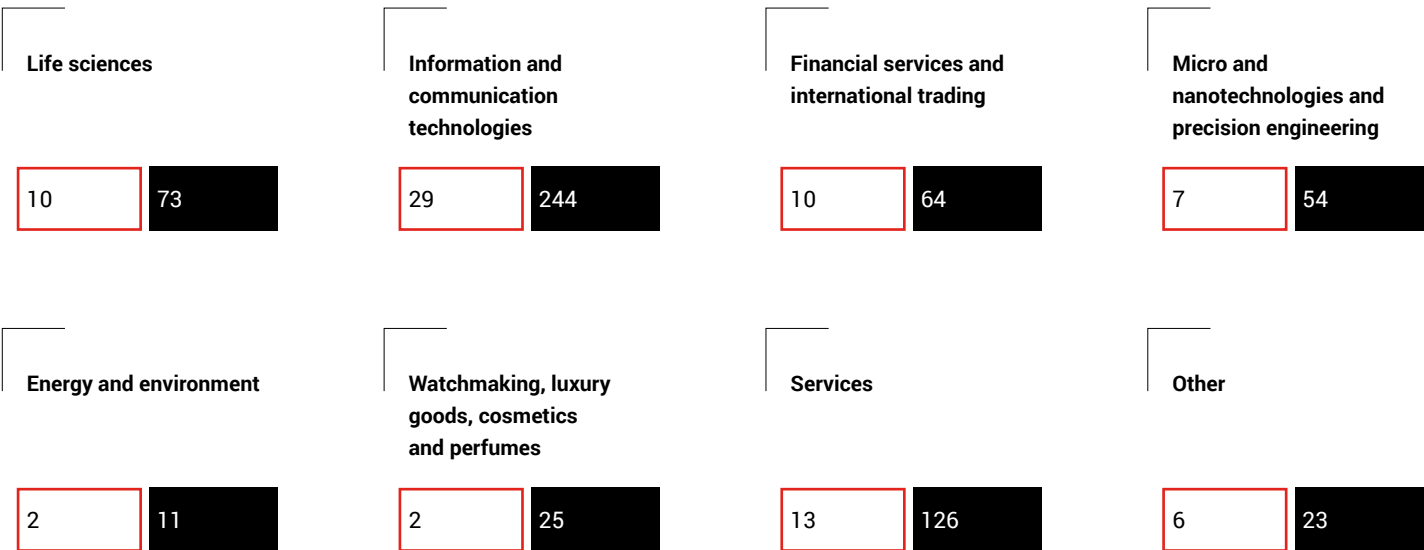
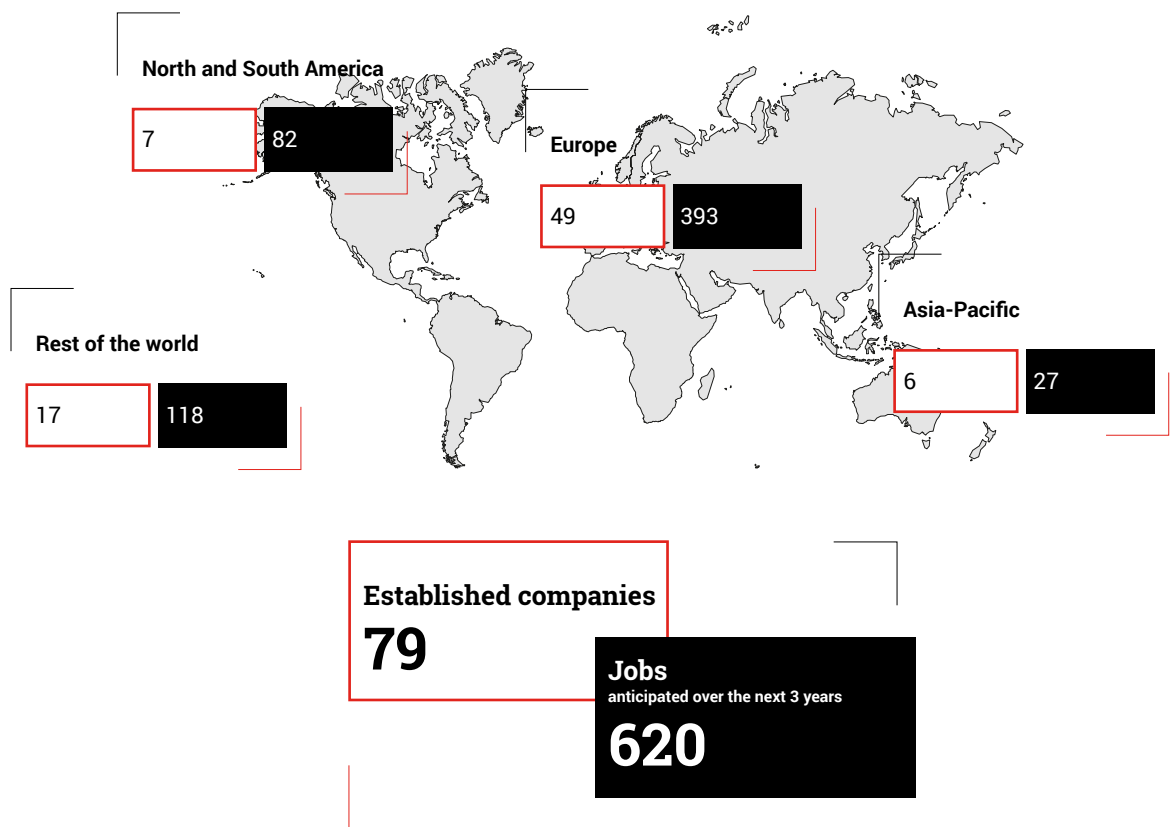
**Western Switzerland,**  
**the ideal business**  
**location for**  
**innovative**  
**entrepreneurs**



# 2019 in figures

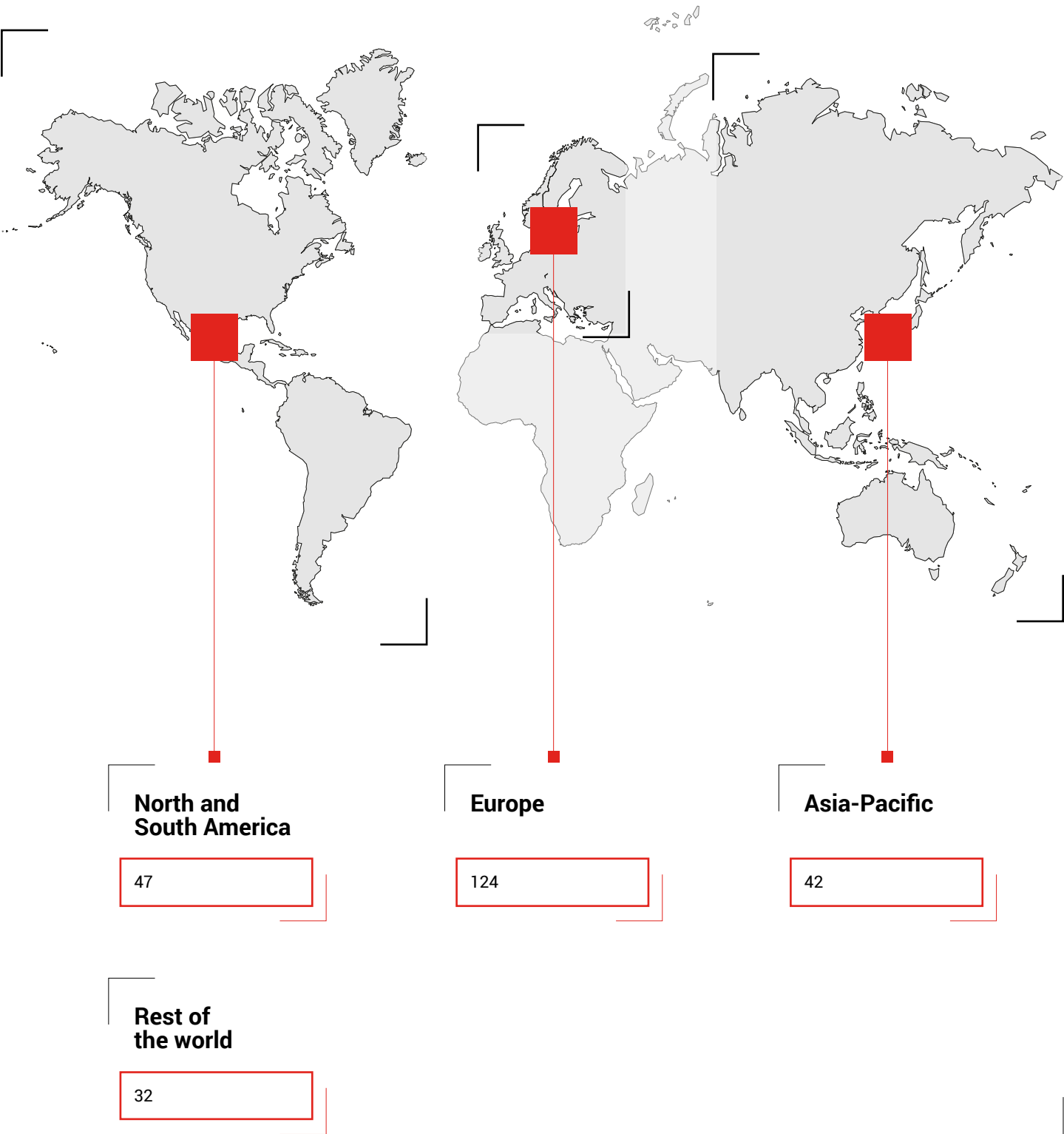
## Established companies by geographic origin and sector of activity

In a joint effort, the GGBa and the cantonal economic development agencies supported the establishment of 79 companies in Western Switzerland in 2019. These new companies are expected to create 620 new jobs in the next three years.



# Evaluation visits to Western Switzerland

245 companies from 42 countries visited Western Switzerland in 2019. This represents a total of 305 first corporate visits, with some companies visiting several cantons.







Palais des Nations, Geneva



**A dynamic  
region connected  
to the world**

# Highlights 2019

## JANUARY

### A stronger foothold in the United States

To capitalize on the potential of innovative Californian companies, the GGBa opens a second office in the heart of the Silicon Valley, headed by Marjorie Hamelin. The United States is a key market for the GGBa. Since its inception, the agency has been present in the country's top tech hotspots in California, the East Coast and Texas.



**Marjorie Hamelin**  
Director USA

### #SwissTech is all the rage in Las Vegas

Switzerland makes its first-ever appearance at the world's largest tech expo, the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. The Swiss pavilion, jointly organized by Presence Switzerland and the economic promotion organizations, showcases the country as a leading center of technology and innovation in the areas of artificial intelligence, robotics, 3D printing and cybersecurity.



### Resounding success for the first edition of the Geneva Blockchain Congress

Palexpo organizes the inaugural edition of the Geneva Blockchain Congress, in close collaboration with the canton of Geneva. The goal of the event is to promote a constructive exchange of views on blockchain solutions applicable to four sectors of activity: identity and e-government, education, commodities trading and supply chain. The GGBa participates as an exhibitor.



## FEBRUARY

### Meeting the French innovation players in Paris

Together with the cantons of Bern and Neuchâtel, the GGBa takes part in the Techinnov trade fair in Paris, a benchmark event in the French innovation ecosystem. Over the course of 24 meetings with French start-ups and SMEs, the cantonal delegates and GGBa representatives present the opportunities Switzerland offers as the most innovative country in the world.

### French-Swiss economic champions in the spotlight

The French-Swiss Commerce Trophies are awarded every year by the French-Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry. They honor companies and organizations whose performance is enhanced by the dynamism of their French-Swiss exchanges, at an economic level and in terms of tradition, expertise, and scientific knowledge. The jury of the 30<sup>th</sup> edition, of which the GGBa is a member, awards eight companies: Implenla, FNAC, Winckelmans, Flyability, Sea Cleaners, SIG, Orange Business and Casino Barrière Montreux, host of the ceremony.



## MARCH

### From Pune to New Delhi: promoting Switzerland as a business location

An Investment Promotion Roadshow covering the Indian cities of Pune and New Delhi is organized by the Swiss Business Hub India and its partners, including the GGBa. It aims at highlighting opportunities that Switzerland presents as a technology and business platform for Indian companies interested in establishing a presence in Europe.

### Malong Technologies sets up in Bern

Following on from the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Bern to set up a joint laboratory dedicated to artificial intelligence, Chinese start-up Malong Technologies officially opens an office in Bern. Founded in 2014 in Shenzhen, the company develops artificial intelligence solutions for the retail and healthcare sectors.

### A seminar on innovation in Shenzhen

As part of a prospecting mission to Shenzhen, in southeast China, the GGBa and CSEM host a seminar for Chinese entrepreneurs on the topics of internationalization and innovation. The mission also includes 12 meetings with companies interested in Switzerland as a business location.









## APRIL

### **An exclusive workshop on doing business in Switzerland**

The Swiss Business Hub UK & Ireland hosts a workshop on “Doing Business in Switzerland” at the Swiss Embassy in London, with the goal of supporting UK companies. The GGBa participates as a specialist in Switzerland as a business location, alongside experts in the fields of taxation, legal services, regulation and human resources.

### **“Silicon Valais” meets California**

Under the initiative of the GGBa, representatives of Idiap and of the economic development office of the canton of Valais travel to California. There they undertake a series of meetings with artificial intelligence companies, organized on the sidelines of the BootstrapLabs conference in San Francisco. New collaboration projects with Idiap have since ensued.



© Idiap

### **Discovering a multifaceted Valais**

The GGBa joins forces with the Wine & Business Club – Lyon to present the canton of Valais to more than 150 French business leaders during an exceptional evening event. State Councilor Christophe Darbellay, œnologist and winemaker Marie-Thérèse Chappaz and GGBa France Director Thierry Baglan present different facets of Valais, a dynamic breeding ground for tech and industrial projects and Switzerland’s most important wine-producing region.



© Alain Rico

### **A roadshow on setting up shop in Switzerland**

The French-Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry and its network of experts on the Swiss market organize two information days, in Marseille and Lyon, for French entrepreneurs with an investment project. The program includes a presentation on the business environment in Switzerland and one-on-one meetings with Swiss market specialists, including the GGBa.



MAY

## Swiss drones under Chicago skies

The GGBa convenes and moderates a panel on “Authorizing BVLOS Operations at Scale: Lessons Learned from Switzerland” at AUVSI Xponential, the world’s largest tradeshow for unmanned and autonomous systems. Speakers from FOCA, DEV and the Swiss commercial drone community, illustrate how Switzerland has become the world’s leading location for the development of core technology and high-end applications for drones.

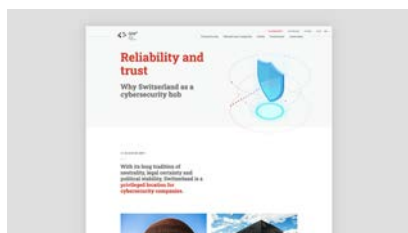


## Lausanne becomes the capital of SportsTech

THE SPOT, an international event dedicated to sport and innovation in Lausanne, brings together the most gifted and visionary minds from the fields of sport, science, technology and health. The GGBa is present on the Swiss pavilion and actively collaborates with ThinkSport, the event organizer, to promote the event abroad.

## Switzerland’s strengths for cybersecurity companies

The GGBa launches a website dedicated to Switzerland’s strengths in the field of cybersecurity. With its long tradition of neutrality, legal certainty and political stability, Switzerland is a privileged location for companies for which cybersecurity is a strategic issue.



[investinswitzerland.com/cybersecurity](https://investinswitzerland.com/cybersecurity)

## Swiss technology holds the limelight at VivaTech

The GGBa is present on the Swiss pavilion at VivaTech in Paris, the leading event for start-ups, leaders and investors to celebrate innovation and new technologies. Designed by Presence Switzerland in collaboration with Switzerland Global Enterprise, the Swiss pavilion focuses on #SwissTech, showcasing smart living technologies developed by some 20 Swiss start-ups, including several from the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology.



JUNE

## Bracco invests 60 million euros in Geneva

Bracco Suisse celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with the laying of the foundation stone of a new building in Plan-les-Ouates to support the strong growth of its medical imaging product. The investment totals to more than 60 million euros and reflects the Italian group's commitment to its Geneva site, which employs around 100 specialized staff and has been marketing its flagship product since 2001 to more than 35 countries worldwide.



## A Geneva economic delegation in China

A Geneva economic delegation visits Dalian, China, to attend the Asian edition of the World Economic Forum. Organized with the support of the GGBa, the trip is a full immersion into Chinese technological innovation. It has two main objectives: to enable Geneva-based companies to penetrate the Chinese market and to attract Chinese groups to Geneva.

## The GGBa at BIO International Convention

The GGBa, together with the canton of Valais and the Swiss Biotech Center in Monthey, participates in the BIO International Convention in Philadelphia. The event, extremely popular with the biotech and pharmaceutical industries, includes business meetings, conferences and an exhibition area. Valais, a rising star in the biotech sector, displays its dynamism amid 70 business meetings.



Forbidden City, Beijing

**The GGBa gives  
you the keys  
to a successful  
establishment  
in Switzerland**



JULY

## The ICARE Group opens a subsidiary in La Chaux-de-Fonds

The French group ICARE, specialized in contamination control in the field of industrial health, chooses La Chaux-de-Fonds for its first European subsidiary. This choice is a response to the company's need for proximity to its growing number of local customers, as well as to international research centers and the micromechanics-health cluster. The new subsidiary is located in Microcity, the innovation hub of the canton of Neuchâtel.



AUGUST

## The stakeholders of regional economic development meet in Neuchâtel

Every year, the GGBa organizes a training week bringing together its representatives based abroad, as well as the directors and project managers of the cantonal economic development agencies. With its openness to the world and pioneering spirit, the canton of Neuchâtel, host of the 2019 edition, fosters the exchange of innovative ideas and best practices between all stakeholders involved in regional economic development.



## HeX Group sets up in Lausanne

HeX Group, a Belgian-French SME specialized in air monitoring and contamination control, opens a subsidiary at Biopôle Lausanne. The company innovates the concept of quality control in so-called sensitive environments, such as the pharmaceutical and hospital environment, through a unique global approach.





## SEPTEMBER

### The GGBa expands to Germany and Northern Europe

After strengthening its presence in Shenzhen, China and Silicon Valley in the United States, the GGBa expands to Germany and Northern Europe with the recruitment of two new representatives. Sara Schneider-Hamai, based in Frankfurt, is also responsible for the Benelux region; from Berlin, Henri Troillet also covers the Nordic countries.



**Sara Schneider-Hamai**  
Director Germany & Benelux



**Henri Troillet**  
Director Germany & Nordics

### Promoting Switzerland in South India

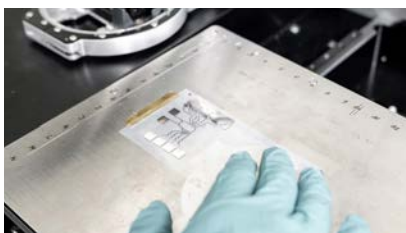
The Swiss Business Hub India organizes a roadshow in the south of the country, in partnership with the main investment promotion stakeholders at the cantonal and regional level. The Swiss delegation travels to Chennai and Bangalore, meeting with eight companies interested in the European market and for which Switzerland could be a relevant investment destination.



OCTOBER

## Fribourg consolidates its reputation in inkjet printing

The GGBa organizes a mission to California to showcase the cutting-edge expertise of the iPrint Institute in Fribourg. At the Printing for Fabrication conference in San Francisco, Fritz Bircher, director of the center, presents an innovative project, with the aim of printing biodegradable porous bone replacement structures made of ethylcellulose, a derivative of cellulose that is widely used in the food and pharmaceutical industries.



## Indian group ACG Inspection opens European HQ in Yverdon

The multinational company specialized in traceability solutions for the pharmaceutical industry ACG Inspection inaugurates its new offices at Y-PARC in Yverdon-les-Bains. The group plans to subsequently set up a 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> production plant on site. The strategic position at the heart of Europe, the proximity to research centers such as EPFL and HEIG-VD and the ease of recruiting new talent are the driving factors behind the company's investment decision.



Jet d'eau, Geneva

## Popety.io sets up in Geneva

Singapore-based proptech start-up Popety.io chooses Geneva to launch its commercial development in Switzerland and Europe. Incubated at FONGIT, Popety.io develops research and analytical solutions for real estate professionals. Its innovative technology is based on artificial intelligence, geo-spatial intelligence and the analysis of locally collected data.

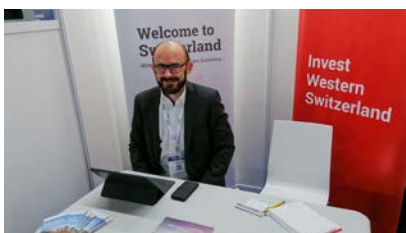
## Bernese know-how on display in California

The GGBa organizes a targeted prospecting mission to California on the topic of Industry 4.0. The canton of Bern boasts major strengths in this forward-looking sector: in Biel, the Swiss Smart Factory is an internationally recognized center of excellence in applied research and technology transfer for the industry of the future.



## Switzerland as a platform for R&D activities

“Les Rendez-vous Carnot” is a business convention in Paris where companies of all sizes meet with major R&D players in order to implement and accelerate their innovation projects. In this context, the GGBa and the canton of Valais present opportunities for collaboration with Swiss universities and research institutes.



## The canton of Fribourg launches the AgriCo campus in St-Aubin

AgriCo – Swiss Campus for Agri and Food Innovation is a site dedicated to value creation in the sectors of agriculture, nutrition and biomass. It provides a stimulating environment for large companies and SMEs, with large industrial parcels suitable for construction, as well as administrative buildings and laboratories available for rent. The GGBa contributes to promoting this unique site internationally.



NOVEMBER

## Valais positions itself as a smart region

The GGBa coordinates Western Switzerland's participation in the Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona. Yann Bocchi, professor of computer science management at HES-SO Valais-Wallis and IoT expert, presents the smart mobility projects implemented in Valais, including grafting sensors on PostBus shuttles to collect real-time data on road conditions.



## A Bernese delegation at the China Hi-Tech Fair

A Bernese business delegation of 25 Swiss entrepreneurs attends China Hi-Tech Fair, the country's largest technology event. Business meetings and visits to Chinese companies active in artificial intelligence are organized by the GGBa on the sidelines of the fair.

### **The GGBa at the 13<sup>th</sup> Forum on Setting up in Switzerland**

Geneva hosts the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the Forum on Setting up in Switzerland, organized by the French-Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The event is designed for companies willing to develop their business or create a company in Switzerland. Throughout the day, representatives of the GGBa present their services and activities.



### **French company La Salle Blanche opens a subsidiary in Martigny**

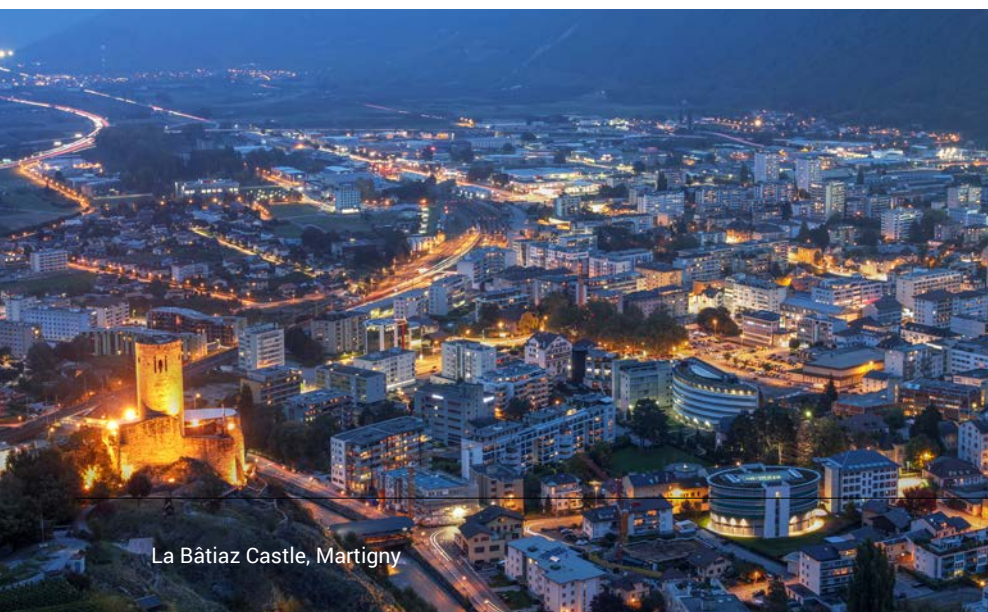
French company La Salle Blanche, active for more than 30 years in the design, construction and installation of clean rooms and controlled atmosphere areas, opens a subsidiary in Martigny to meet the needs of the Swiss market in the pharmaceutical and hospital sectors.

### **The canton of Fribourg explores opportunities in Brazil**

The GGBa organizes a promotion and prospecting mission to São Paulo and Curitiba, in southern Brazil. The Fribourg delegates meet with some 20 companies interested in developing their operations outside of Brazil. In the short to medium term, these companies may choose Switzerland as a springboard to expand their business in Europe and internationalize their activities.

### **The GGBa partners with the BioAlps Networking Day**

As the flagship event of the BioAlps Association, the BioAlps Networking Day takes its more than 250 participants on a journey to the heart of the dense life sciences ecosystem of Western Switzerland. The GGBa takes this opportunity to invite foreign companies and introduce them to potential partners, customers and investors.



La Bâtiaz Castle, Martigny



DECEMBER

## Crypto Valley: official launch of the Western Switzerland Chapter

The Crypto Valley Association officially launches its Western Switzerland Chapter with an event that brings together the region's blockchain and crypto community on the EPFL campus. Headed by Jérôme Bailly, the Western Chapter was set up to foster the growth of blockchain and cryptographic technologies in Western Switzerland. In this endeavor, it can rely on the support of the GGBa, an active member of the association since 2018.



## The Prix Croisé de l'Ambassadeur is awarded in Paris

The Swiss Ambassador to France, Livia Leu, presents the Prix Croisé de l'Ambassadeur, an award created to enhance business partnerships between French and Swiss companies. Swiss Fresh Water, which offers autonomous and low-cost water desalination systems, wins the Export Prize. The Invest Prize is awarded to EDM SWISS and Atelier de la Boiserie, branches of the Ateliers de France group based in the canton of Vaud.



## Apex Logic opens European HQ in Fribourg

Software development company Apex Logic, based in Reno, Nevada, chooses Fribourg for its first overseas office. With its vibrant and diverse university offerings, proximity to major cities with potential clients, as well as reasonable tax rates and moderate cost of living, Fribourg emerged as the ideal location to develop and manage business outside the United States. The enthusiastic support and access to local networks provided by the cantonal authorities was also a key decisive factor.



Neuchâtel under the snow





Poya Bridge and Cathedral, Fribourg



**We add  
value to  
companies and  
the region**



The GGBa team in La Chaux-de-Fonds

# About the GGBa

Founded on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, the Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa) regroups the cantons of Bern, Fribourg, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Geneva and Valais. The GGBa's mission is to attract foreign companies that will sustainably strengthen the priority expertise clusters of Western Switzerland and create high added-value jobs. More specifically, the GGBa generates investment projects through its business development activities in foreign countries, and transmits these projects to its member cantons, which are in charge of implementing them.



Greater Geneva Bern area is an initiative of the cantons of Bern, Fribourg, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Geneva and Valais.