



ETAT DE FRIBOURG
STAAT FREIBURG
STATE OF FRIBOURG

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Media release

Growing number of location and expansion projects for the FDA in 2016

The Fribourg Development Agency (FDA) presented its 2016 annual report today. Despite the economic uncertainty that dominated the past business year, the FDA successfully helped 22 companies to expand or set up their operations in the canton (11 new arrivals; 11 expansions). Indeed, this was the highest number of expansion projects since 2010. In total, the 22 projects will create around 400 new jobs in the medium term. Added to this were 15 projects which received support under the New Regional Policy program. The venue for the annual FDA press conference was PharmaFocus in Romont, on the site formerly occupied by Tetra Pak. The purchase of this industrial complex by the canton of Fribourg in 2016 constitutes an important milestone in the government's proactive land policy. The FDA press conference was also the first attended by Olivier Curty in his new capacity as Cantonal Minister of Economic Affairs.

Amidst the current economic uncertainty, many companies are reluctant to undertake any major investments. This observation was borne out by the number of projects in which the FDA was involved over the last year. While the number of projects rose in 2016 (22 location and expansion projects compared to 17 the previous year), the investment involved fell considerably (CHF 85 million compared to CHF 185 in 2015). In total, these 22 projects will create 390 new jobs in the medium term, which is slightly up on last year's figures (382).

Six new arrivals from five countries

In 2016, the FDA helped 11 new companies set up their business in the canton of Fribourg. Of these, five were Swiss companies, while the remaining six hailed from France, Russia, Brazil, India and the United States. Four of these projects were the result of collaboration with the *Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa)*, Western Switzerland's investment promotion agency. The new arrivals are primarily technology firms, most of which are small start-ups attracted to Switzerland by its innovation-friendly environment. According to FDA's Managing Director, Jean-Luc Mossier: "Thanks to new innovation quarters like blueFACTORY in downtown Fribourg, the canton can now leverage its new status as an innovation hub in this promising market."

The FDA also advised and assisted 11 Fribourg companies with their expansion plans. One of the largest projects last year was the construction of Scott Sports' new administrative headquarters in Givisiez. The manufacturer of sportswear and equipment is investing CHF 50 million in the project.

New Regional Policy enters third phase

The aim of the New Regional Policy (NRP), which was launched back in 2008, is to make regions more competitive and help them create and safeguard jobs. 2016 saw the adoption of the new strategy set out in the NRP Implementation Program for 2016-2019. During the first 12 months of this four-year program, some 15 projects received support totaling CHF 7.3 million. The showpiece was undoubtedly *INNOSQUARE*, a technology and information platform that lets Fribourg firms access cutting-edge technologies.

The canton of Fribourg acquires industrial land

In 2016 the FDA focused a substantial share of its efforts on putting vacated industrial sites to new use. The closure of Tetra Pak in Romont and Elanco in St-Aubin meant that two large plots of land became available in 2016. As part of its proactive land policy, the cantonal government decided to acquire these sites in order to ensure their future development.

Our host: PharmaFocus Ltd, Romont

The venue for this year's press conference was PharmaFocus Ltd in Romont. The company, which was founded in Basel in 2001, has had its main logistics center at the former Tetra Pak site in Romont since 2014. PharmaFocus seeks to promote and safeguard independent community pharmacists; as such, it is the only pharmacy wholesaler in Switzerland which exclusively supplies to owner-run pharmacies. Its 150-strong workforce, spread between its sites in Romont and Münchenstein, deliver over 37,000 products twice a day to pharmacies across the country. NOWEDA, Germany's second largest pharmacy wholesaler, holds a 51% share in PharmaFocus.

www.pharmafocus.ch

Information

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Go to www.promfr.ch to read or download the Fribourg Development Agency's Annual Report 2016 (only in French or German).