Strüngmann Award Committee Announces 2025 Finalists Recognizing Outstanding Life Science Entrepreneurs

The selected finalists have demonstrated entrepreneurial execution and translational potential for a range of scientific approaches

The winner(s) will be officially announced on July 3, 2025, and will receive an EUR 100,000 cash prize

Munich, Germany, May 27, 2025

The Strüngmann Award selection committee today announced this year's award finalists. The three companies and their founders highlight the exceptional and internationally successful leaders emerging from the DACH region's thriving life science ecosystem. Now in its second year, the award aims to recognize founders who are not only advancing breakthrough science, but who have also demonstrated the drive and resilience required to translate innovation into therapeutic impact.

The award was established to honor its namesakes, Andreas Strüngmann, M.D., and Thomas Strüngmann, Ph.D. As the founders of Hexal they achieved extraordinary entrepreneurial success, subsequently they expanded on these achievements in their roles as visionary investors. The award celebrates the next generation of leaders advancing a great idea into reality.

"We are convinced of the exceptionally talented leaders in the DACH life science ecosystem and are committed to recognizing and promoting both innovative ideas and execution through this award. This year's finalists underscore the depth of scientific and entrepreneurial excellence in the DACH region. They represent a remarkable diversity of scientific fields: from targeted cancer therapies to regenerative neuroscience and drug resistance. It's inspiring to see how different paths can lead to meaningful innovation that improves patients' lives," said Andreas und Thomas Strüngmann.

The following visionary entrepreneurs have been selected by the award committee for their innovative mindset and talent for execution in translating biomedical research into therapeutic approaches:

Dragan Grabulovski
Philipp Spycher
Isabella Attinger-Toller –
Araris Biotech

The founding team of Araris Biotech, Dragan Grabulovski, Ph.D., CEO, Philipp Spycher, Ph.D., CSO, and Isabella Attinger-Toller, Ph.D., CTO, has built one of Switzerland's most successful biotech ventures in recent years. Spun out of the Paul Scherrer Institute (part of ETH domain), the team developed a novel antibody-drug conjugate (ADC) linker-payload technology (AraLinQTM) that enables one-step payload attachment to off-the-shelf antibodies, without the need of prior antibody engineering. Their collaborative leadership and scientific excellence led Araris to raise over CHF 40 million, form a strategic partnership with Chugai (Roche) and Johnson & Johnson, and achieve a landmark acquisition by Taiho Pharmaceutical in March 2025 for up to USD 1.14 billion.

Araris Biotech is advancing a new class of ADCs aiming to redefine the entire paradigm of targeted cancer therapy and beyond.

Martin E. Schwab
Stefan Moese –
NovaGo Therapeutics

Prof. Martin E. Schwab, Ph.D., CSO and co-founder of NovaGo Therapeutics, is a world-renowned neuroscientist whose pioneering work on nerve growth inhibition fundamentally changed the field of neuroregeneration. He discovered the protein Nogo-A, a key blocker of nerve repair in the central nervous system and translated this breakthrough into the development of regenerative antibody therapies. Building on decades of research at the University of Zurich and ETH Zurich, he founded NovaGo in 2015 to advance clinical candidates for patients with spinal cord injury and related indications.

Since joining as CEO in 2023, Stefan Moese, Ph.D., has brought deep expertise in biologics and translational drug development. Together, he and Martin E. Schwab are driving the company's efforts to translate cutting-edge science into regenerative therapies, where the first candidate has entered clinical trials in acute spinal cord injured patients in 2024.

NovaGo Therapeutics is a Swiss biotech company developing antibody-based therapies to promote nerve and blood vessel regeneration, with a lead program targeting acute spinal cord injury.

Stefanie Flückiger-
Mangual –
TOLREMO therapeutics

Stefanie Flückiger-Mangual, Ph.D., founder and CEO of TOLREMO therapeutics, has built a company that is redefining the way drug resistance is approached in the treatment of cancer. Drawing from her academic research at ETH Zurich, she uncovered that resistance is often driven by transcriptional changes — sometimes long before oncogenic mutations arise. This insight led to the development of a proprietary screening platform which resulted in the identification of CBP/p300 as an epigenetic master regulator of non-oncogene resistance. Under Stefanie's leadership, the company has raised over CHF 34 million and advanced its lead program TT125-802, a novel, highly selective CBP/p300 inhibitor, into the clinic. In this ongoing clinical trial, TT125-802 has shown a best-in-class safety profile and unprecedented monotherapy activity in solid tumors.

TOLREMO therapeutics is pioneering a comprehensive new approach to tackle cancer drug resistance by blocking transcriptional resistance pathways that operate parallel to the primary oncogene signaling axis. This represents a differentiated strategy to address a major challenge in cancer treatment, with significant therapeutic potential both as a monotherapy as well as in combination with targeted therapies.

As a next step in the selection process, an expert jury consisting of leading entrepreneurial personalities and biotechnology investors will select the winner(s). The winner will be officially announced on July 3, 2025, and will receive a EUR 100,000 cash prize.

To learn more about the award and stay up to date on the latest news visit our website: www.struengmannaward.de.

About the Strüngmann Award

The award was established in 2024 to recognize outstanding entrepreneurs realizing revolutionary ideas in the DACH life science sector. The goal is to reward exceptional achievements with a prestigious prize and to further the development of the next generation of leaders in this space. The award was named to honor twin brothers Andreas Strüngmann, M.D., and Thomas Strüngmann, Ph.D., who are among the important entrepreneurs, visionaries and investors in the life science sector. As the founders of Hexal, they achieved extraordinary entrepreneurial success and as investors, they have continued to repeat that success for more than 20 years by building and developing leading companies across the industry, including Mainz-based BioNTech. Learn more at https://struengmannaward.de/.

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