

swiss  
clinical  
trial  
organisation



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

## Table of contents

Editorial: Strengthening clinical research in Switzerland .....	3
2024 in numbers .....	4
Promoting scientific excellence and supporting best practices .....	5
Education and training.....	10
National collaborations.....	11
International collaborations.....	11
Fostering dialogue with national authorities .....	12
Communication and events in clinical research .....	13
Patient and public involvement (PPI) .....	15
Financial statement.....	16
Governance.....	18
About us .....	19
Contact .....	19
Imprint.....	19

## Editorial: Strengthening clinical research in Switzerland

---

Dear reader

The Swiss Clinical Trial Organisation (SCTO) is proud to announce the successful completion of the 2021–2024 funding period, marking another milestone in our mission to support and advance high-quality clinical research in Switzerland. Over the past four years, we worked strategically across our three pillars – collaboration, innovation, and education – to deliver impactful results that benefit both researchers and patients. Our major achievements include strengthening national and international partnerships, developing key regulatory and methodological resources, and expanding patient and public involvement (PPI) initiatives in clinical research.

Looking ahead, we are excited to share that we have secured renewed funding for the 2025–2028 funding period from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). This funding will ensure that our organisation continues to grow. During this next phase, we will build upon our solid foundation while also introducing new strategic objectives that reflect the evolving research landscape. Our commitment to foster a harmonised, sustainable, and innovative environment for Switzerland remains steadfast.

Our SCTO Platforms have been instrumental in our progress, providing essential tools, resources, and expertise that support clinical research professionals. A major highlight has been the development of new resources, for example the Easy Guide to Clinical Studies (Easy GCS) tool, which simplifies compliance with good clinical practice for both researchers and institutions.

Education continues to be a cornerstone of our strategy. The SCTO Education Platform has successfully launched eight new lunch seminar sessions addressing the Human Research Ordinance (HRO), which have received highly positive feedback from participants. These sessions have significantly enhanced the knowledge and competencies of clinical research professionals, ensuring adherence to the highest ethical and regulatory standards.

As we enter into this new funding period, we reaffirm our commitment to innovation, collaboration, and excellence. With renewed support, we will continue to develop pioneering solutions and empower the clinical research community, ultimately resulting in new and better therapies for patients. We invite you to explore the SCTO's 2024 annual report to learn more about our key milestones and discover what the future holds for academic clinical research in Switzerland.

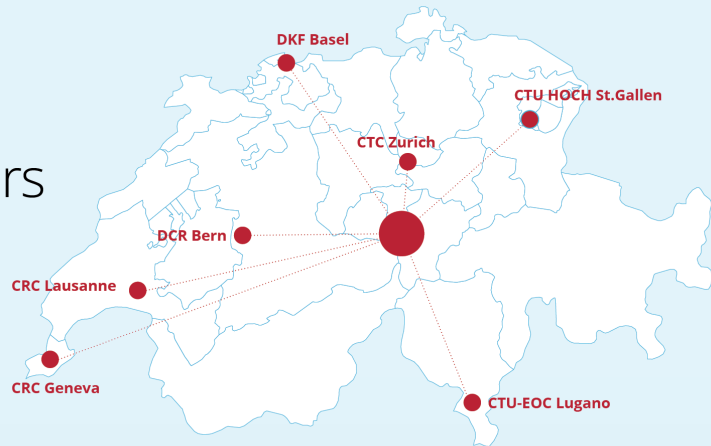
Yours sincerely



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ch. Pauli-Magnus" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Prof. Christiane Pauli-Magnus  
President

## 2024 Highlights The year in numbers



### SCTO Clinical Trial Unit (CTU) Network

**7** Clinical Trial Units within the Network

**10,135**  
participants trained

**2,152**  
clinical research projects supported

**232**  
trainings provided

**5**  
(out of 6) of awarded IICT projects were supported by the SCTO CTU Network

**4,225**  
services delivered to clinical researchers

**311**  
people employed by the CTU Network, 238.3 full-time equivalents

### SCTO Platforms tools and resources

**8,187**  
(+57%)  
tools downloads on the SCTO Tools & Resources website

**12**  
(+9%)  
new tools and publications on the SCTO Tools and Resources website

**21**  
projects finalised to develop tools, templates, publications and guidance documents

**16,185**  
(+43%)  
statistical codes downloads on Github website

**9**  
trainings provided

**1,810**  
participants trained

### Websites outreach

**19,474**  
(+36%)  
SCTO Tools & Resources website users (www.sctoplatforms.ch)

**14,909**  
(+30%)  
SCTO website users (www.scto.ch)

# Promoting scientific excellence and supporting best practices

## Highlights 2024

- The SCTO CTU Network provided clinical researchers extensive support with 2,152 research projects and provided 4,225 services.
- 46 applications to the SNSF's Investigator Initiated Clinical Trials (IICT) programme were supported by the SCTO CTU Network.
- 5 (out of 6) projects awarded funding from the IICT 2023 call were supported by the SCTO CTU Network.
- 21 projects were completed by the SCTO Platforms that developed tools, templates, publications, and guidance documents.
- 12 new tools and publications were added to the SCTO's Tools & Resources website.

## Projects supported and services provided by the SCTO's Clinical Trial Units (CTUs)

The SCTO CTU Network plays a pivotal role in fostering scientific excellence and enhancing the quality of academic clinical research in Switzerland. Supporting clinical research projects remains a cornerstone of the SCTO CTU Network, which offers a broad range of services to its researchers locally. In 2024, the SCTO CTU Network provided researchers extensive support with 2,152 clinical research projects and provided 4,225 services. The most common services provided by the CTUs were consulting (31%) and data management (21%).

For high-quality applications to its Investigator Initiated Clinical Trials (IICT) programme, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) strongly recommends researchers to involve CTUs when preparing their IICT grant applications and implementing IICT projects. In 2024, the SCTO CTU Network supported 46 projects that were submitted for the SNSF's IICT call. Six projects from the 2023 SNSF call were awarded grants in 2024, five of which were supported by an SCTO CTU.

In 2024, the SCTO started its Research on Research (RoR) initiative for the 2025–2028 funding period. The aim of this initiative is to establish evidence-based approaches to clinical research infrastructures and methodologies in Switzerland. 14 proposals were submitted in response to an internal call. Proposals were reviewed by external experts in the field and by the Swiss clinical Trials Empirical Assessment & Methods (STEAM) Scientific Committee, which includes representatives from all SCTO CTUs. Five projects were selected in 2024 and will be launched in 2025.

## SCTO Platforms' tools and resources

SCTO Platforms, comprising experts from the seven SCTO CTUs, develop national standards and best practices in clinical research as well as publicly accessible, harmonised tools via the SCTO Platforms' Tools & Resources website. In 2024, SCTO Platforms completed 21 projects that developed tools, templates, publications, and guidance documents. Twelve new tools and publications were published on the SCTO Platforms' Tools & Resources website in 2024.

## SCTO Platforms' key projects in 2024

One of the standout achievements in 2024 was the completion of the [Easy Guide to Clinical Studies \(Easy GCS\)](#). Easy GCS is an interactive and user-friendly tool designed to assist research professionals in planning and conducting clinical studies that fully comply with regulations. In 2024, this valuable resource was expanded to cover the field of statistics, further enhancing its utility. This tool was developed by the [Project Management Platform](#) in collaboration with all SCTO Platforms and with contributions from the [Swiss Biobanking Platform \(SBP\)](#).

The [Safety Platform](#) updated various [safety reporting forms](#) for clinical research projects, ensuring alignment with the revised Clinical Trials Ordinance (ClinO) that went into effect on 1 November 2024. In addition, the [Regulatory Affairs Platform](#) published [Regulatory Affairs Watch 9](#), which explores the evolving landscape of decentralised and complex clinical trials and provides key insights into the future of clinical research.

The [Data Management Platform](#) made significant strides by developing a web-based, interactive

dashboard using R Shiny, which empowers researchers to manage and visualise clinical trial data more effectively. The [Auditing Platform](#) thoroughly updated the [Guidelines for Good Operational Practice \(GGOP\)](#) to keep them relevant and effective. The updated version will be published in 2025.

The [Statistics & Methodology Platform](#) developed a software validation process, a collaborative effort to validate statistical software such as R and its packages within the SCTO Network. The [Monitoring Platform](#) developed 19 new templates to support both sponsors and sites in monitoring clinical trial conduct and compliance, thus ensuring that research projects meet the highest standards.

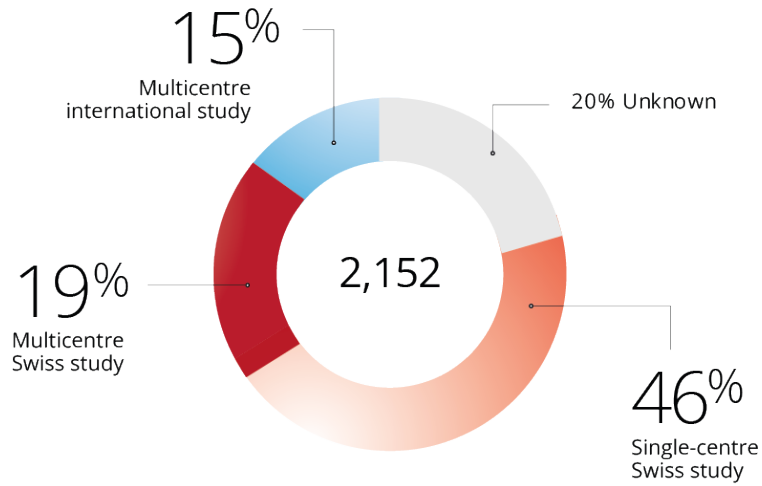
The [Safety Platform](#) collaborated with the [Data Management Platform](#) to integrate electronic serious adverse event (SAE) reporting forms into clinical data management systems (CDMS), thus enhancing reporting accuracy and standardisation.

The impact of the [SCTO Platforms' Tools & Resources website](#) is evident in its growing use. In 2024, it attracted 19,474 users, a 36% increase compared to the previous year. At the same time, page views surged by 174% to 45,181. Users downloaded 8,187 tools and resources in total.

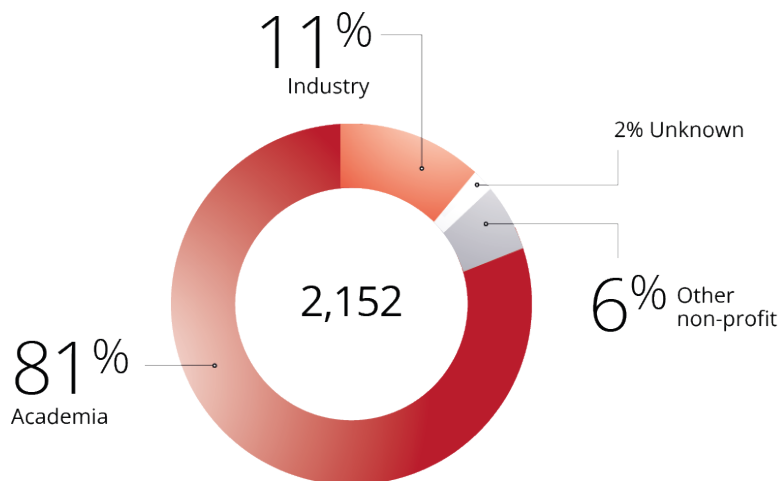
<b>Services provided to projects by SCTO CTUs in 2024</b>	<b>4225</b>
Consulting	31%
Data management	21%
Statistics / methodology	15%
Regulatory affairs	10%
Monitoring	8%
Project management / study coordination	5%
Coordinator / study nurse / physician	5%
Other services	5%

## Main characteristics of clinical research projects supported by SCTO CTUs

### Design of projects

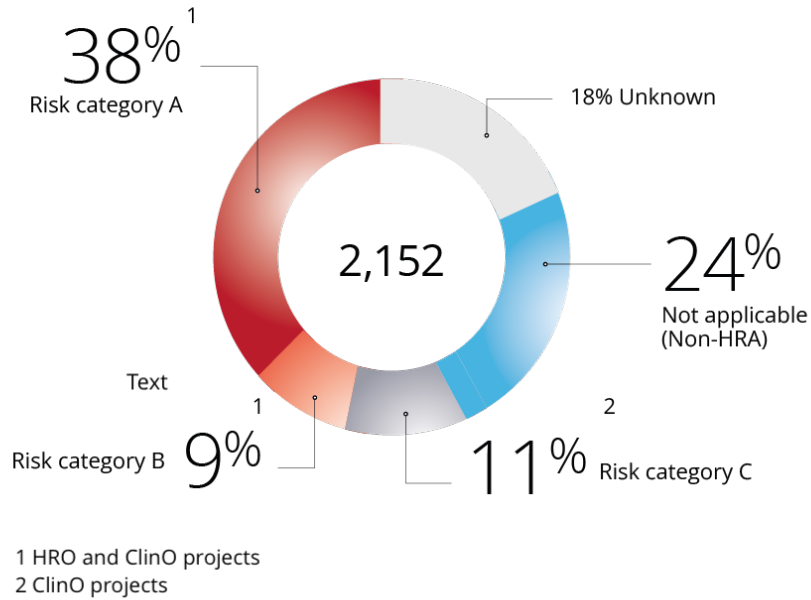


### Sponsor of projects

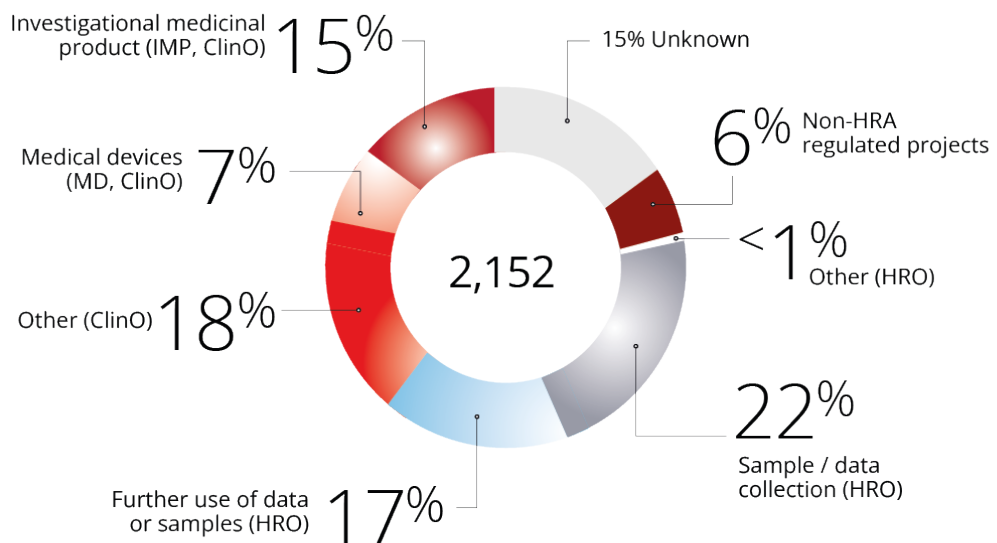


## Main characteristics of clinical research projects supported by SCTO CTUs

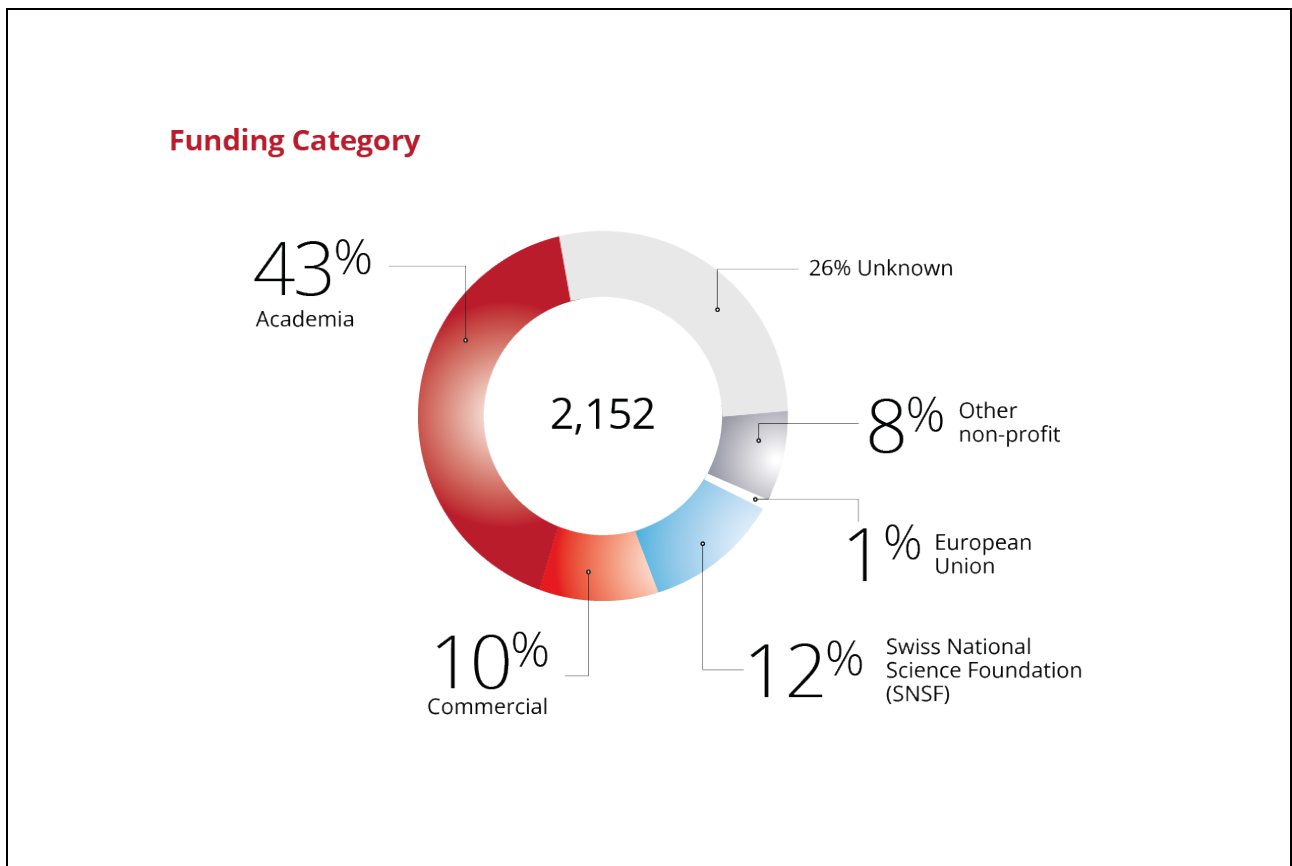
### Risk categories of supported projects



### Type of projects supported



## Main characteristics of supported clinical research projects by SCTO CTUs



# Education and training

## Highlights 2024

- The SCTO CTU Network trained 10,135 participants across Switzerland in the 232 courses it offered.
- The Education Platform held 8 new lunch sessions on “Facts and pitfalls of observational studies: How to plan and conduct HRO projects”, which were attended by 1,343 participants.
- The Regulatory Affairs and Education Platforms developed and hosted the online seminar “Human Research Act (HRA) ordinances: What has changed?”, which attracted 467 participants.

## SCTO CTU Network: Education and training

Training is essential in clinical research to ensure protocol adherence, regulatory compliance, and data reliability. In 2024, the SCTO CTU Network trained 10,135 participants across Switzerland in the 232 courses it offered.

In 2024, selected members of the SCTO CTU Network participated in training on the Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS) and established processes and a task force to support the CTU Network with CTIS. CTIS facilitates information exchange between sponsors, EU member states, European Economic Area (EEA) countries, and the European Commission. All ongoing EU trials must comply with the Clinical Trials Regulation (CTR) and be submitted into CTIS by 30 January 2025. The Clinical Research Centre in Lausanne and the Department of Clinical Research in Basel have already transitioned their trials to CTIS and continue to support other institutions with their transitions.

## SCTO Platforms: Education and training

A core mission of SCTO Platforms is to promote the continuous education of clinical researchers and research professionals. In 2024, SCTO Platforms introduced new training formats to enhance learning opportunities. The Education Platform hosted eight lunch sessions on “Facts and pitfalls of observational studies: How to plan and conduct HRO projects”, which were attended by an impressive 1,343 participants. In addition, the Regulatory Affairs Platform collaborated with the Education Platform to offer the online seminar “Human Research Act (HRA) ordinances: What has changed?”, which attracted 467 participants from both academia and industry.

## CR Careers website: New strategy

In 2024, the SCTO collaborated with unimedsuisse and the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS) to develop a plan to integrate the [Clinical Research Careers website](#) into the SCTO’s new website – which is scheduled to be launched in 2025 – to improve visibility and user engagement.

<b>Training provided by SCTO CTUs in 2024</b>	<b>Courses: 232</b>	<b>Participants: 10,135</b>
Research ethics and GCP (investigator level)	14%	26%
Research ethics and GCP (sponsor-investigator level)	7%	4%
GCP refresher, continuing GCP education	5%	10%
Postgraduate (CAS, DAS, MSc/MAS, PhD)	10%	10%
Undergraduate (e.g. MD/MSc)	8%	16%
PPI courses	3%	1%
Patient courses	<1%	0.3%
Other expert courses (such as courses on statistics and methodology, safety management, data management, REDCap, project management, and scientific writing)	52%	32%

*Note:* Number of courses provided by SCTO CTUs and number of participants per course type

## National collaborations

---

### Highlights 2024

- The SCTO participated in 45 meetings, exchanges, and working groups with key national stakeholders.
- SwissPedNet supported a total of 457 projects and trials. Of these, 217 received more than one day of service, with 15% (32 projects) also benefiting from support provided by SCTO CTUs.
- 29 young paediatric researchers attended SwissPedNet's NextGen Research Day in Sursee.

### Collaboration with national stakeholders

The SCTO has continued its ongoing dialogue and collaboration with key stakeholders in Switzerland. In 2024, the SCTO Executive Office, the SCTO CTU Network, and SCTO Platforms participated in 45 meetings, exchanges, and working groups with the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), the Coordination Platform Clinical Research (CPCR), the Swiss Personalized Health Network (SPHN), the Swiss Biobanking Platform (SBP), the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS), unimesuisse, swissethics, Swissmedic, and others, all with the aim of fostering research excellence and strengthening coordination within clinical research.

The SCTO actively contributes to the National Open Research Data (ORD) Strategy by

participating in discussions and collaborations within its health and life sciences cluster.

### Collaboration with SwissPedNet

The SCTO collaborates closely with the [Swiss Research Network of Clinical Pediatric Hubs \(SwissPedNet\)](#) and hosts its coordinator at the SCTO's Executive Office in Bern. SwissPedNet's hubs support paediatric clinical trials. In 2024, SwissPedNet assisted 457 projects and trials. Of these, 217 received more substantial support. In 15% of these projects (32), SCTO CTUs provided complementary services.

The NextGen Research Day, an event for young researchers in paediatrics, took place in Sursee on 5 June 2024. The SCTO assisted SwissPedNet in organising the event, which was attended by 29 young Swiss paediatric researchers.

## International collaborations

---

### Highlights 2024

- As the Swiss ECRIN-ERIC node, the SCTO Network successfully supported a total of 11 projects.
- The SCTO Executive Office was part of the programme committee for the 2024 D|A|CH Symposium für klinische Prüfungen in Berlin.

### Strengthening global impact

The SCTO represents Switzerland in the [European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network \(ECRIN\)](#). As ECRIN's Swiss node, the SCTO plays a key role in supporting and promoting multinational trials.

In 2024, the SCTO CTU Network participated in a total of 11 projects as the ECRIN-ERIC node, including TREOCAPA, EU-RESPONSE, LIVERATION, and the two recently added (in 2024) AUSTRAL and MORPHEUS projects. The

supported projects cover a range of therapeutic areas, including oncology, infectious diseases, and paediatrics, and they address critical medical and public health challenges. Across ECRIN's broader portfolio in Europe, 70 clinical trials and 50 infrastructure projects are currently being supported. Additionally, in its role as the Swiss ECRIN-ERIC node, the SCTO actively contributed to the ECRIN's Network Committee's strategy.

## D|A|CH Symposium

The SCTO Executive Office was part of the programme committee for the D|A|CH Symposium für klinische Prüfungen 2024 in Berlin, thus

furthering collaboration between Switzerland, Germany, and Austria. A delegation from the SCTO Executive Office attended the engaging event, which brought together over 600 participants from the three countries.

## Fostering dialogue with national authorities

---

### Highlights 2024

- The SCTO contributed to the Federal Office of Public Health's public consultations on the Transplantation Act and Therapeutic Products Act.
- The Regulatory Affairs Platform organised a roundtable with Swissmedic, swissethics, the SCTO CTU Network, and SCTO Platforms on the revised ClinO and recent modifications to HRA ordinances.

### Strengthening dialogue with authorities

Engaging in meaningful dialogue with national authorities remains a key priority for the SCTO. Over the past year, the SCTO actively contributed to important regulatory discussions. For example, the SCTO participated in two public consultations held by the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), providing input on the Transplantation Act and on the partial revision of the Therapeutic Products Act.

On 7 October 2024, a roundtable discussion took place with swissethics, Swissmedic, the SCTO CTU Network, and the SCTO Platforms regarding the

implementation of the revised Clinical Trials Ordinance (ClinO), and the impact of recent modifications to Human Research Act (HRA) ordinances.

By fostering open communication with national authorities, the SCTO continues to contribute to a well-regulated and robust clinical research environment.

## Communication and events in clinical research

### Highlights 2024

- The SCTO Forum 2024 addressed the impact of the Human Research Act’s revised ordinances and was attended by nearly 80 participants.
- The SCTO Symposium 2024 focused on data-driven clinical research in Switzerland and attracted over 170 participants.
- The SCTO website saw a 30% increase in traffic with 14,090 users.

### Outreach through events

In 2024, the SCTO strengthened its clinical research community outreach by organising two events that fostered dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaboration. The SCTO Forum 2024, held on 31 January in Bern, focused on the topic “Navigating the changing clinical research environment: How the revision of the Human Research Act’s Ordinances will affect clinical Research”. Nearly 80 participants took part in this engaging discussion.

The SCTO Symposium 2024, which took place on 11 June in Lausanne and was open to the public, was co-organised with the [Clinical Research Centre \(CRC\) Lausanne](#). It focused on data-driven clinical research in Switzerland and attracted over 170 participants. Experts from across the country shared their insights into current and future trends in clinical research data management.

### Outreach through the SCTO’s website and LinkedIn

In 2024, the SCTO made significant progress in enhancing its public outreach through various channels. Notably, the SCTO’s main website (scto.ch) saw a 30% increase in user traffic, with 14,090 users engaging with our content. On LinkedIn, the SCTO’s audience grew by over 800 followers (48% increase), reaching a total of 2,698 followers.

### New communication strategy

In 2024, the SCTO Executive Office’s communication team developed a new strategy to establish a more integrated and unified approach to communication, which is scheduled to be launched in 2025.



SCTO Symposium 2024, Lausanne, 11 June 2024

## Outreach through communication channels in 2024

Our audiences	
Newsletter subscribers	2,628 (-6%)
LinkedIn followers	2,698 (+48%)
Website users	
scto.ch	14,090 (+30%)
sctoplatforms.ch	19,474 (+36%)
cr-careers.ch	2,098 (-29%)

*Note:* Percentages represent the increase/decrease relative to the corresponding values in 2023.

## Patient and public involvement (PPI)

### Highlights 2024

- The SCTO's online PPI course for SNSF IICT grant applicants was held for the third time and attracted 45 participants.
- The SCTO co-organised the first Swiss PPIE Symposium, which was attended by over 200 participants.

### PPI courses and events

In 2024, the SCTO continued to promote patient and public involvement (PPI) in clinical research and healthcare.

In March, the SCTO held an online course for clinical research professionals applying for funding through the Swiss National Science Foundation's (SNSF) Investigator Initiated Clinical Trials (IICT) programme. Applicants are required to actively involve patients and the public in their projects. The course, entitled "How to successfully address the PPI requirements", provided participants with practical guidance on integrating meaningful patient engagement into their projects. The course attracted 45 participants.

In May, the SCTO contributed to the second patient training course organised by Switzerland's European Patients' Academy on Therapeutic Innovation (EUPATI CH). This course introduced participants to the SCTO's PPI initiatives and offered valuable insights into patient engagement strategies for Switzerland.

To further increase awareness of PPI, the SCTO also presented its activities to participants of the Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Regulatory Affairs Pharma at the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH) in Biel in July. Through these efforts, the SCTO continued to promote PPI as an integral part of clinical research.

The SCTO co-organised the inaugural [Swiss PPIE Symposium](#), which took place on 16 November and successfully brought together over 200 participants. The Symposium was a collaborative effort between the BFH, the Patient Lab, the Swiss Group for Clinical Cancer Research (SAKK), the European Patients' Academy on Therapeutic Innovation Switzerland (EUPATI CH), the Stiftung Lindenhof Bern (SLB) foundation, Ente Ospedaliero Cantonale (EOC), Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV), and the SCTO. The event underscored the importance of integrating PPI throughout the entire healthcare chain, promoting sustainable partnerships, and ensuring patient representation in decision-making processes.



Swiss PPIE Symposium, Bern Wankdorf, 16 November 2024

## Financial statement

The SCTO remains on a firm financial footing. Its balanced financial result for 2024 is due to responsible management as well as accurate financial planning and effective financial controls.

The SCTO closed out its 2024 financial year with a slight profit. This positive result was due to reduced personnel costs and administrative adjustments.

The SCTO plans to invest these savings in various efficiency initiatives, in optimising and digitalising processes, and in revising its communication strategy. BDO AG audited the SCTO's 2024 financial statement.

<b>Expenses 2024</b>	<b>CHF</b>
<b>Personnel expenses</b>	
Salaries	826K
Social charges	137K
Remaining personnel expenses	30K
<b>Total</b>	<b>993K</b>
<b>Clinical operations</b>	
Platforms' management and liaison costs	120K
Funding for network (CTU Network and SwissPedNet hubs)	4,100K
Other	232K
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,452K</b>
<b>Business operations</b>	
Administration charges	83K
Fiduciary charges	39K
IT	61K
<b>Total</b>	<b>183K</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Websites	22K
Translation and editing services	3K
Miscellaneous	15K
<b>Total</b>	<b>40K</b>

<b>Patient and public involvement</b>	
Organisational costs	32K
<b>Total</b>	<b>32K</b>
<b>Events</b>	
Symposium / forum / other	28K
<b>Total</b>	<b>28K</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>5,728K</b>
<b>Income 2024</b>	<b>CHF</b>
Swiss National Science Foundation	1,000K
State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation	4,326K
SCTO Association	140K
Refund EU projects	205K
Other (events, secuTrial, advisory services)	86K
<b>Total income</b>	<b>5,757K</b>
<b>Status of association assets on 31 December 2024</b>	<b>265K</b>

## Governance

---

In 2024, the Swiss Clinical Trial Organisation received a positive evaluation from the Swiss Science Council (SSC), reaffirming the SCTO's key role as a research infrastructure of national importance in the field of academic clinical research. The SCC's report highlighted the SCTO's central role in optimising and harmonising processes, best practices, and methodologies in clinical research through its Platforms and support for CTUs.

As a result of this positive evaluation, the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) have renewed their funding support for the SCTO for the 2025–2028 funding period. This continued commitment underscores the importance of harmonising and strengthening Switzerland's academic clinical research landscape.

In 2024, the SCTO began preparing strategic objectives for the upcoming funding period. These objectives focus on several key initiatives:

- Supporting SCTO Platforms and the SCTO Clinical Trial Unit (CTU) Network in continuously adapting to the evolving needs of the clinical research landscape.
- Supporting the paediatric research infrastructure through SwissPedNet.

- Expanding patient and public involvement (PPI).
- Fostering international collaboration, particularly as the European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network (ECRIN) European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) node for Switzerland.
- Strengthening national collaborations with other research organisations.

At the governance level, the following changes were made within the SCTO Steering Board in 2024:

- Prof. Claudio Bassetti from Bern University Hospital (Inselspital) was elected as a new member to the SCTO Steering Board, with Dr Danielle Krebs remaining as his deputy.
- Prof. Primo Schär from the Collège des Doyens stepped down from the Steering Board as of 31 July 2024. His replacement will be elected in 2025.

Looking ahead, the SCTO is excited about its new projects and initiatives planned for the upcoming funding period and remains committed to advancing clinical research in Switzerland.

## About us

---

### New and better therapies thanks to clinical research.

The Swiss Clinical Trial Organisation (SCTO) is the first and largest academic clinical research infrastructure in Switzerland. The SCTO enables **the evidence-based, clinical validation of medical innovation and the transfer of value between research** (as the source of innovation) **and patients/the public** (as recipients).

Since 2017, the SCTO has been a clinical research infrastructure of national importance, funded by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

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

The SCTO Executive Office (EO) liaises with and between SCTO Platforms as well as with other Swiss and European partners. In addition to proposing and coordinating the SCTO's strategy, projects, and activities, the EO oversees the SCTO's financial and operational management and its governance.

More information about the SCTO:

- [Members and boards](#)
- [Executive Office](#)
- [Vision and mission](#)

## Contact

---

Do you have any questions or feedback?  
Contact us at [info@scto.ch](mailto:info@scto.ch).

Follow us on:



## Imprint

---

Swiss Clinical Trial Organisation (SCTO)  
Effingerstrasse 35  
3008 Bern  
+41 (0)31 307 10 40  
[info@scto.ch](mailto:info@scto.ch)  
[www.scto.ch](http://www.scto.ch)

Authors and editors: SCTO Executive Office  
© Swiss Clinical Trial Organisation, Bern, May 2025