



## Press release

Date  
Embargo

7 June 2016

---

# CTI Swiss Medtech Award 2016: recognition for neuro-stimulation device for stroke patients

**Bern, 7.6.2016 – At the Swiss Medtech Day held at the Kursaal in Bern today the EPFL spin-off Intento SA from Ecublens was presented with the CTI Swiss Medtech Award, endowed with prize money of CHF 15,000. This year the award went to the SME from western Switzerland and the EPFL for developing a user-friendly neuro-stimulations device, which helps with the therapy of stroke patients with individual movement patterns. The award was presented by President Johann N. Schneider-Ammann in front of an audience around 600 delegates. For the first time this year, Swiss Medtech Day was jointly organised by the CTI and the industry associations Medical Cluster and Fasmed.**

President Johann N. Schneider-Ammann and Gábor Székely, CTI Commission member and head of CTI Medtech, presented Dr Andrea Maesani and Dr Andrea Biasucci of Intento SA with the award in the form of a stone trophy and cheque for CHF 15,000. “All three of the projects nominated deserved to win the award. They demonstrate the enormous spirit of innovation in this country and how it benefits the medtech industry and Switzerland’s standing as a location for business”, said President Schneider-Ammann in his address in praise of the nominees. The winning project was selected by the 600 delegates from medtech research and industry during a live voting session at Swiss Medtech Day 2016.

### **Innovation for patients with brain injuries caused by strokes**

Every year, 17 million people worldwide suffer strokes – a third are left severely paralysed. Rehabilitation therapies available today can offer only little help. A CTI-funded project carried out by the EPFL and its spin-off Intento is giving new hope to people with brain injuries. The user-friendly system they have developed consists of tablet software and a motion control device which is connected to an electrical stimulator. The therapist selects one of several programmed movements on the tablet and loads them wirelessly onto the motion-control device. The patient is connected to the stimulator via electrodes. Turning a dial on the device controls the electrical stimulation of the muscles and nerves – and thereby the degree of movement of the paralysed arm according to the programmed movement se-

lected. Initial studies show how effective the system is: 80 per cent of patients showed a clinically relevant improvement after two weeks compared to only 30% undergoing conventional intensive therapy. Intento plans to launch two versions of the product – one for use in hospitals, followed by a second for simple use at home.

### **Hope for cancer and eye patients**

Two other promising projects were also nominated for the CTI Swiss Medtech Award: a compact, wireless probe, which allows the precise and simple localisation of cancer cells in diagnosis and operations. This innovation developed by Forimtech SA, Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV) and the EPFL opens up a new chapter in the fight against cancer. The third project nominated comes from Ziemer Ophthalmic Systems and the HuCE-optoLab at Bern University of Applied Sciences: they have developed an imaging procedure which allows surgeons to make precise incisions deep in the eye. This innovation makes a significant contribution to improving eye surgery, as the use of laser treatment was previously only possible in certain cases.

### **Successful Swiss Medtech Day with new organisers**

The CTI has organised the annual CTI Medtech Event for the last ten years. In 2015 the industry associations Medical Cluster and held the Swiss Medtech Day for the first time. To underline the importance of medical technology, the three organisers decided to merge the two events in 2016, thereby creating the largest national platform for industry, commerce, research and start-ups from the medtech sector. The centrepiece of this year's Swiss Medtech Day was a series of four 'Breakout Sessions'. A large number of medtech experts talked with delegates on the subjects of market access, Workplace 2020, sustainable innovation culture and the current state of research. Promising ongoing research projects were also presented in a science slam and delegates were also able to find out the latest about medtech research and industry at an exhibition.

Event photos: [www.kti.admin.ch/swissmedtechday](http://www.kti.admin.ch/swissmedtechday)

### **Contact/Enquiries:**

#### **CTI**

Kathrin Hausammann, Co-head, CTI Communication, 058 462 83 63, [media@kti.admin.ch](mailto:media@kti.admin.ch)

Eliane Kersten, Co-head, CTI Communication, 058 464 19 95, [media@kti.admin.ch](mailto:media@kti.admin.ch)

#### **Medical Cluster**

Peter Biedermann, Managing Director, 076 324 31 15, [peter.biedermann@medical-cluster.ch](mailto:peter.biedermann@medical-cluster.ch)

#### **Fasmed**

Fabian Stadler, Secretary General, 031 380 85 95, [fabian.stadler@mepartners.ch](mailto:fabian.stadler@mepartners.ch)

**Commission for Technology and Innovation CTI**

The CTI is the federal government's innovation promotion agency. It is responsible for encouraging science-based innovation in Switzerland by providing financing, professional advice and networks.

**The CTI Medtech Initiative**

The CTI Medtech Initiative was launched in 1997 and has since supported over 500 projects. CTI Medtech has two main aims: to improve the innovativeness and competitiveness of Swiss medical technology and to stimulate the transfer of know-how between researchers, medical technology companies, start-up companies and SMEs. In 2015, 48 medtech projects were approved by the CTI and CHF 16.7 million was awarded in funding.

[www.kti.admin.ch](http://www.kti.admin.ch)

**Medical Cluster**

The basis for Medical Cluster's activities is the vision of establishing and promoting Switzerland as the world's leading centre for the development, production and distribution of medtech products ([www.medical-cluster.ch](http://www.medical-cluster.ch)). To achieve this it offers selected platforms and services, which are developed and consolidated in close collaboration with industry. Its 400 members represent the whole value added chain of the medical technology industry, i.e. from university institutes, specialised suppliers and – at the cluster's core – suppliers of finished products. Over 800 experts from industry and research take part in conferences, members' forums and networking events each year to exchange know-how and experiences and foster contacts.

**Fasmed**

The Swiss Medical Technology Federation with over 230 members represents the leading medtech businesses from industry and commerce in Switzerland. To enable the medical technology sector to contribute to the provision of excellent products and services, FASMED ([www.fasmed.ch](http://www.fasmed.ch)) is committed to maintaining and promoting market structures in the healthcare system. To do this it fosters contacts with political authorities, the administration and important partners such as doctors, hospitals and health insurance providers. FASMED also informs and advises on specialist, economic policy, legal and regulatory issues.

**Facts and figures on Switzerland's medtech sector\***

- Around 1,450 businesses, including some 850 manufacturers and suppliers, almost 600 dealers and specialised service providers in Switzerland;
- Around 52,000 full-time jobs;
- With a turnover of around CHF 14 billion it accounts for 2.3% of Swiss GDP;
- Each year medtech producers invest 17 times their turnover in research and development, for suppliers the figure is 11 per cent;
- The total volume of exports by medtech firms amounts to around CHF 10.5 billion;
- The largest export market is the USA with CHF 2.2 billion, followed by Germany with CHF 2 billion;
- Switzerland's medtech industry contributes 24 per cent to the country's trade surplus

\*Figures based on 2014 SMTI survey results