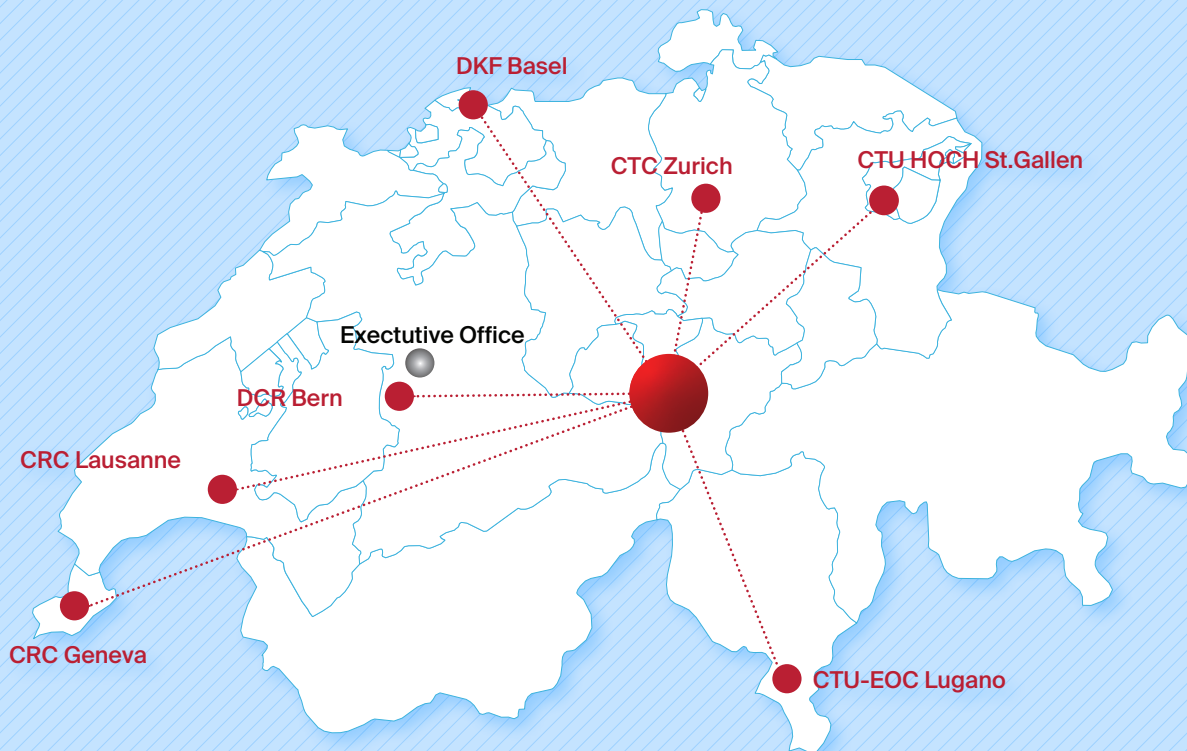


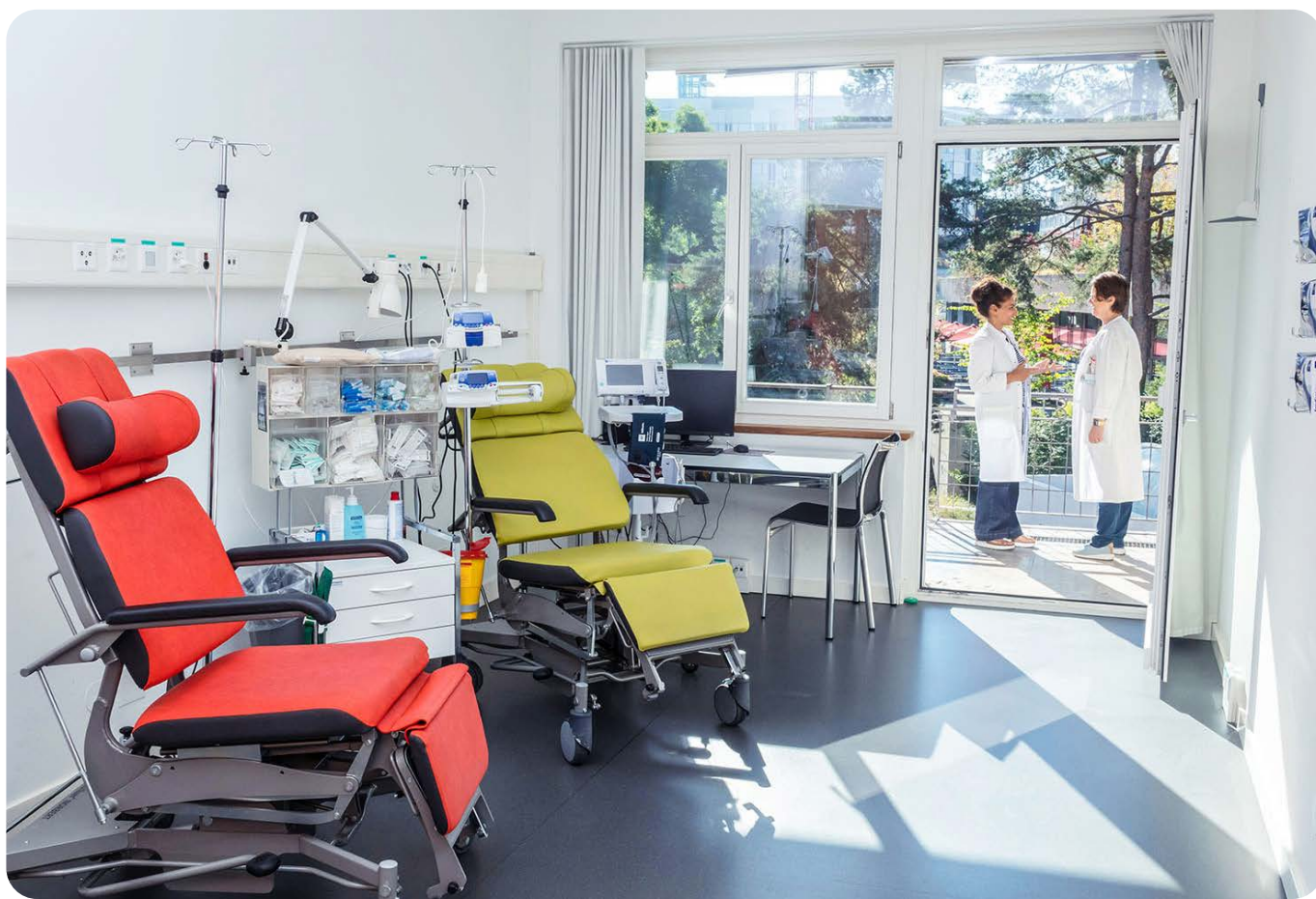


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**Annual
Report 2025**



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01 / Message from the President

Clinical research is undergoing rapid transformation, shaped by increasing complexity, technological advances, and growing expectations from society. In this evolving landscape, the ability to generate high-quality evidence efficiently and responsibly has never been more important.

Meeting these challenges requires more than individual expertise; it requires coordinated infrastructure. The Swiss Clinical Trial Organisation's (SCTO) mission is to provide that foundation, enabling researchers to translate scientific questions into robust evidence and, ultimately, into better outcomes for patients.

In 2025, the SCTO consolidated its role as Switzerland's national backbone for academic clinical research. Across every dimension of our work, from the seven Clinical Research Centres supporting thousands of researchers on the ground, to our national Platforms developing the standards and tools that define best practice, we saw both growth and increasing complexity.

The scale of activity in 2025 reflects both the demand for and the value of the SCTO's role: 2'164 clinical research projects supported, 9'374 professionals trained, 247 peer-reviewed publications with 77% in top-tier journals, and 352 international multicentre studies facilitated. These figures are not only indicators of performance, they signal a system that is working, evolving, and delivering impact. Behind every number, is both a researcher, enabled to address a relevant research question, and a clinical team capable of generating high-quality data. They can carry out their work because the infrastructure is in place, ultimately advancing medicine and science.

Three themes in particular defined 2025.

The first was innovation. With the launch of our Research-on-Research (RoR) initiative, we are beginning to rethink how we can do clinical



research in a more efficient and evidence-based way. At the same time, with the creation of two national working groups we want to address the growing challenges on Artificial Intelligence in clinical research and Decentralised Clinical Trials.

The second was integration. Our new website, launched in early 2026, brings together for the first time our tools, training resources, and career information in one unified digital environment. This marks a step towards a more connected and accessible research ecosystem.

The third was regulatory engagement. The SCTO acted as a trusted facilitator of dialogue between the academic clinical research community and the regulatory authorities. In a landscape where new guidelines, revised ordinances, and evolving ethical frameworks can create significant uncertainty for clinical researchers, the SCTO serves as a constructive bridge, engaging →

with Swissmedic, swissethics, the Federal Office of Public Health, and international bodies. Through roundtables, public consultations, and structured exchanges, the SCTO advocates alongside all academic clinical research stakeholders for a regulatory environment that reduces unnecessary complexity without compromising on safety or quality.

Looking ahead, one principle remains central: Clinical research must be shaped with and for patients. Strengthening patient and public involvement is not only a responsibility, it is a prerequisite for research that is relevant, inclusive, and impactful.

Switzerland's academic clinical research landscape is competitive, internationally visible, and essential to advancing patient care. The SCTO plays a central role in ensuring that this landscape functions efficiently, harmoniously, and to the highest standards.

We are proud of what was achieved in 2025, and look ahead with energy and a clear sense of purpose.

PROF. DR MED. ALESSANDRO CESCHI, M.SC.
PRESIDENT, SWISS CLINICAL TRIAL ORGANISATION



02 / 2025 in numbers



2'164

clinical research projects supported across Switzerland

4'258

specialised services delivered to researchers by the CRC Network

9'374

participants trained in clinical research across 218 courses

247

peer-reviewed publications co-authored by CRC Network members

77%

of publications in top-tier (Q1) scientific journals

352

international multicentre studies supported

40

new or updated tools and resources published for the research community

27'616

downloads of statistical codes

7'788

SCTO tools downloaded from the web

14'847

SCTO website users

3'551

LinkedIn followers

03 / SCTO at a glance

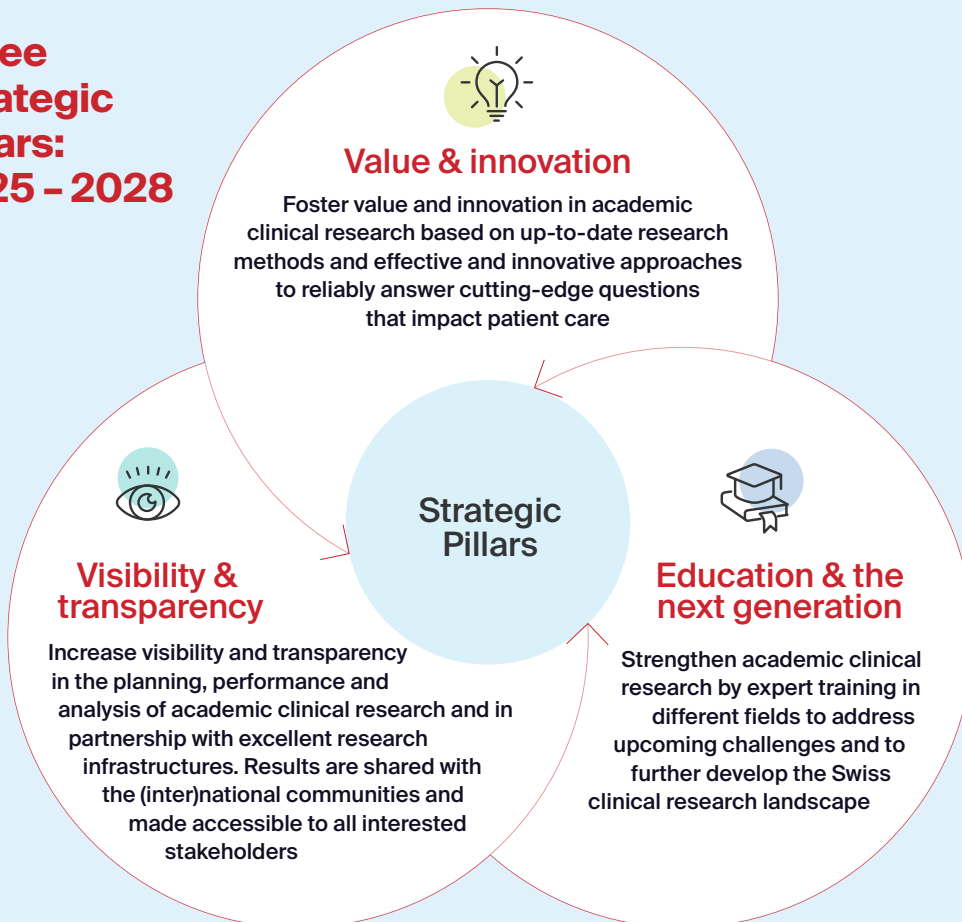
The SCTO is Switzerland's national infrastructure for academic clinical research and the first and largest of its kind in the country.

Since 2017, the SCTO has been recognised as a clinical research infrastructure of national importance under Article 15 of the Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation (RIPA), and is funded by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). The SCTO plays a key role in enabling the evidence-based clinical validation of medical innovations and in bridging the gap between research and real-world patient benefit.

The SCTO coordinates eight expert Platforms that develop tools, standards, and guidance used by clinical researchers nationwide. Its Network includes the Clinical Research Centres (CRCs) of five University Hospitals (Basel, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne and Zurich) and two Cantonal Hospitals (Lugano and St. Gallen). A total of 333 professionals work across the CRC Network (245.7 full-time employees).

As Switzerland's reference academic infrastructure for high-quality, patient-centred clinical research, the SCTO provides comprehensive services and expert local support essential for conducting studies. Each CRC leads one of the SCTO's Platforms, with all CRCs contributing to national collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Three Strategic Pillars: 2025 - 2028



Our Mission

The SCTO provides high-quality integrated support and expertise for academic clinical research, across all medical disciplines, to deliver new and better therapies to society.

04 / Supporting clinical research across Switzerland

At the heart of the SCTO's work are the 7 Clinical Research Centres, each providing hands-on expert support to academic clinical researchers throughout the entire lifecycle of a clinical study: From design and regulatory approval, through conduct and monitoring, to data analysis and publication.

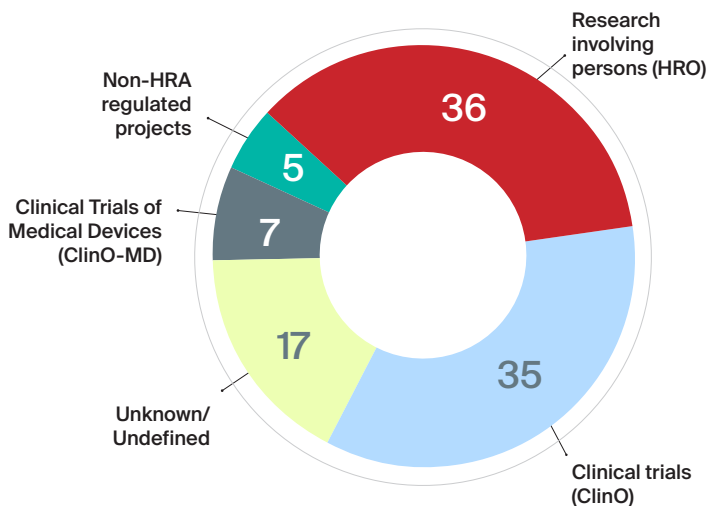
In 2025, the SCTO CRC Network supported 2'164 clinical research projects and delivered 4'258 specialised services. While the number of projects has stabilised after years of steady growth, consulting hours increased by nearly 8%, a clear signal that studies are becoming more complex and demanding greater expertise per project. The Network covers all major therapeutic fields, with the strongest representation in Neurology (11%), Oncology (9%), Paediatrics (8%), Cardiology (7%), and Psychiatry (6%), confirming that SCTO is a genuinely general infrastructure, not a disease-specific niche.

One in three supported projects is a multicentre study; more than half of those involve international collaboration. This reach places Swiss academic research firmly within the European and global landscape and brings that international standard of quality back into the Swiss research community.

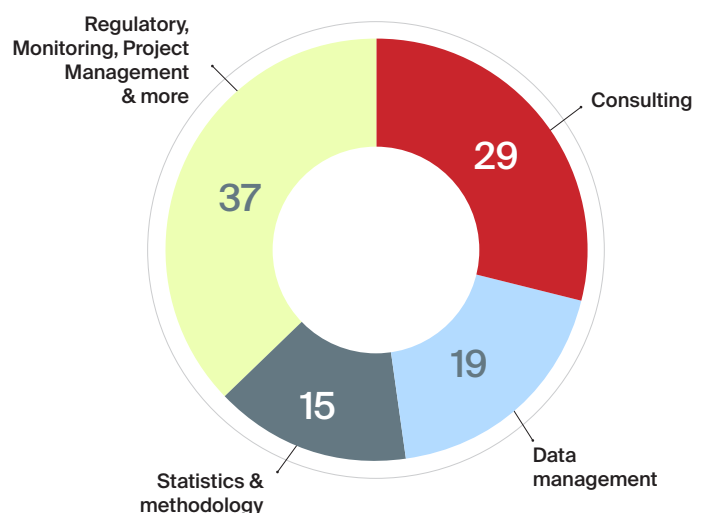
4.1 Strengthening investigator-initiated clinical trials

Investigator-Initiated Clinical Trials (IICTs), studies driven by independent researchers are the cornerstone of evidence-based academic clinical trials and a flagship programme of the SNSF. In 2025, 51 IICT projects received preparatory support from the SCTO CRC Network, showing how central this infrastructure is to Switzerland's academic landscape. CRC's involvement significantly strengthens applications by enhancing methodological robustness, feasibility, and regulatory readiness, and supports researchers in producing the kinds of trials that change clinical practice.

Project types supported (%)



Services delivered (%)



05 /

Building tools and standards for better clinical research

The SCTO Platforms are national expert groups, each bringing together specialists from across the seven CRCs, that develop and maintain the tools, guidelines, and standards used by clinical researchers throughout Switzerland. In 2025, the Platforms delivered 40 new or updated tools, templates, guidelines, statistical packages, IT developments, and training resources.

A major milestone was the launch of the fully redesigned SCTO website in early 2026, developed throughout 2025. For the first time, tools, training resources, and career information

are available in a single, unified digital environment on www.scto.ch. The Easy Guide to Clinical Studies (Easy-GCS), developed by our Project Management Platform in collaboration with other Platforms, saw 74% growth in users, with strong organic demand before any formal marketing campaign.

Innovation was also a hallmark of 2025: The Research-on-Research (RoR) initiative launched five cross-Network projects using evidence-based methods to improve clinical research practices themselves, in areas including reproducibility, patient involvement, risk-based study management, and barriers to conducting trials in Switzerland. Furthermore, two national working groups on Decentralised Clinical Trials and Artificial Intelligence in clinical research were established.



5.1 2025 Platforms highlights

PLATFORM	2025 HIGHLIGHT	WHAT IT MEANS	IMPACT
Auditing	Central repository for audit findings; DCC readiness tool launched	Stronger quality assurance, preparing CRCs for international certification	Increase trust in Swiss clinical research Stronger international reputation
Data Management	CDISC/CDASH eCRF templates; evaluation of next-generation data systems	Standardised data collection enables higher-quality multicentre studies	Better evidence base for medical decisions More trustworthy health data
Education	New SCTO course finder launched; unified training catalogue	Easier access to training nationwide for all clinical research professionals	Stronger national research capacity More competent workforce serving patients
Monitoring	National framework for integrated Central Data Monitoring; GCP E6(R3) tools	Modern, risk-adapted oversight, more efficient and consistent across CRCs	Greater patient safety in trials More efficient use of public research funding
Project Management	AI-powered search in Easy-GCS; Preparation of Easy-GCS HRO extension	Researchers navigate regulatory complexity faster and more reliably	Faster access to innovative treatments Reduced cost of bringing research to practice
Regulatory Affairs	Swissmedic–swissethics Roundtable; RA Watch on ICH GCP E6(R3)	Bridges regulators and researchers; supports consistent implementation	More transparent and accountable research system Patient access to innovative treatment
Safety	Guidance for Category A IMP trials published	Harmonised safety practices, clearer sponsor responsibilities	Greater clarity in safety responsibilities Enhanced participant protection
Statistics & Methodology	Centralised R validation framework; new R packages for clinical research	Reproducible, regulatory-compliant analyses across the whole network	Evidence based results Better-informed clinical and public health decisions

5.2 Data for the future

A new objective for the 2025–2028 period focuses on data harmonisation and interoperability. In 2025, four foundational projects were launched: Implementing CDISC-compliant eCRF templates, standardising terminology with MedDRA coding, developing an eConsent solution for research projects, and evaluating SPHN tools for routine data integration. These form the building blocks towards a FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable) data infrastructure for Swiss clinical research.

06 / Training the next generation

The SCTO and its CRC Network is Switzerland's primary provider of continuous education in clinical research. In 2025, the CRC Network delivered 218 courses and trained 9'374 participants, clinical researchers, study nurses, biostatisticians, data managers, regulatory specialists, and patient advocates, across every career stage.

The training portfolio spans Good Clinical Practice (GCP), research ethics, data management, biostatistics, regulatory affairs, and patient and public involvement. For the first time in 2025, training activities were systematically categorised by theme, providing

a clearer picture of where national capacity is being built. Data management emerged as the largest single category, representing nearly a quarter of all courses, reflecting the growing importance of data quality and standardisation in modern clinical research.

The SCTO Platforms organised 4 Human Research Ordinance (HRO) lunch seminars and 7 Platform lunch sessions, reaching 643 participants, plus 158 participants in online safety training representing a 100% increase year-on-year.

The new SCTO website with its Course Finder, launched in 2026, consolidates all training and course information and opportunities in one place for the first time, making it easier than ever for clinical research professionals to find and access education across Switzerland.



218

courses delivered by
the CRC Network in
2025

9'374

participants trained by the
SCTO CRCs: Researchers,
CRC staff, and patient
representatives

1'183

HRO lunch seminars
materials downloads

17

training sessions delivered
by the SCTO Platforms

1'244

participants trained by the
SCTO Platforms

07 / Shaping the research environment

Clinical research does not happen independently of its regulatory environment: It depends on a regulatory framework that is clear, risk proportionate and aligned with the realities of academic research. The SCTO plays an active role in shaping that framework, working alongside national authorities and research partners to ensure that regulations protect participants without creating unnecessary barriers to important science and researchers.

In 2025, the SCTO participated in 15 dedicated regulatory stakeholder interactions, meetings, roundtables, workshops, and public consultations, including the annual Swissmedic/swissethics/SCTO Roundtable, which addressed emerging challenges such as decentralised trials, electronic consent, and sponsor oversight. The SCTO also supported the implementation of the revised Human Research Act (HRA) ordinances and the new ICH Good Clinical Practice guideline E6(R3), which entered into force in Switzerland in August 2025.

Beyond regulatory engagement, the SCTO recorded 57 national stakeholder interactions in 2025, with Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), State Secretariat for Education Research and Innovation (SERI), Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS), Swiss Cancer Institute, Swiss Biobanking Platform, Swiss Personalized Health Network (SPHN), Swiss Research Network of Clinical Pediatric Hubs (SwissPedNet) and others. These relationships are the connective tissue of Switzerland's clinical research ecosystem, and the SCTO's coordinating role within them ensures that efforts are aligned, duplications avoided, and resources maximised.

Furthermore, in 2025, the SCTO hosted two key events: The SCTO Forum (29 January, 77 participants) on regulatory changes in clinical research, and the SCTO Symposium (3 June, 161 participants), which focused on integrating clinical trials with medical care.

A notable milestone was the SCTO's contribution to the new Service Finder for Clinical Researchers, launched by Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS) within the national Coordination Platform Clinical Research (CPCR) later (in February 2026), providing researchers across Switzerland with a single access point to national research support services.



08 / Switzerland in the world

Academic clinical research is inherently international. The diseases we study do not respect borders, patients are diverse, the methodological standards we apply are set globally, and the trials that change clinical practice are increasingly multinational in design. The SCTO's role includes ensuring that Switzerland is a visible, competitive, and trusted partner in this global landscape.

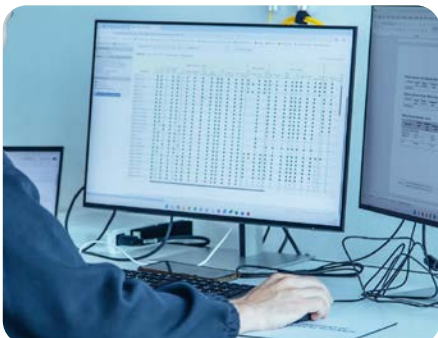
In 2025, the CRC Network supported 352 international multicentre studies, 16.3% of all projects, while a further 19.4% were national multicentre studies. Scientific productivity was strong: 247 peer-reviewed publications were co-authored by CRC Network members, representing a 37% increase on 2024, with an

average impact factor of 8.7 and 77% published in top-quartile (Q1) journals within their clinical specialty.

The SCTO being the Swiss node for European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network (ECRIN) – European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), we facilitate Swiss participation in multinational trials and European research infrastructure projects. In 2025, six ECRIN-supported projects were active under the SCTO's responsibility, and nine new project proposals were prepared. The SCTO also participated in additional structured international engagements, including co-organisation of the forthcoming DACH Symposium for Clinical Trials to be hosted in Austria in 2026.

More than half of the SCTO website users come from outside Switzerland: A signal of growing international interest in the tools, standards, and expertise developed by the SCTO and its Network.

CRC Network Support in 2025



352

international multicentre
studies

419

Swiss multicentre
studies

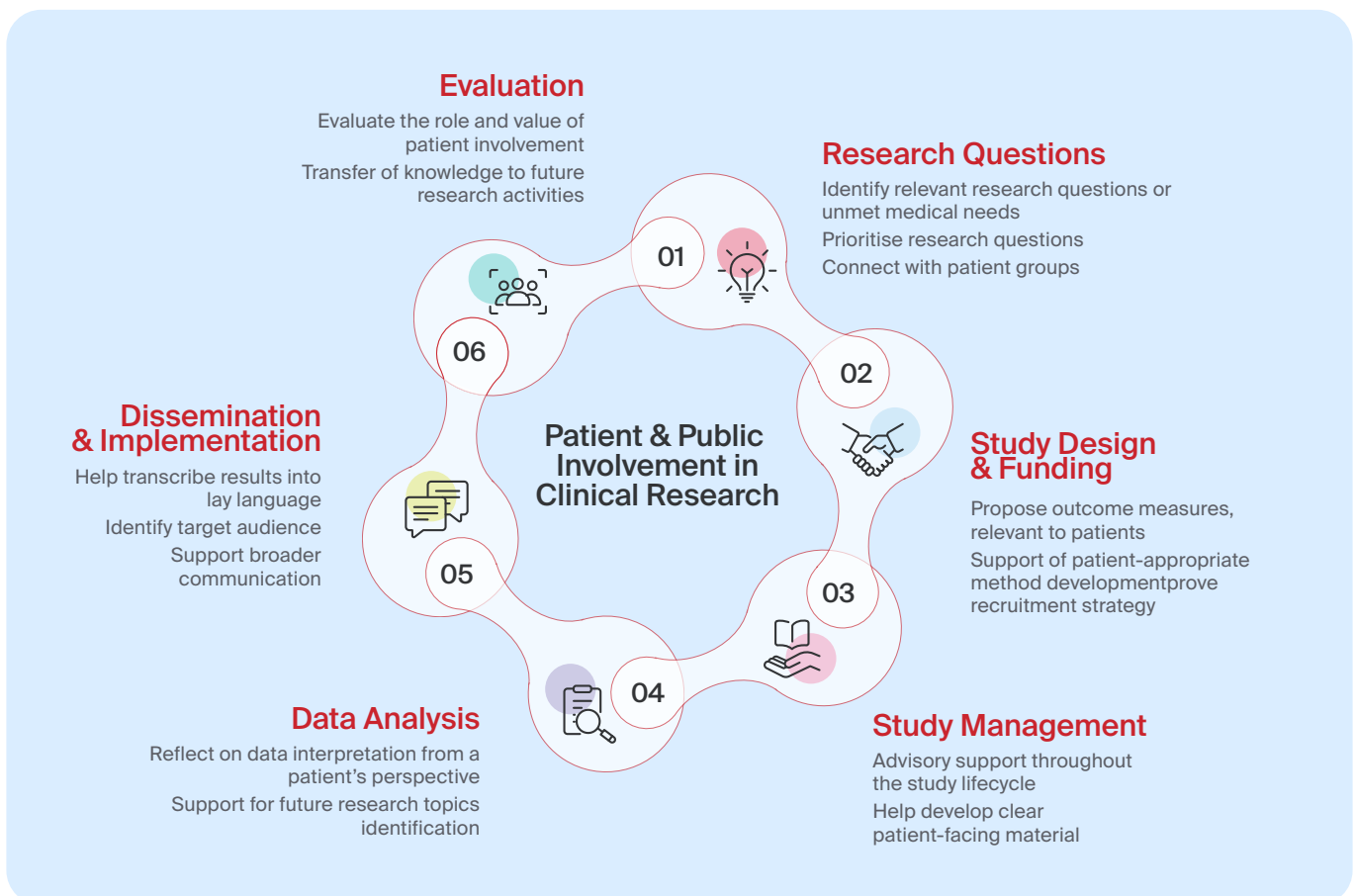
09 / Connecting patients and the public

Clinical research only fulfils its promise when it is designed with and for the people it aims to cure. Patient and public involvement (PPI) means that patients, carers, and members of the public actively contribute to how research is planned, conducted, and shared. The SCTO is committed to embedding this principle throughout the Swiss academic clinical research ecosystem.

In 2025, the SCTO co-led the development of a national PPI Forum and a harmonised national framework for PPI in clinical research,

working in close partnership with the Swiss Cancer Institute under the lead of the national Coordination Platform Clinical Research. This structure is an evolution of the SCTO PPI multistakeholder working group.

Training is also central: The SCTO offers a dedicated online training course for researchers preparing SNSF IICT applications that include PPI components, completed by 35 participants in 2025. The recorded training session was viewed by 129 users. The SCTO's PPI dedicated webpages received nearly 2'000 users and over 5'600 page views, reflecting growing interest across the research community.



10 / Looking ahead: 2026–2028

Building on the strong foundations established in 2025, the SCTO's priorities for the 2026–2028 period are focused on deepening impact, advancing innovation, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

Innovation

The Research-on-Research initiative will expand with new projects, structured dissemination of findings, and integration of results into routine CRC practice. The working groups on Decentralised Clinical Trials and Artificial Intelligence will deliver concrete national guidance and tools, helping to position Switzerland at the forefront of emerging clinical research approaches.

Data interoperability

Implementation of CDISC standards, eCRF standardisation, eConsent solutions, and

alignment with national health data infrastructure (SPHN) will continue, with a clear objective of contributing to responsible reuse of routine healthcare data in clinical research.

International collaboration

Active engagement in ECRIN-ERIC and European consortia will be maintained and deepened, strengthening Swiss participation in multinational trials and reinforcing the SCTO's role in setting international standards.

Visibility and accessibility

The integrated SCTO website, launched in early 2026, will serve as the consolidated central access point for tools, trainings, and CRC services for the entire Swiss clinical research community. Communication and outreach will continue to evolve, strengthening engagement with patients, researchers, policymakers, and the broader public.



11 / Financial overview

The SCTO's 2025 financial position was stable and balanced, reflecting careful financial stewardship and robust planning. The annual financial statements are audited by an independent external trustee.

Federal funding from SNSF and SERI supports the national coordination activities of the SCTO, including the Platforms, the Executive Office, PPI activities, international engagement, and the CRC Network coordination. Local CRC services, delivered directly to researchers, are financed through institutional contributions, cantonal support, and research project budgets.

Financial statement 01 January - 31 December 2025

Operating income		CHF
Public funding		
	State Secretariate for Education, Research and Innovation	4 585 000
	Swiss National Science Foundation	988 000
		5 573 000
Membership fees		140 000
Income network, collaborations and events		74 700
Other funding programs (EU, SERI)		192 600
Total income		5 980 300
Operating costs		
Network initiatives and operations		
	SCTO Platform funds	-2 854 200
	SCTO Platform initiatives, operations, events	-237 600
	Other funding programs (EU, SERI)	-190 300
	SwissPedNet funds	-1 277 600
		-4 559 700
Business operations		
	Personnel costs	-1 156 400
	Executive Office infrastructure and administration	-199 400
	Communication and PR	-26 900
		-1 382 700
Total Costs		-5 942 400



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organisation**

Swiss Clinical Trial Organisation (SCTO)

Effingerstrasse 35 | 3008 Bern | Switzerland | +41 (0)31 307 10 40 | info@scto.ch

www.scto.ch

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