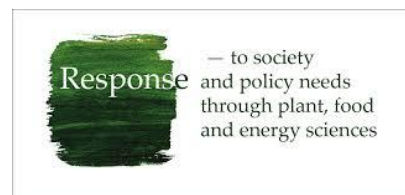


How to Create Your Own Startup:

Insights from UZH Innovation Hub & Unitectra

Dušan Denić
University of Zürich



OVERVIEW

The University of Zürich supports entrepreneurial ventures through a dual approach: **an innovation hub** that provides practical support and mentoring, and a set of clear guidelines (outlined by the technology transfer office **Unitectra**) that ensure regulatory compliance and ethical innovation. Together, they create a robust framework that fosters responsible, sustainable, and transparent startup development.

WHAT IS RRI?

Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) is an approach that integrates ethical, societal, and environmental considerations into the research and innovation process. It aims to ensure that scientific discoveries and technological advancements are developed in a way that benefits society as a whole, while minimizing potential harms and addressing stakeholder concerns.

Tips for steering your career path by launching a company grounded in Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) principles:

Engage with the Public:

Involve community stakeholders early; use feedback from consultations and social media.

Invest in Science Education:

Stay current with research; collaborate with academia and offer team workshops.

Prioritize Socio-Economic Sustainability:

Build ethical, long-term business models that benefit society.

Commit to Open Access:

Share research openly to foster collaboration and trust.

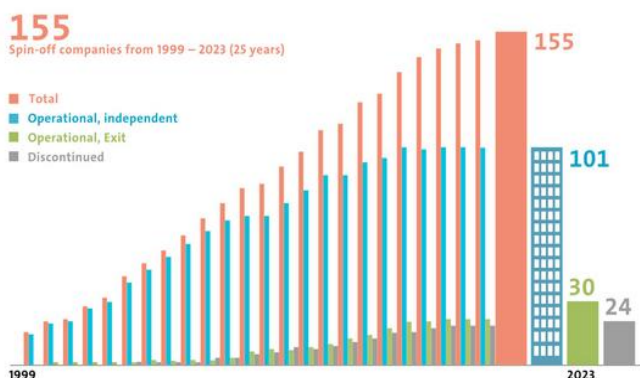
Build an Ethical Framework:

Set clear policies on intellectual property (IP), transparency and conflict-of-interest management.

Cultivate a Collaborative Network:

Connect with innovators and experts through hubs and incubators.

Spin-off Companies



UZH Spin-offs & Startups: A total of 155 Spin-offs have been founded at UZH since 1999, of which 131 (84 %) are still active. This is a remarkable percentage considering that, according to current statistics from the Federal Statistical Office, the survival rate of newly founded companies in Switzerland is only around 50 % after five years. 2023 was a particularly successful year for UZH spin-offs (<https://www.innovation.uzh.ch/en.html>).



Contact details

Universität Zürich | Innovation Hub
Hirschengraben 48
CH-8001 Zürich
info@innovation.uzh.ch

Unitectra, Scheuchzerstrasse 21
8006 Zürich,
044 634 44 01

FACT SHEET IN ACCORDANCE WITH:

Principles for Spin-Off Companies at UZH

Adopted by the Executive Board of the University on 1 December 2020

What is the role of the innovation hub at UZH?

- **Practical Support:** The Innovation Hub offers tailored services including consulting, mentoring and workshops to guide startup founders from idea conception through to execution.
- **Networking & Collaboration:** Entrepreneurs have access to a vibrant network of industry experts, academic mentors and potential investors, facilitating cross-disciplinary collaboration.
- **Resource Access:** The hub connects startups with UZH research facilities, providing resources that enable rapid prototyping and testing of innovative ideas.

What is the difference between a Spin-Off and Start-Up:

Spin-Off Companies:

Legally independent companies that commercialize intellectual property developed at UZH through research, teaching or other university operations.

Start-Up Companies:

Legally independent companies (co)founded by UZH members that do not use UZH-protected intellectual property.

Licensing Negotiations at UZH

Negotiation Requirements outline the criteria that UZH and its partners use to determine if a spin-off is ready to engage in licensing discussions.

Negotiation Requirements:

- A compelling and sustainable implementation plan (pitch deck or business plan).
- Demonstrated entrepreneurial spirit and necessary experience (or involvement of external experts).
- Secured financing or a clear financial sourcing plan.
- Conducted by Unitectra with representatives who are not current UZH employees (with specific exceptions for transitional cases).

Conflict of Interests: Maintaining Ethical Boundaries

Disclosure & Transparency:

- UZH members must promptly disclose any personal or professional interests in a spin-off or start-up.
- University resources (funds, staff, branding and email) cannot be used to benefit the spin-off without explicit written approval. Researchers must not steer their work solely to favor the spin-off.
- Professors with stakes in a spin-off must not engage in licensing negotiations and must fully disclose any advisory or financial roles.





Collaborative Research: Formalizing Joint Ventures

- **Written Research Agreements:**

Any collaboration between a spin-off and a UZH research group must be formalized in a written agreement, signed by an Executive Board member.

- **Clinical Development Exception:**

In clinical research, UZH members involved in spin-offs must not act as principal investigators unless a justified, approved exception is provided.



Would you like to know more?

Follow the link: <https://www.innovation.uzh.ch/en.html>

Below are examples of the entrepreneurship support events offered by the UZH Innovation Hub page:

- **UZH Innovators Camp:** A program designed to ignite innovative ideas and provide early-stage entrepreneurial support.
- **BioEntrepreneurship & Innovation Program (BEI):** Tailored for life science ventures, offering specialized mentorship and resources.
- **Digital Entrepreneurship Program:** Focused on digital innovation, this program helps founders navigate tech-driven markets.
- **Therapy Development Accelerator:** Supports startups developing novel therapies, providing industry-specific guidance.
- **UZH Entrepreneur Fellowships:** Offers fellowships to promising entrepreneurs for further development of their innovative projects.