

# 3.0 Generation

*Strategy 2017 – 2019*



# Mission Mission

Avenir Suisse is an independent free-market Swiss think tank which promotes liberal and scientifically substantiated ideas in economics, politics and society at large.

*That is the basis of our model*

Avenir Suisse was established in 1999 as the “Foundation for the Future of Switzerland” in cooperation with 14 major Swiss companies. Two years later, it started operations, initially with a five-year funding agreement, with sociologist Thomas Held as the foundation’s first director. In 2004, the donors decided to prolong the foundation’s activities on an indefinite basis with an expanding pool of generous donors. In 2010, economist Gerhard Schwarz took over as director, followed in spring 2016 by business administration graduate Peter Grünenfelder. The appointment of Avenir Suisse’s third director prompted a wish by the board of trustees for a generational change to “Avenir Suisse Generation 3.0.”

Since its establishment, Avenir Suisse has become Switzerland’s foremost think tank. As a free market thought leader, it forms an important link between business, politics, science, media and the public. Its academically based policy recommendations and long-term reform strategies have enjoyed wide acceptance.

Avenir Suisse engages in public debate through various types of publications. Its palette ranges from books, cantonal monitoring studies and discussion papers (“avenir debate”) to shorter thought leadership reports (“avenir standpunkte”) and opinion pieces in prominent media. In recent years, our website blogs have become a central communications tool. Additionally, Avenir Suisse’s experts regularly participate as speakers at various events and are interviewed on national and international radio and television. Avenir Suisse must keep ahead of the times and take the leading role in shaping opinion on important

issues affecting Switzerland's future. In the interest of transparency towards our sponsors and the public, our Strategy 2017–19 sets out the key objectives of our work

Peter Grünenfelder  
and the Avenir Suisse team

# Introduction



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## **A Think Tank for Switzerland**

Avenir Suisse develops ideas for Switzerland's future. We identify relevant topics, provide early warnings of where action is required, and recommend solutions. Avenir Suisse's ideas are intended to prepare the political and social ground for reforms. The motivation behind Avenir Suisse's work is the long-term preservation and enhancement of Switzerland's prosperity.

## **independent**

Avenir Suisse develops its views independently and free of political restriction. This independence is guaranteed by our donors' commitment to long-term funding and our clear corporate governance rules. As a non-profit foundation focused on thought leadership and research work requiring absolute independence, in contrast to other interest groups and lobbies, Avenir Suisse does not participate in the consultative phase of legislation or in Swiss referendum campaigns.

## **evidence-based policy research**

Avenir Suisse's researchers work with both domestic and foreign institutions on drawing up scientifically based, economically grounded reforms. A guiding principle is open discussion with politicians and business leaders, while disseminating



our findings to appropriate target audiences in easily accessible form.

## liberal

Avenir Suisse's values are based on liberal social principles and free market economics. They are grounded on the conviction that a liberal state and an open society that promote individual enterprise, strengthen individual responsibility and boost modernisation, creating the best conditions for widespread prosperity.

## privately financed

Avenir Suisse is privately funded. Its donors include small and large companies from all economic sectors and regions of Switzerland, as well as private individuals. Thanks to such wide backing, the think tank is free of special interests and is able to address uncomfortable topics or political taboos.

## **Board of trustees**

Avenir Suisse's most senior body, the Board of Trustees, selects members of all its committees, as well as the director. The board, which meets once or twice a year, approves the annual budget, report and accounts.

*Andreas Schmid (President)*

## **Management committee**

The management committee is responsible for supervising the foundation's operating activities, approving thematic priorities, overseeing financial affairs and preparing meetings of the board of trustees.

*Andreas Schmid (Chairman)*

## **Nomination committee**

The nomination committee is responsible for selecting candidates for all of the foundation's committees and the management board.

*Thomas Knecht (Chairman)*

## **Programme committee**

The programme committee advises the director in setting major research priorities, follows projects' progress and, not least, ensures the high research standards. At thrice yearly meetings, individual projects are discussed in detail. Commission

representatives also coordinate research activities with think tank staff outside the formal meetings structure.

*Prof. Marius Brülhart (Chairman)*

## **Finance committee**

The Finance Committee supervises the financial affairs of Avenir Suisse. It checks quarterly figures, annual results and the budget.

*Markus Neubaus (Chairman)*

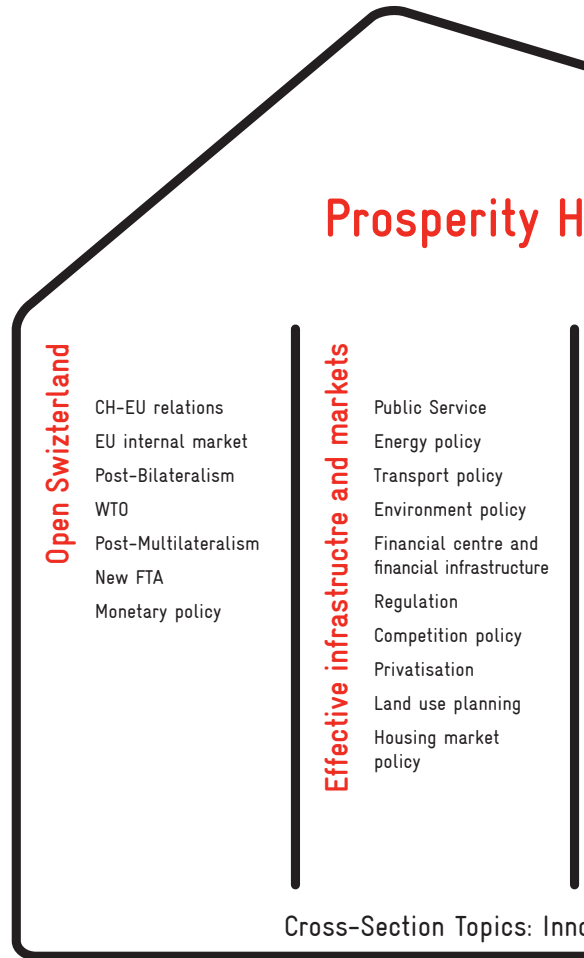
## **Pool of donors**

The extensive pool of donors assures the long term, sustainable funding of the foundation's activities. Its members comprise companies and individual donors that have supported the foundation with significant one off or repeated contributions. The pool of donors serves as an auditing body for Avenir Suisse's projects.

*Thomas Hammer (President)*

**Our programme:  
focussing on five drivers  
of prosperity**

Avenir Suisse wants to contribute to ensuring and increasing Swiss citizens' long term prosperity. To do so, our research focuses on five “drivers” which we see as pillars for the further development of the “Prosperity House Switzerland.” Additionally, we look at cross-sectional themes, such as digitalization and innovation, which influence all the pillars and are therefore incorporated in all of our proposals.



## house Switzerland

### Sustainable welfare state

- Pensions
- Care for the elderly
- Senior citizens' employment
- Health care
- Social security
- Medical ethics

### Smart Government

- Federal budget/spending structure
- Tax system
- Fiscal equalisation
- Federalism
- Democracy
- System competition
- Domestic security
- Foreign security

### Equal opportunity society

- Militia system
- Labour market
- Social partnership
- Education system
- Gender
- Migration
- Refugee policy
- Integration

novation/Digitalization/Demography/Distribution

Driving  
**Prosperity**

## A pillar-based strategy

Over the past two decades, dark clouds have gathered over the “Prosperity House Switzerland.” Many factors have contributed to this re-emergent isolationism, hesitant market opening in infrastructure, a social security system unprepared for an ageing society, incorrect priorities in tax policy, a general tendency to regulate and delays in reforming Switzerland’s financial architecture and competition within the federal state structure. For Switzerland’s further social and economic development, every driver of prosperity matters.

## Open Switzerland

Switzerland’s economic success and prosperity are based on the country’s openness and the unhindered exchange of goods and services, capital, people and ideas. Avenir Suisse develops strategies for foreign policy and trade, for Switzerland’s bilateral and multilateral relations and participation in supranational organisations. Avenir Suisse draws attention to issues where emphasis should be placed to strengthen Switzerland in the long term.

## Effective infrastructure and markets

Switzerland has room for improving the effectiveness and openness of its markets and infrastructure—for example, reducing barriers to market entry or public sector companies. To strengthen market forces, Avenir Suisse advises on what strategies should be taken by the state and private companies to ensure better and cheaper services. We work on policy suggestions to improve the efficiency of public services and on intelligent regulations to boost competition—for example in energy, transport or the environment.

## Sustainable welfare state

Demographic developments are binding ever more cantonal and federal tax revenues. Expenditures in the coming decade on social security and health will account for a good two thirds of all government spending—to the detriment of other important tasks, such as education. Avenir Suisse develops strategies for the federal, cantonal and communal authorities that allow Switzerland's social security system to (again) become financially sound in the middle and longer term.

## Smart Government

By 2020, half of the labour force will comprise members of the so called Generations Y and Z. Digitalisation will affect ever more aspects of life and work. The public sector cannot ignore such developments. Avenir Suisse works on strategies for the digital development of our democracy. At the same time, we prepare economic policy proposals, as the public sector's room to manoeuvre is being reduced by the constantly rising share of planned expenditure in federal and cantonal government. Avenir Suisse's solutions range from increasing discretionary spending to budget cuts and tax reforms. To raise competition within the federal system, we propose possible ways of reforming the new fiscal equalisation system and the division of responsibilities between federal government and cantons.

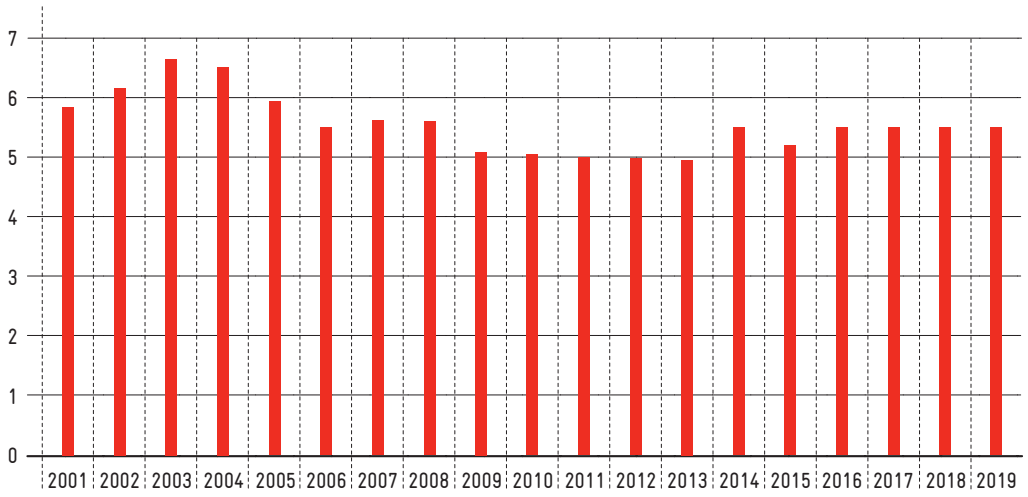
## Equal opportunity society

The potential capacity of the Swiss domestic labour force is declining due to an ageing society. Estimates show that by 2030, the number of people leaving the workforce will be about 65 % higher than those entering it. Avenir Suisse develops strategies for an efficient labour market, greater integration of women in the workforce, a lasting social partnership and a modern and innovative educational system. Immigration will remain an important factor to satisfy the labour market's need for qualified specialist staff.





Budgeted spending 2001 to 2018 Fr million

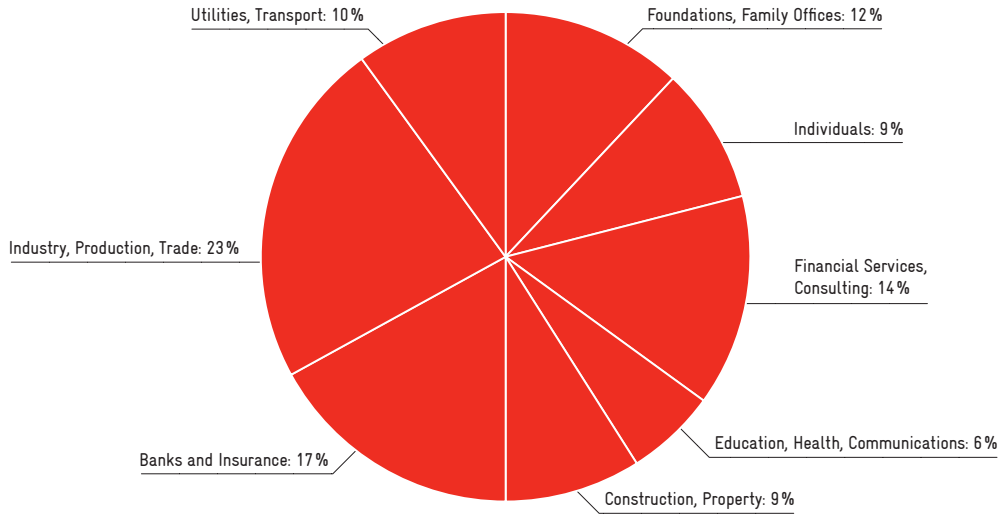


Source: Avenir Suisse

**Plan:**  
**stability and broad-based growth**

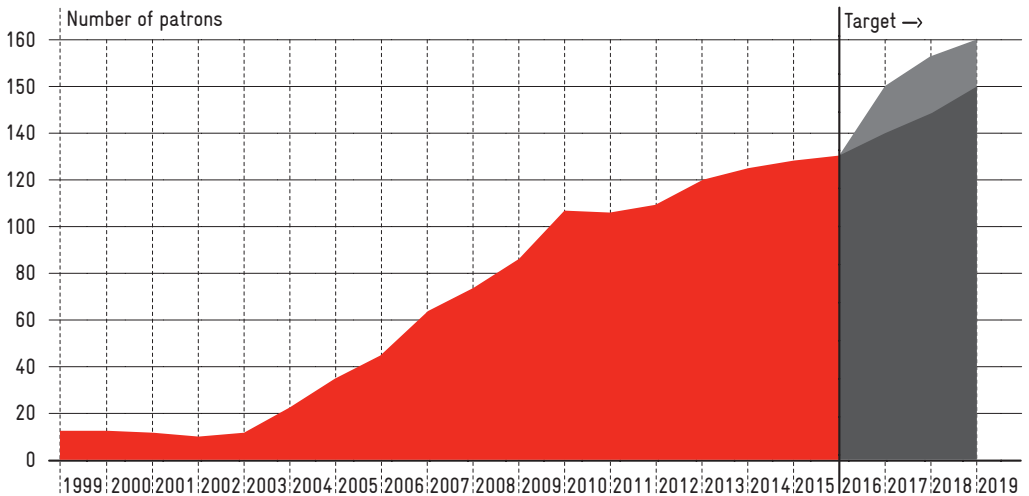
Avenir Suisse is a non profit foundation. Spending on research, publications and communications is financed by contributions from sponsors. In 2001, our founding year, expenditure amounted to Fr 5.8 m. Between 2010 and 2015, expenses were about Fr 5 m annually as more research was brought in house. The budget for 2016 is about Fr 5.6 m. Because of strong demand for Avenir Suisse's services, expanding regional activities (particularly in Italian speaking Switzerland) and the need for a broad, liberally based, discussion about renewal in Swiss politics and society, we plan to strengthen our five pillar based research activities. Spending should remain stable at about Fr 5.5 m a year in the forthcoming period.

## Donors by sector (2015)



Source: Avenir Suisse

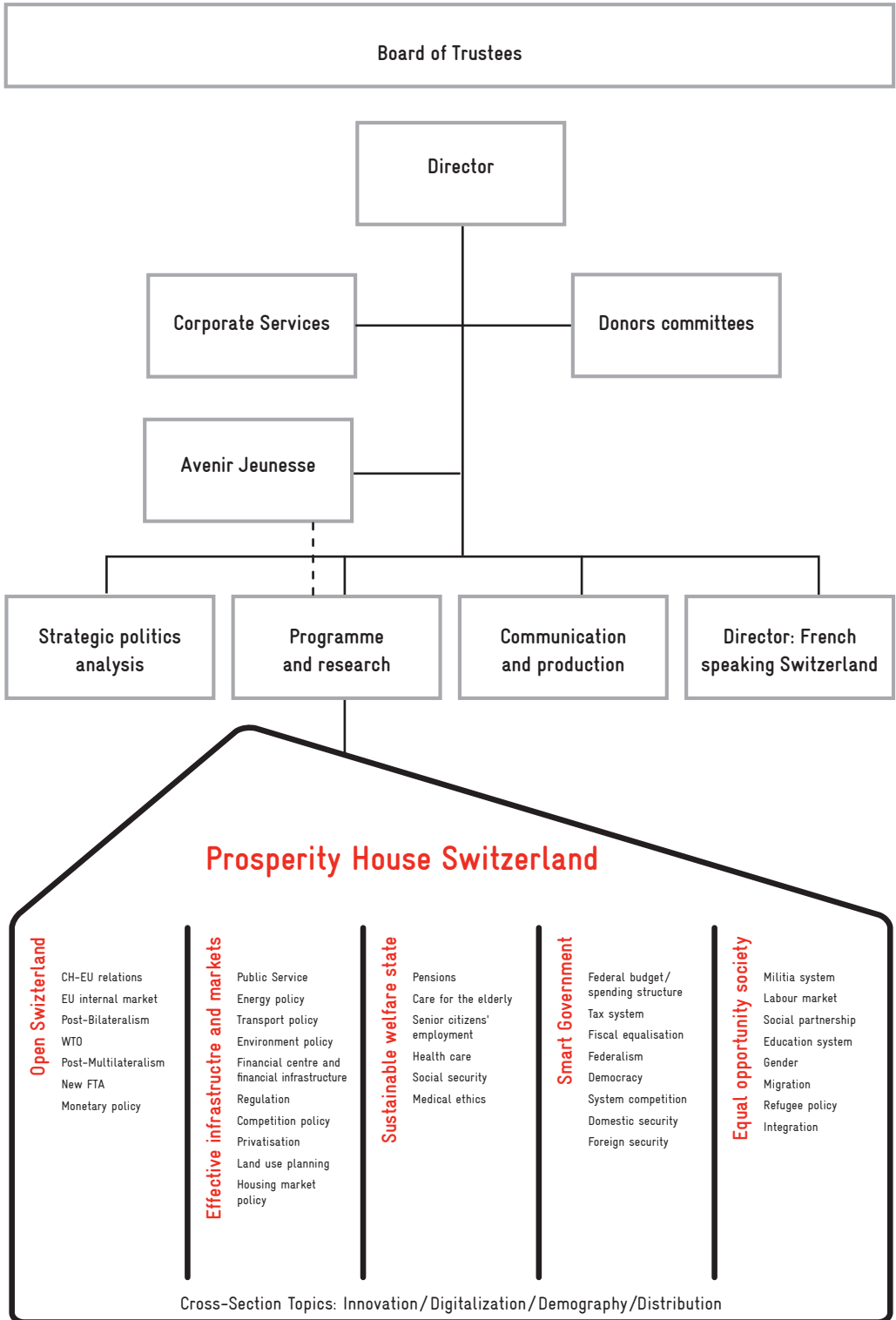
## Broad support from all sectors and regions



Source: Avenir Suisse

**Donors pool:**  
**broader sectoral and**  
**regional diversification**

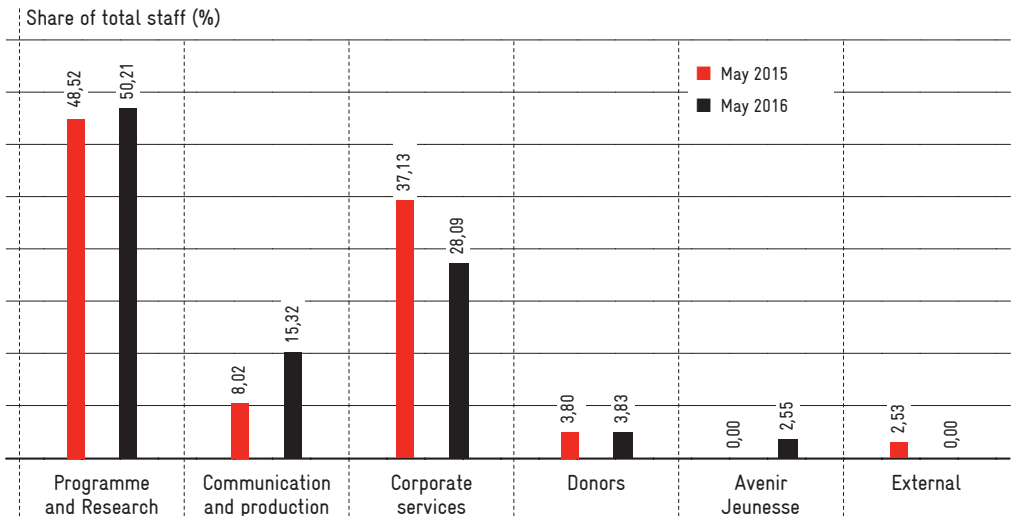
In the current planning period, the donor's pool should be broadened and diversified by economic sector and region. In Avenir Suisse's early years, around half our sponsors came from finance, industry, production and trade. Since creation of the sponsor's circle in 2005, our donors have become more diversified, covering additional sectors and regions. Numerous private donors and foundations have also offered their support. This diversification should increase modestly in the current planning period and, from 2018, remain at a high level.



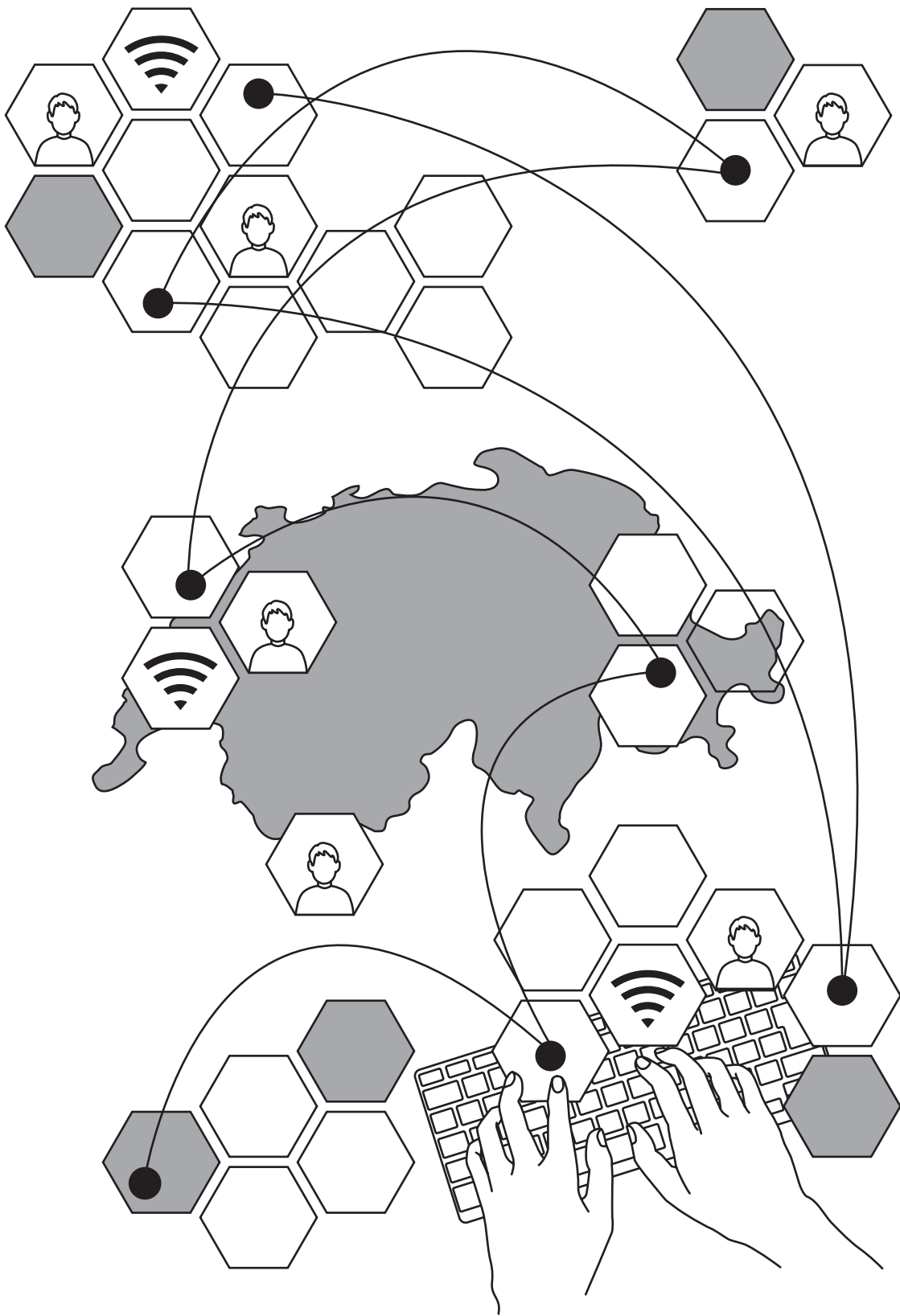
## Human resources strategy: Priority for research and communication

We are a team of about 35 (equivalent to about 20 full time posts). Our development strategy for 2019 is aimed at strengthening our research activities and our communication.

### Division of staff by area



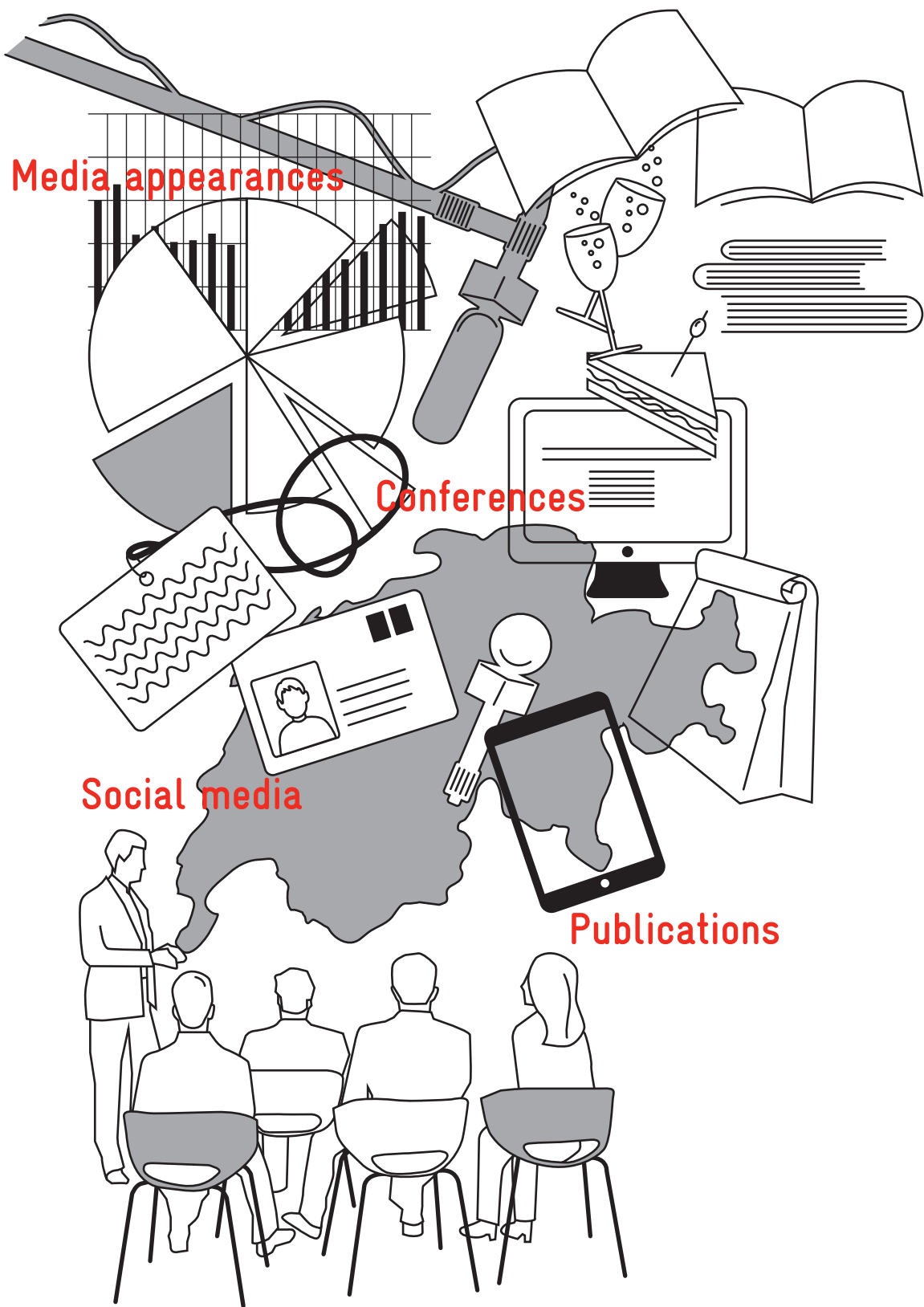
Quelle: Avenir Suisse





## Avenir Jeunesse

Today's youth is tomorrow's future. Avenir Jeunesse creates formats to involve young people in its interests and win them over to liberal modernisation. Accordingly, themes are chosen that are particularly relevant to the younger generation. Avenir Jeunesse offers a platform for bringing together interested young people at different types of events, for exchanging views and for discussing about Switzerland's future.



Media appearances

Conferences

Social media

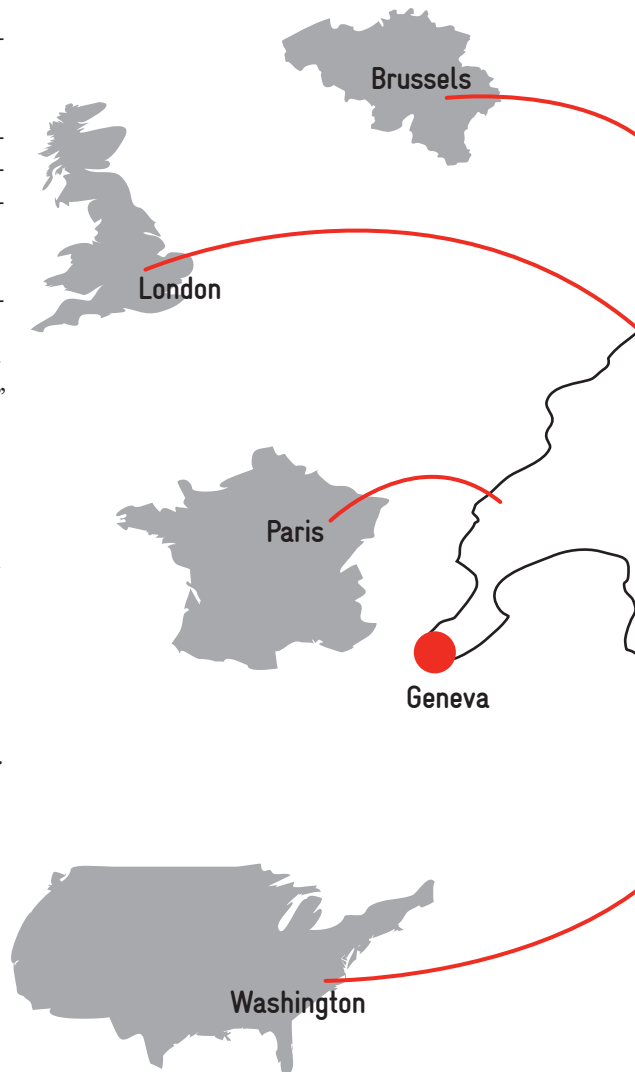
Publications

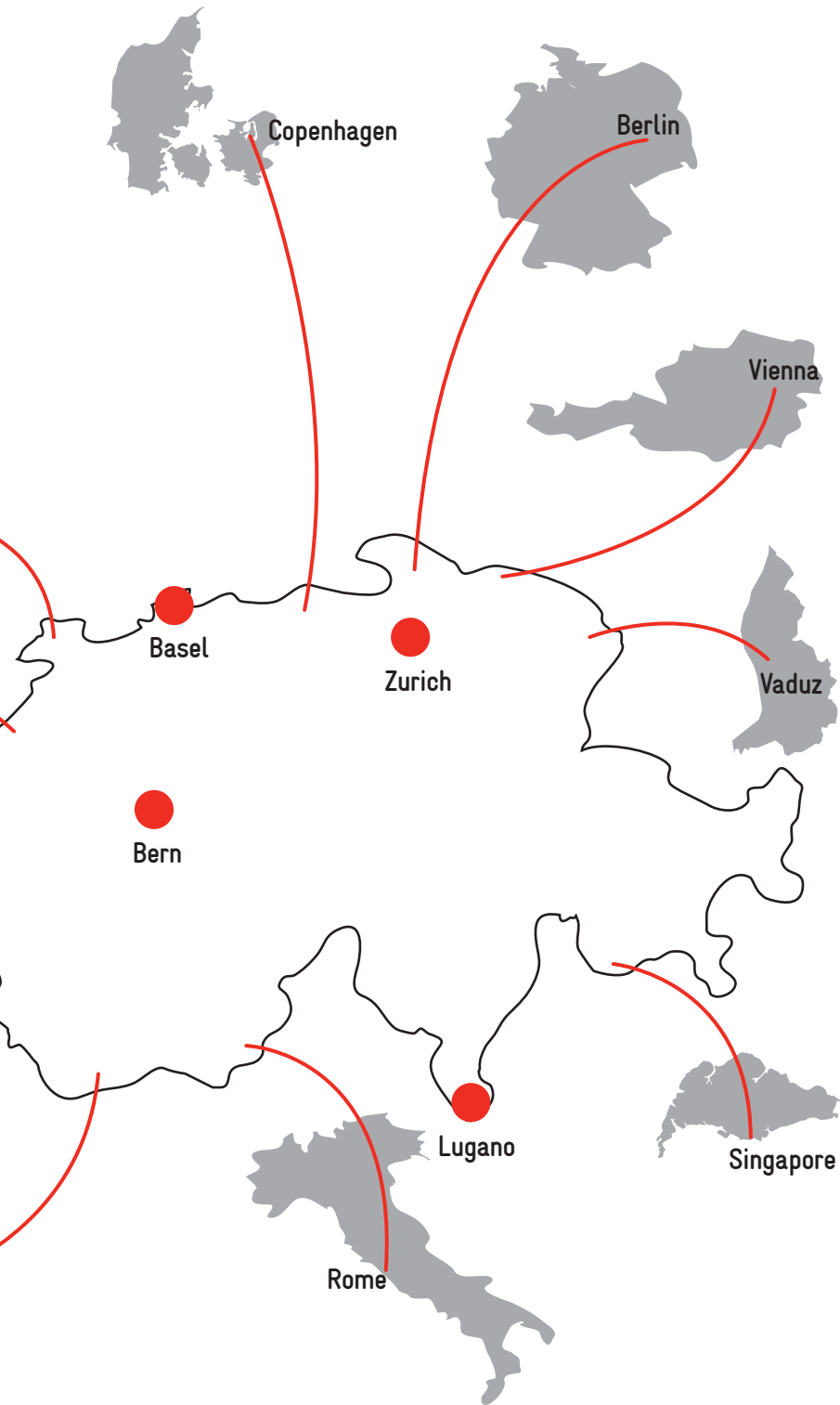
## Clear Messages

Avenir Suisse sets specific goals for each of its prosperity drivers. Messages are conveyed in tailor made and highly targeted forms. Exchanges with politics and the public administration should be reinforced by building up our presence in Bern through, for example, events or participation at parliamentary committee hearings. Public awareness of our activities should also be strengthened by opinion pieces in major media. New possibilities for communicating will also arise through shifting media consumption and new technologies. Already, about half of our media presence is via the internet. In the new online world, the effectiveness of established publications like “avenir debate” and “avenir standpunkte” will be supported by targeted use of multimedia formats such as videos or podcasts, as well as “digital storytelling.” Dissemination of our reform proposals should in future come through personal contacts, talks by our experts, greater numbers at discussion forums and through our own events.

## Regional roots and international network

Avenir Suisse's research focuses on Swiss themes but can also be canton or region specific. While most of the current team is based in Zürich, since 2002 we also have an office in Geneva to highlight the value of French speaking Switzerland in our activities. And while most of our publications are in German and French, we also produce a selection of work in Italian and English. Additionally to our existing work, we will from winter 2016 offer a monthly English digital newsletter. Alongside other closely related organisations worldwide, we also aim to inform expatriates in Switzerland and Swiss diplomatic representations abroad about our activities. Switzerland is one of the world's best networked countries. In today's globalised society, few problems recognise national borders; instead, many countries face similar challenges. All are interested in "best practice" elsewhere. Avenir Suisse intends to strengthen its international network, particularly through contacts with other think tanks and in areas that directly affect Swiss prosperity. From 2017, we plan to host an annual international think tank conference to boost the exchange of ideas with like minded institutions. Avenir Suisse will also build up its national and regional network. Along with reinforcing our policies in the federal capital of Bern, we envisage putting more emphasis on Italian speaking Ticino in our regional activities.





# Regionalisation **Strategy**

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