



Eawag spin-off Aquatox Solutions at WEF 2020

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Topics: Organisation & Staff | Ecosystems

“Innovative and successful: the start-ups and spin-offs in the ETH Domain” – this is the motto which Eawag used to present itself at this year’s World Economic Forum in Davos.

This year, once again around 60 guests from Swiss politics, business and administration accepted the invitation of the ETH Domain to visit Davos. As part of the World Economic Forum, Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin and State Secretary Martina Hirayama got to know the innovative companies in the ETH Domain during a tour of the SLF, for instance.

Eawag attended the event with its spin-off **“aQuatox-Solutions”** launched in 2016. CEO Stephan Fischer not only highlighted the incredibly successful story behind the foundation of the company, but also explained to the interested guests what his young company has to offer. Aquatox Solutions offers animal-free, alternative test methods with fish cells and fish eggs, which surpass conventional approaches to assessing environmental hazards in terms of informative value, precision and efficiency. In addition, the company meanwhile advises numerous firms and cooperates with a wide range of public bodies.

Kristin Schirmer and Melanie Fischer, from the Environmental Toxicology department of Eawag and partners at Aquatox Solutions, declared the need for these alternatives: “Before chemicals are launched on the market, or to determine their toxicity in the environment, they undergo a risk assessment in order to protect people and the environment. Millions of live fish are used for this purpose every year, which die in agony during this process,” explained Kristin Schirmer. “At Eawag, we said years ago that this should not be the case and developed an alternative that uses gill cell lines instead of live animals”, so the Eawag researchers further. “Our approach offers the same reliable results, but much faster, more cost-efficiently and with significantly less effort”, specified Stephan Fischer.

Not only did the example of Aquatox Solutions impressively demonstrate to guests how fundamental research can be successfully applied in practice. The other young companies also showed that research insights from all ETH Domain institutions can be harnessed by the economy and society.

Picture gallery

Photos: Mallaun Photography

Cover picture: Kristin Schirmer explains to Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin how gill cells from rainbow trout are used in the fish cell line test, thereby replacing tests on live fish. (Photo: Mallaun Photography)

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<https://www.eawag.ch/en/info/portal/news/news-archive/archive-detail/eawag-spin-off-aquatox-solutions-at-wef-2020>