



Universität
Zürich ^{UZH}

President

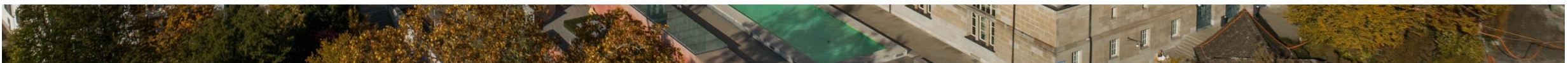


Science and Education – How can we advance to the next Level together?

Philanthropy: Making a Difference Together – Fondation Lombard Odier 20th Anniversary Dinner

Michael Schaepman, UZH President

25. September 2025



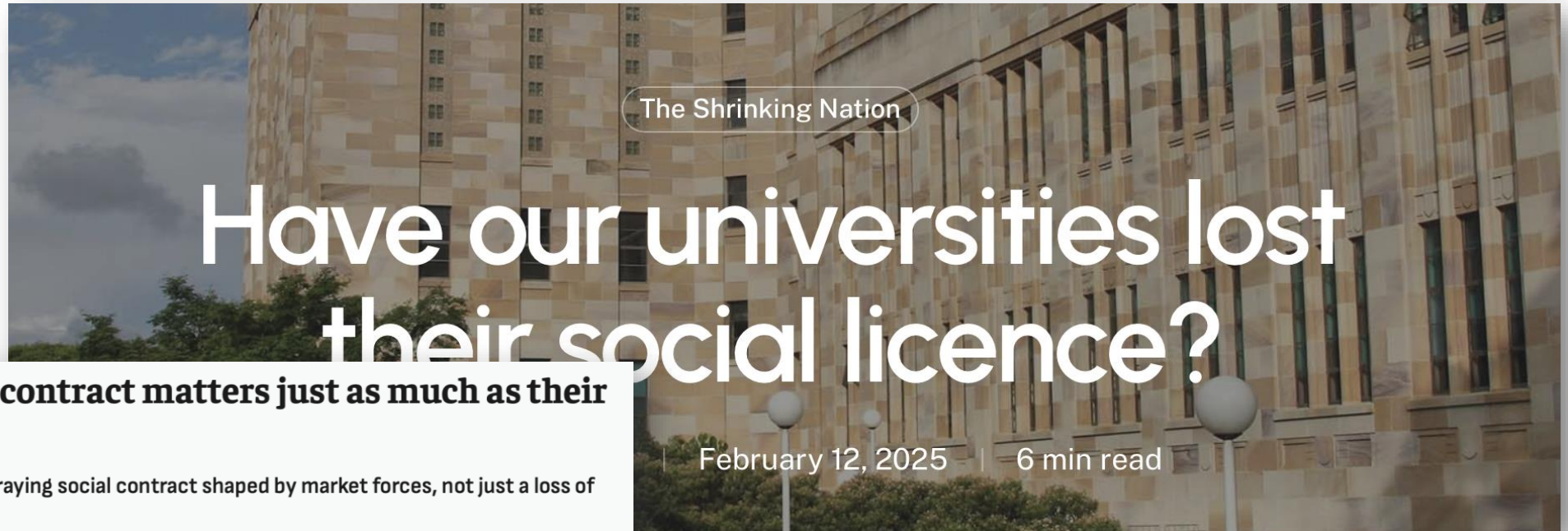
“The Social License of Universities” – Definition

- The “Social License to Operate” (SLO): a concept originally **from industry** describing the **level of societal acceptance or approval** granted to an enterprise or institution
- Applied to universities, “Social License” implies they must **act in the public interest and meet societal expectations** – while at the same time **keeping their authority to define and interpret** key topics, terms and narratives.



SLO: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301420725000303>, opened on 21 September 2025.

The Social License of Universities – a Topic of Debate



Universities' social contract matters just as much as their social licence

Australian universities reflect a fraying social contract shaped by market forces, not just a loss of public trust.



HELEN SULLIVAN • JUN 3, 2025 • 4 MIN READ

<https://www.themandarin.com.au/293265-universities-social-contracts-matter-just-as-much-as-their-social-licences/> zuletzt geöffnet am 21.09.25

<https://graemeturner.org/2025/02/12/have-our-universities-lost-their-social-licence/> zuletzt geöffnet am 21.09.25

— Opinion

How do our universities get their social licence back?

There are four issues that universities need to address if they are to revive their troubled reputations in Australian society.

Shamit Saggat Policy expert



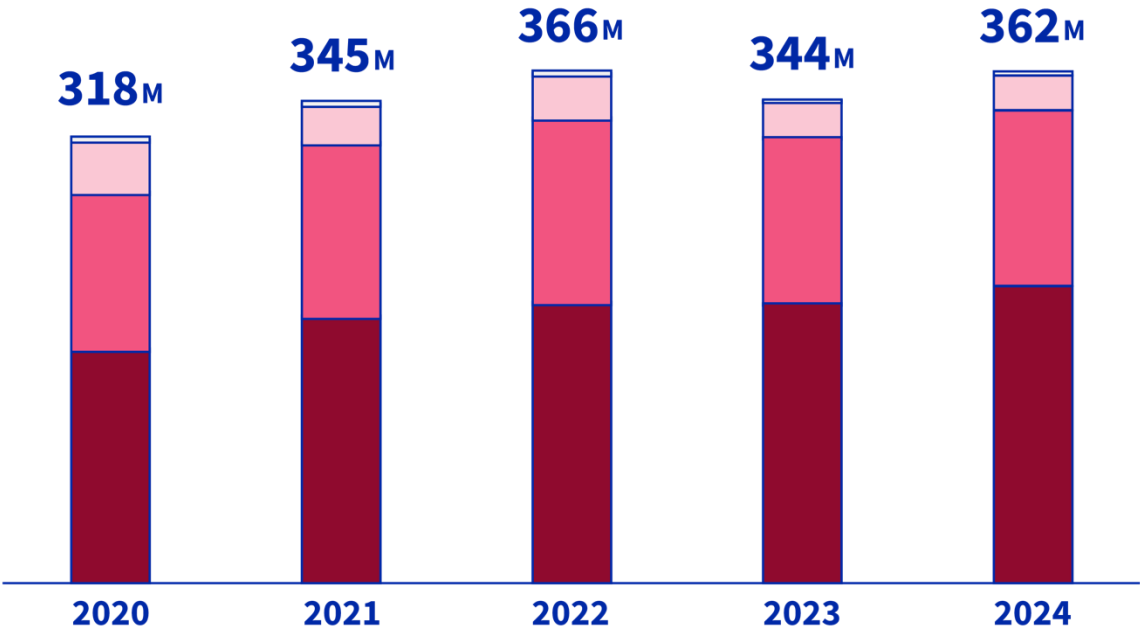
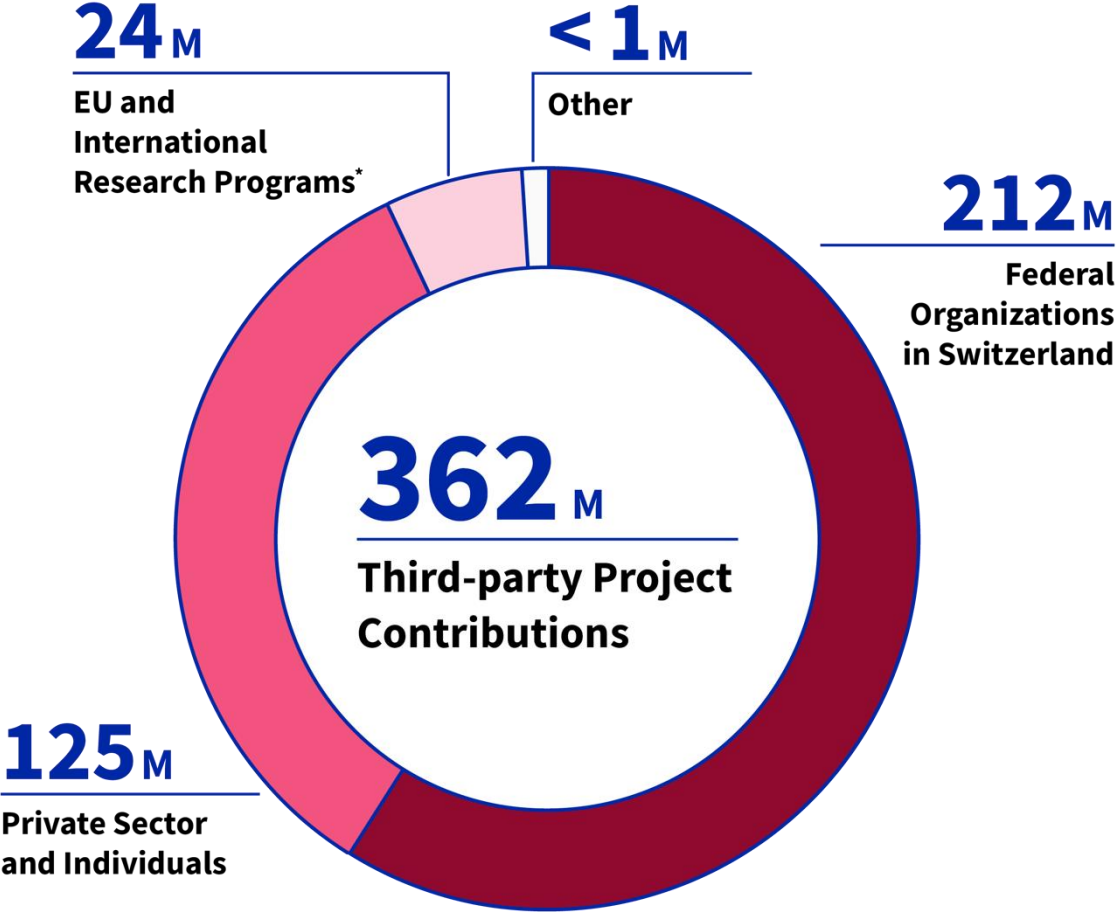
<https://www.afr.com/policy/health-and-education/how-do-our-universities-get-their-social-licence-back-20241002-p5kf5h> zuletzt geöffnet am 21.09.25

What are the Links between Social License and Philanthropy?

- Philanthropy is often an **important driver of progress in socially relevant fields of research** – especially at times when public funding is stagnating.
- However, it **may also represent a risk for universities' social license**, as it often raises questions about the independence of research.
- Universities are obliged to **act with particular transparency** and communicate openly regarding external / third-party funds.



Development of Third-Party Funding at the University of Zurich



- Federal Organizations in Switzerland
- Private Sector and Individuals
- EU and International Research Programs*
- Other

* Includes SBFI funded transitional measures for Horizon packages

Transparency: Disclosing the Sources of Third-Party Funds

- UZH publishes the sources of its third-party funds acquired in a transparency list, which is updated annually and accessible via the UZH homepage.
- The list covers third-party funds **totaling more than CHF 100'000.**
- Funding by the European Union, the Swiss National Science Foundation, Continuing Education Programs and Funding for National Centers of Competence in Research (NCCR) **are not included in the list.**



Established Paths of Cooperation between UZH and private Donors

UZH Innovation Hub

The logo for the UZH Innovation Hub features a stylized black key shape. The key's shaft is a horizontal green bar on the left, and its head consists of two circular rings connected by a horizontal bar. This key shape is centered over three vertical bars: a light blue bar on the left, a white bar in the middle, and a pink bar on the right.

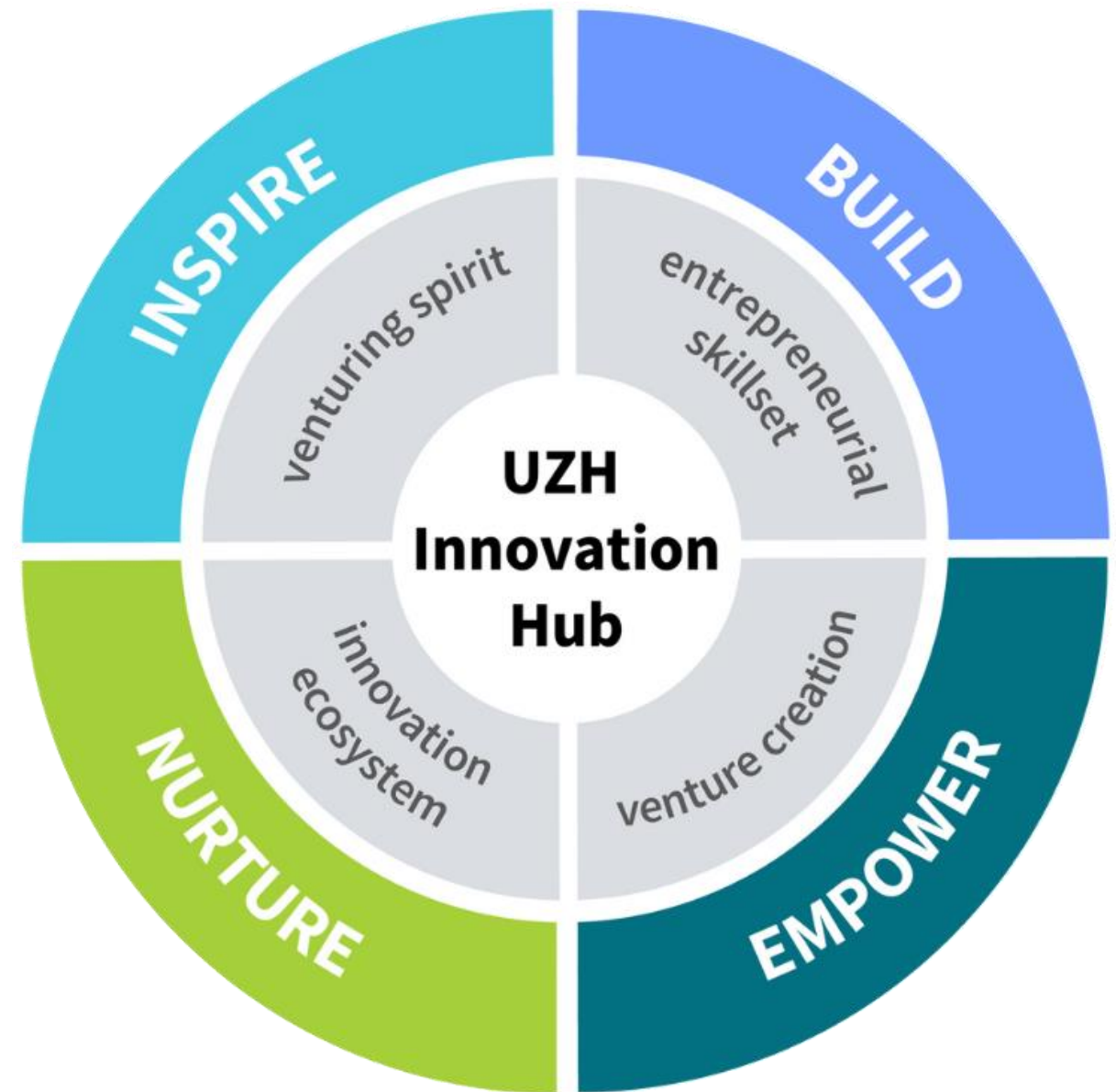
UZH Foundation

- founded in 2012
- 14 employees
- over 330 Mio. CHF for UZH since 2012



The UZH Innovation Hub

- The UZH Innovation Hub is our **own platform for innovation and entrepreneurship** which connects researchers and non-academic partners and supports start-ups.
- It **transfers scientific findings into marketable products** and services, thus strengthening the innovation ecosystem around UZH.



Transformative Power since 2018

Acceleration thanks to third-party funding

Program funding by
3 foundations with
12.5 Mio CHF since 2018

WSS

WERNER SIEMENS-STIFTUNG

ERNST GÖHNER
STIFTUNG

Hans Eggenberger
HANS-EGGENBERGER-STIFTUNG

46.5 Mio CHF Follow-up financing
by entrepreneurs*

Offers that serve to promote I&E

20 offers für I&E (services, courses
workshops, innovation formats, Minor
in I&E starting in 2026) of which 10 are
Innovation Hub formats

Innovation Ecosystem with Impact

- **10** Council members from industry
- **30** Jury members & Coaches
- **13** Innovation Ambassadors**
- **3** Community Events per year

Promoting translation

Successful grant programs
including training and coaching

80 researchers – Fellowships &
Innovation Grants

7 projects with follow-up financing by
the Life Sciences Fund and Wyss
Zurich

161 Spin-offs, **22** of which were
results of Entrepreneur Fellowship
Projects; **every 2nd Fellow** founds a
spin-off.

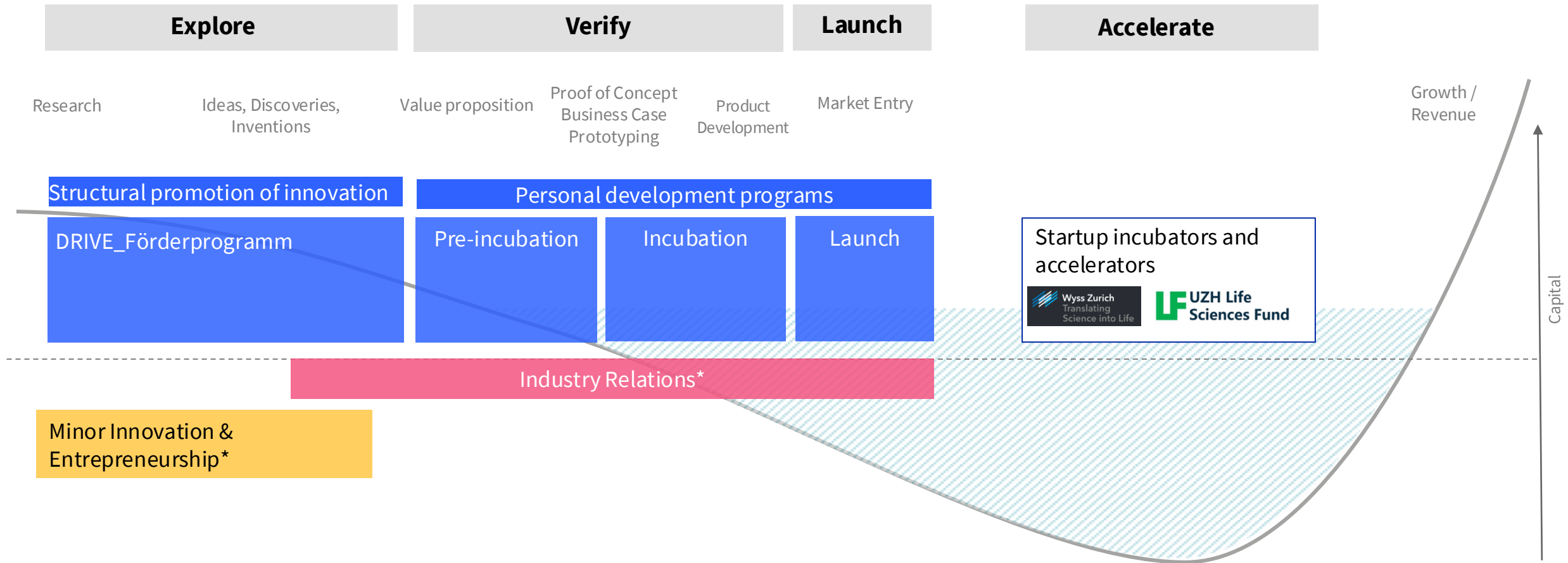
Visibility of innovation

Storytelling
Panel Discussions and Talks

e.g. LERU Enterprise &
Innovation, European
Patent Office, Sciencepreneurs
Meetup, Biointerfaces Internat.
Conference, Greater Zurich
Area

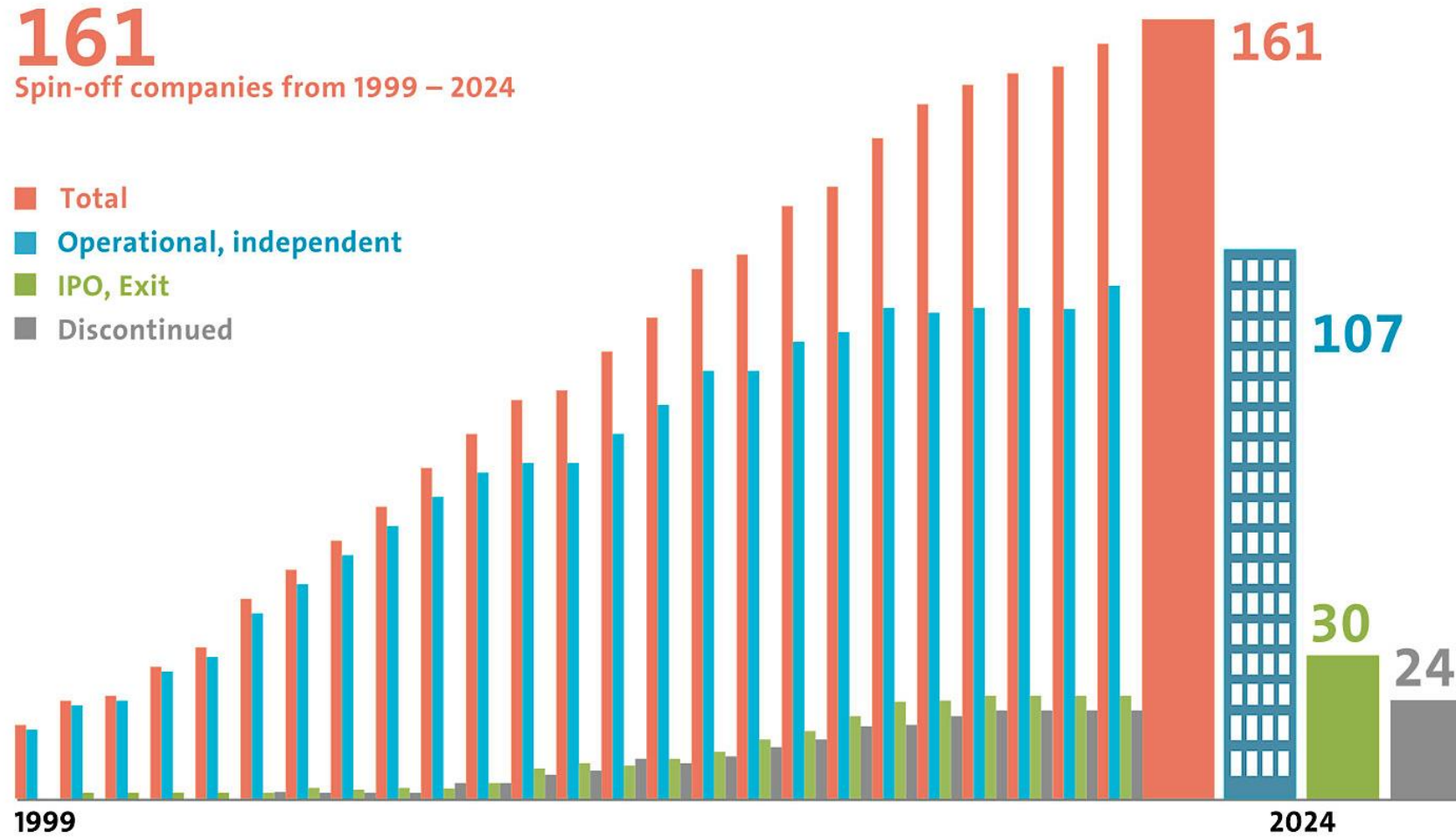
* Entrepreneur Fellows and Innovation Grantees
** from 6 UZH faculties (MeF, MNF, WWF, PhF, TRF, VET)

A Phase-oriented Innovation Pipeline



*in 2026

A Total of 161 UZH Spin-offs since 1999



Source: <https://www.news.uzh.ch/en/articles/news/2025/spinoffs.html>

Fun Fact...



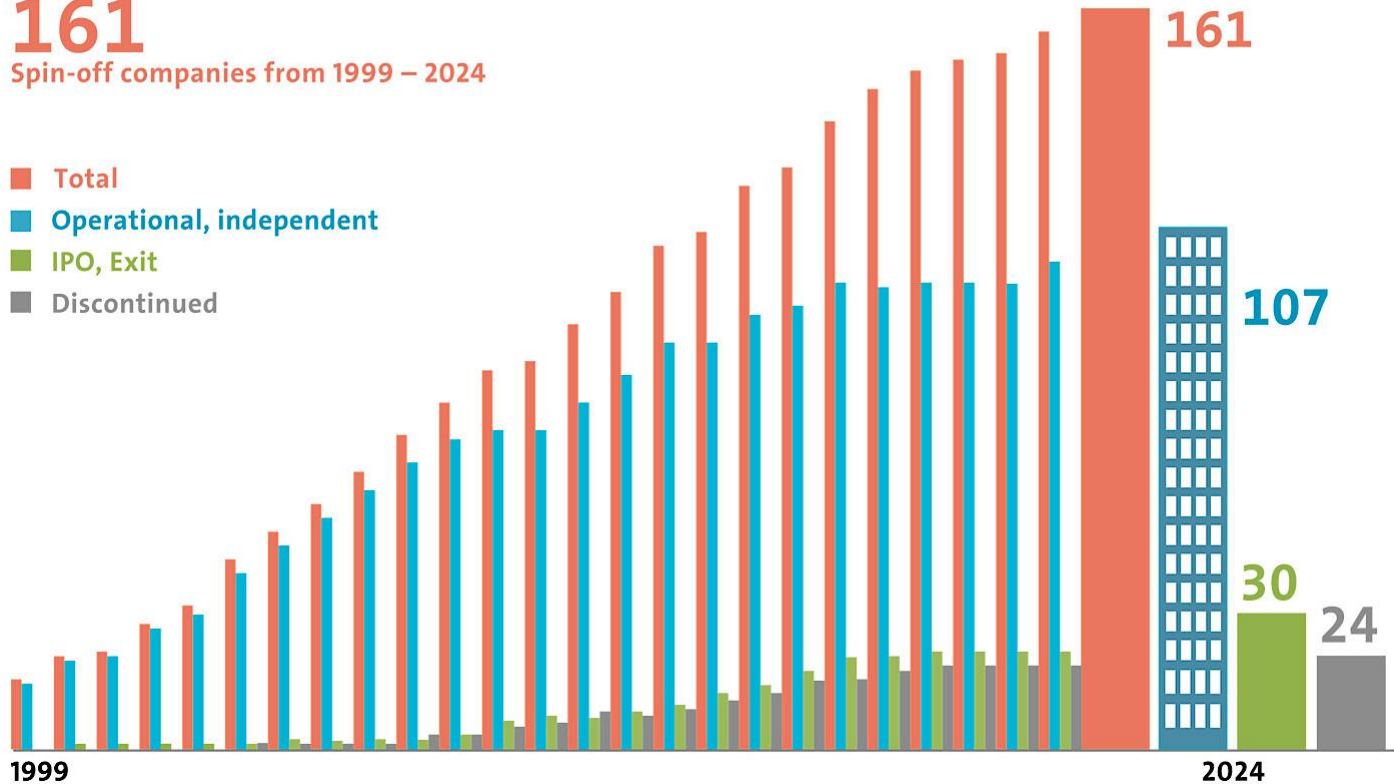
Who invented it? The University of Zurich!

not Ricola...

161

Spin-off companies from 1999 – 2024

- Total
- Operational, independent
- IPO, Exit
- Discontinued



The Importance of Philanthropy when it comes to shaping central Issues and Concepts

- Collaboration with private donors, as well as with companies, increases the flexibility of universities and **can help them regain the authority to define key topics and concepts.**



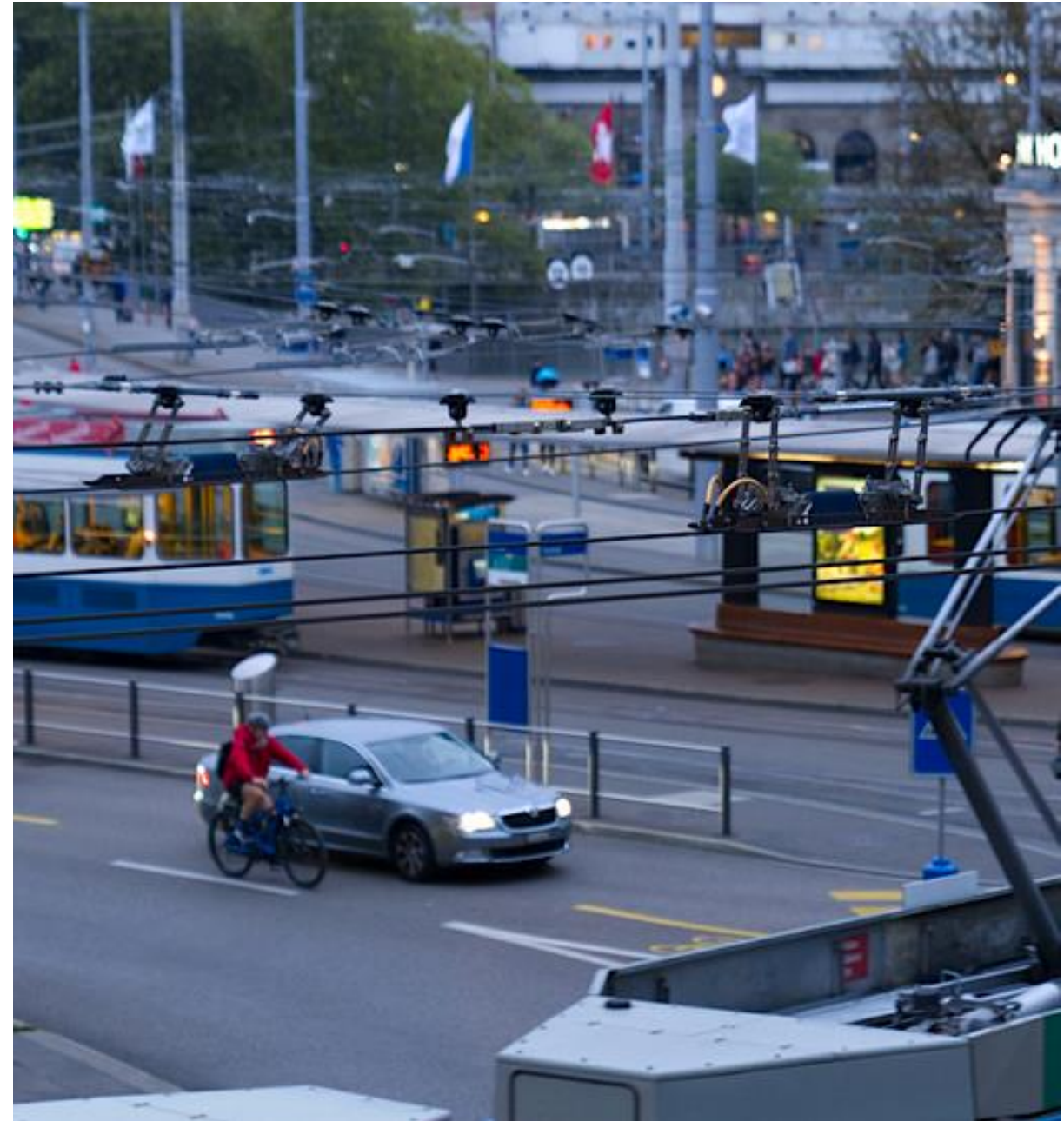
Example: The UBS Center for Economics in Society at UZH

- The **UBS Center is an Associated Institute** at the Department of Economics of UZH
- The Center was established in 2012, **enabled by a founding donation by UBS.**
- The UBS Center **enables cutting-edge research** in economics, to be conducted at the University's Department of Economics and **serves as a platform for dialogue** between academia, business, politics and the broad public.



Example: Center for the Future of Personal Mobility

- Thanks to a collaboration with the Emil Frey Group, the **Center for the Future of Personal Mobility** will conduct research on pressing questions related to individual mobility.



Example: Project «ARES» (Airborne Research Facility for the Earth System)

- Remote sensing for the health of our planet; including on-site surveys and aerial observations
- Precise, large-scale analyses of our planet and its ecosystems; state-of-the-art spectrometry in use
- Targeted measures for the preservation of our planet
- Conducted in partnership with NASA and others





**Many thanks for your Attention and
Happy Birthday to Fondation Lombard
Odier!**