



**SystemsX.ch**  
The Swiss Initiative in Systems Biology

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## Press Release

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# Eight SystemsX.ch Projects chosen

**The first eight Research Technology and Development (RTD) projects that SystemsX.ch, the Swiss initiative in Systems Biology, will support over the next four years have been determined. These projects include 79 Systems Biology research groups from ten Swiss universities and research institutions.**

These eight projects address a diverse set of basic biological questions ranging from the role of lipids in cells to the mechanisms underlying decision-making in the brain. The 79 research groups include 39 from the two federal polytechnic schools ETH Zurich and EPF Lausanne and 39 from the Swiss universities, one group is part of the Swiss Institute of Bioinformatics (SIB). Prof. Ralf Eichler, president of the SystemsX.ch Board of Directors commented that “the projects cover a vast field of topics and provides a unique opportunity for Swiss Systems Biologists to interact».

Each of the eight projects will be coordinated by one SystemsX.ch partner institution. Researchers from the ETH Zurich will head four RTD projects, EPF Lausanne will head two, and the Universities of Bern and Zurich will each head one. An international panel of experts was put together under the direction of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) with the specific task of selecting the projects for funding by SystemsX.ch. This panel chose eight projects out of the 30 submitted. Prof. René Schwarzenbach, the SNSF panel Chairman stressed that «it was a tough competition, and some very good projects could not be considered for funding due to budget limitations.» The scientific quality and the systems biology approach of the project proposals have been the most decisive elements in the panel’s decisions. Abstracts of the new RTD projects can be found on the new website of SystemsX.ch (<http://www.systemsx.ch/>).

The issue of budget allocations for each project is still in progress. In their current forms, the investigators requested some CHF 58 million, while SystemsX.ch has budgeted CHF 45 million for this first round of financing for RTD projects. Since the institutions involved in each project are required to invest matching funds equal to or exceeding those requested from SystemsX.ch, the total investment in this first round of RTDs will be at least CHF90 million. The definite budget allocations will be finalized in May. The next call for RTD proposals is expected in about a year.



Members of the research initiative SystemsX.ch include the two polytechnic universities ETH Zurich and EPF Lausanne, the Universities of Basel, Bern, Lausanne, Geneva, Zurich, and Fribourg, as well as the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI), the Friedrich Miescher Institute (FMI), and the Swiss institute of Bioinformatics (SIB). The federal government allocated a CHF 100 million budget for investment in Systems Biology research from 2008- 2011.

Systems Biology aims to explain biological regulation at a cellular, tissue, organ, or whole organism level in order to understand living systems as a whole. To do this effectively, biological data needs to be collected, interpreted, and analyzed at a level above its individual role in specific cellular mechanisms, compartments, or components. The development of computer simulations of entire biological systems based on mathematical models is equally important. This allows Biology to become a predictive quantitative science which in the long term will simplify processes such as the discovery of novel and more personalized medications.

Attachment: Table listing the eight RTD projects chosen for funding with corresponding PI information

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# Research-, Technology-, and Development-Projects of SystemsX.ch

| Project Title  | Partners  | Principal Investigator   |
|--|---|--|
| LiverX: Systems Biology of Hepatic Insulin Resistance  | ETHZ, U Bas; UZH  | Prof. Wilhelm Krek, Institute of Cell Biology, ETH Zurich<br>044 633 34 47<br>wilhelm.krek@cell.biol.ethz.ch               |
| Systems Biology of the Drosophila Wing   | ETHZ, UZH, U Bas, EPFL, UniL                              | Prof. Ernst Hafen, Institute of Molecular Systems Biology, ETH Zurich<br>044 633 36 88<br>hafen@imsb.biol.ethz.ch          |
| Plant Growth in a Changing Environment   | U BE, UZH, ETHZ, U FR, U Bas, U GE, EPFL, U NE, UniL, SIB | Prof. Cris Kuhlemeier, Institute of Plant Sciences, University of Berne<br>031 631 49 13<br>kuhlemeier@ips.unibe.ch        |
| A Systems Approach to Characterizing and Modeling the Yeast Transcriptional Regulatory Network                         | EPFL, UniL, U GE  | Prof. Sebastian Maerkl, Laboratory of Biological Network Characterization, EPFL<br>021 6937835<br>sebastian.maerkl@epfl.ch |
| Coping with Uncertainty: Towards an Integrated Understanding of Nutrient Signaling, Regulation and Metabolic Operation | ETHZ, U Bas, UZH  | Prof. Uwe Sauer, Institute of Molecular Systems Biology, ETH Zurich<br>044 633 36 72<br>sauer@imsb.biol.ethz.ch            |
| Neural Correlates of Collective Decision Making: From Molecules to Minds (NEUROCHOICE)                                 | UZH, U BE, EPFL, U GE                                     | Prof. Fritjof Helmchen, Brain Research Institute, University of Zurich, 044 63 53340<br>helmchen@hifo.uzh.ch               |
| Systems Biology of Biomembranes  | EPFL, U GE, UZH, ETHZ, UniL                               | Prof. Gisou van der Goot, Global Health Institute, EPFL<br>021 6931791<br>gisou.vandergoot@epfl.ch                         |
| Phosphorylation-Modulated Informational Networks of the Cell   | ETHZ, UZH   | Prof. Ruedi Aebersold, Institute of Molecular Systems Biology, ETHZ<br>044 633 31 70<br>aebersold@imsb.biol.ethz.ch        |