

## «Intelligent Dark Warehouse»: VNL launches innovation program

*Eleven companies from three countries, together in a “Special Interest Group”, have set the goal to develop a state of the art, reference warehouse that can be operated fully autonomous for 48 hours. With this premise, the Association “Network Logistics Switzerland” launched its four years innovation program for an “Intelligent Dark Warehouse” in early February 2021.*



The idea to establish this long-term innovation program is based on a question, that might be familiar to many decision makers in warehousing: “what can be done autonomously?”. Despite a high level of automation, logistics in Switzerland is an ever-growing business. More than 200’000 employees are directly or indirectly involved in logistics, and the figure is still rising. During the current pandemic it became even more apparent, that effective and efficient logistics are extremely important. It is not surprising, that the broad public nowadays considers logistics and the people behind as a systemically relevant industry. To further support this crucial industry, it is of great importance to investigate how technology can be used to ease the pressure that workers encounter in their daily tasks and routines.

### Selected group of application and science partners

The association „Network Logistics Switzerland” has developed the “Special Interest Group” as an innovative and ambitious platform to discuss and find practical solutions for such pressing questions. Together with the Association, technology partners such as ABB, Balance Drive, Gilgen Logistics, Miebach Consulting, Rapp Industrial Planners and Westernacher Consulting have recently joined the platform. On the application side, Alloga, Emmi and Ikea are on board, complemented by the science partners Logistikum Switzerland and Fachhochschule Oberösterreich, as well as the Technical University Munich. Interdisciplinarity and cross-country knowledge exchange mark the building stones for this cooperation. Extending on previous experiences, a close partnership between industry and science lays the foundation for excellent long term solution strategies.

With tangible results and solutions in mind, the platform will engage in extending the current knowledge network, deploy state of the art innovation methodologies and conduct large-scale feasibility studies. Along the platform’s investigations, our science Partner Logistikum Switzerland will establish a Masters Degree Program in a joint collaboration with the University of Applied Science in Lucerne. As a further prospect, Logistikum Switzerland currently evaluates locations to found a Logistics Test Centre. The Test Centre would be used for in-depth technological feasibility studies and prototyping.

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Inspired by a significant potential to contribute to a sustainable economy, the reduction of greenhouse gases through decarbonization and to increase safety and attractiveness of workplaces, the Association Network Logistics and Logistikum Switzerland expect important impulses for innovation in the age of Industry 4.0. The Association Network Logistics currently also offers participation in other thematic areas like Purchasing, Transportation, Customer Experience, Construction Logistics, Supply Chain Design Methodologies and Circular Economic Systems.

### **About Association Network Logistics**

The Association Network Logistics is a pioneer and pathfinder for the development of logistical Applications in Switzerland. Since its foundation in 2008, the Association Network Logistics is firmly committed to enable and support corresponding initiatives and innovation projects. Backed by a strong professional network, the Association continuously emphasizes interdisciplinary roundtables and collaborations between industry and science. Based on this approach and mutual commitment, the association reflects traditional and functionally restrictive viewpoints and suggests new ways to increase productivity and company performances. Between 2012 and 2020, the Association Network Logistics represented the governments leading thematic network for domestic logistics. The Association is still granted subsidies through Innosuisse, the Federal Innovation Agency.

### **About Logistikum Switzerland**

The Association Network Logistics Switzerland acts as a co-initiator and co-founder of Logistikum Schweiz GmbH, which was founded as extra-curricular research institution for innovation and education in Purchasing, Logistics and Supply Chain Management. Logistikum Schweiz GmbH is based in Altdorf, Switzerland.

### **About Innosuisse**

Innosuisse is the leading federal Innovation Agency. Innosuisse promotes science-based innovations with potentially significant impacts to society and economy. Innosuisse also supports start-ups, internationalization initiatives and network building.

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