



The BFBI Roadmap

2026-2030

FE+MALE
THINK TANK

Turning research into action

Prepared by :
The FE+MALE Think Tank Team

Date:
May, 2026

The BFBI Roadmap

2026-2030 | Report Y26

A Path to Sustainability:
Unlock Female Entrepreneurship in Switzerland



BFBI - Beat Funding Bias Initiative
"Turning research into action"

With the Support of:



ERNST GÖHNER STIFTUNG

**WISSENSCHAFT.
BEWEGEN**
GEBERT RUF STIFTUNG

Contents

1. Message from Leadership

- 1.1 Vision
- 1.2 Launching the Roadmap
- 1.3 Measurable Impact

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Strategic Challenge
- 2.2 A Systemic Shift: From Awareness to Execution

3. The Roadmap 2026 - 2030 at a glance

- 3.1 From mindset to capital to scale
- 3.2 Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

4. System diagnosis

- 4.1 Funding Bias as Capital Allocation Failure
- 4.2 Pipeline Formation and Founder Continuity as Structural Constraints
- 4.3 The Great Wealth Transfer as a Structural Opportunity
- 4.4 From System Failure to Strategic Opportunity

5. Boosting inclusive entrepreneurship

- 5.1 A word from Patricia M. Montesinos, President of FE+MALE Think Tank
- 5.2 Building the foundations
- 5.3 FE+MALE Think Tank - The Value Proposition
- 5.4 The Inclusive Way Initiative (TIWI) and Transition to the Roadmap

6. The Roadmap development process

- 6.1 The Initiatives - Summary
- 6.2 Early Entrepreneurship and Bias Education
- 6.3 The Funding Bridge
- 6.4 Helvetia2030

7. Impact, research, and measurement framework

8. Funding and Partnership Opportunity

- 8.1 The Values
- 6.2 Strategic Engagement Framework
- 6.3 Impact & Governance

9. Acknowledgement

10. Annex - How to get involved?

11. Our Shared Commitment

12. Letter of support

1. Message from Leadership

1.1 The Vision

"Where a founder's access to capital depends on the strength of her idea, not the room she was born into."



Imagine a Switzerland where the most talented people build the next generation of breakthrough companies, not just the best-connected ones.

Where every child grows up believing that building something extraordinary is within reach. Where a founder's access to capital depends on the strength of her idea, not the room she was born into.

We want gender-diverse entrepreneurs to contribute fully to Switzerland's economic growth - as founders, innovators, investors, leaders, and drivers of a competitive, socially cohesive, and resilient economy. This is both a social aspiration and a measurable economic opportunity - not a distant one. It is an achievable outcome and when it becomes reality, the returns extend far beyond 2030.

Every funded founder who wouldn't otherwise have made it through creates jobs, builds markets, and inspires the next generation. The founders of 2040 and 2050 are in schools today. What they are shown is possible shapes of what they attempt.

Words from Supporters of the Movement

"We all need to take different perspectives into account. The question is how we can equip students with the right skills to keep pace with this change."

Dr. Carole Ackermann

Chairwoman EHL Group and President of Board of Trustees

"Greater gender diversity is not only a social priority; it is a key driver of creativity, resilience, and long-term competitiveness in Switzerland and globally."

Raphaël Brunschwig

Director, Locarno Film Festival



Patricia M. Montesinos
President | FE+MALE Think Tank

1.2 Launching the Roadmap

Switzerland has everything it needs to be the world's most inclusive innovation economy, and the good news is that we are already on our way. Entrepreneurial activity is growing, diverse founding teams are emerging, and the ecosystem is more aware than ever that talent is evenly distributed, even if opportunity is not. The question now is not whether change is possible. It is how quickly and how boldly we move.

At the heart of this roadmap is a straightforward conviction: when gender-diverse entrepreneurs participate fully in entrepreneurship and innovation, economies grow stronger, societies become more cohesive, and businesses become more resilient. This is not a values statement alone; it is an evidence-based economic argument. Diverse founders build different companies, serve different markets, and make different decisions. Their full participation makes the system better for everyone. Switzerland's long-term competitiveness depends on it. Since 2022, FE+MALE Think Tank has been building solutions together with entrepreneurs, investors, academics, government bodies, and ecosystem builders who share this conviction.

"Our model is co-creation: we bring diverse stakeholders to the table, translate research into actionable frameworks, and find the right partners to own and scale implementation."

1.3 Measurable Impact

The Roadmap 2026–2030 is where that energy becomes a measurable impact.

Three complementary initiatives address the system at its core.

- 01 Building entrepreneurial confidence at the earliest stage
- 02 Connecting high-potential female founders with investors and sponsors
- 03 Supporting ventures in regions and sectors that mainstream funding overlooks

For these initiatives, we will develop dedicated strategic papers that set out the evidence base, implementation model, and partnership opportunities. To launch and sustain these initiatives, we are actively seeking funding and institutional support. The timing could not be better. Capital ownership is shifting to a new generation that brings fresh expectations of fairness, transparency, and impact. The window to reshape how that capital flows is open now, and more people than ever are ready to walk through it together. When we get this right - and we will - the returns are felt across the whole economy: more jobs, stronger regions, more resilient innovation, and a generation that grows up knowing that building something extraordinary is within reach. FE+MALE Think Tank exists to make that future real.

The Roadmap 2026–2030 is how we do it at scale. We look forward to building it with you. Additional information and next steps can be found in the annex. Enjoy reading.

Best Regards,

Patricia M. Montesinos

President | FE+MALE Think Tank

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The Strategic Challenge

Switzerland is one of the world's most advanced innovation ecosystems, supported by strong research institutions, deep capital markets, and a highly educated workforce. Yet a structural inefficiency persists: entrepreneurial potential and access to capital remain unevenly distributed.

Despite women representing a significant share of the educated workforce and early-stage entrepreneurial activity, they remain underrepresented in funded startups.

In 2024, women represented only 14.1% of startup founders in Switzerland, while approximately 25% of funded startups included at least one female-led venture.

(EY Startup Barometer Switzerland 2025, p.31; p.4)

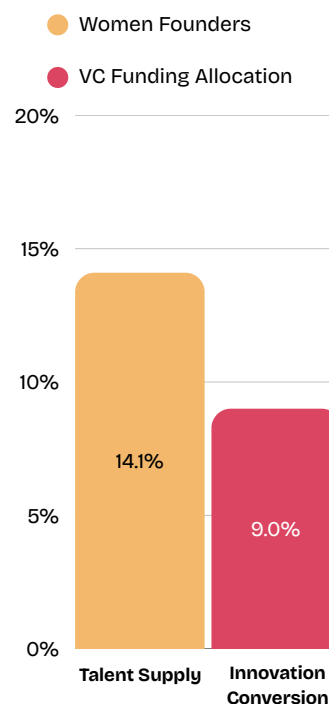
At the same time, **venture capital investment reached CHF 2.95 billion** (+23.9% year-on-year), yet **most of this capital continues to flow to male-only teams.**

- Education and early exposure
- Access to networks and trust
- Investment decision-making processes

Differences in talent or ambition cannot explain this funding imbalance. Evidence shows that structural and institutional factors shape entrepreneurial outcomes. Gender disparities emerge early and accumulate across the entrepreneurial lifecycle.

As a result, by the time capital is allocated, the pipeline of female-led ventures has already narrowed, and capital markets operate on an uneven, distorted pool of inputs.

CHF 2.95B > Total VC Market
(+23.9% YoY)



2.2 A Systemic Shift: From Awareness to Execution

Funding bias should be understood not as an isolated issue at the point of investment, but as a systemic capital allocation failure. It leads to the mispricing of risk, underinvestment in high-potential ventures, and inefficient use of available capital, ultimately weakening national innovation outcomes and economic performance.

At the same time, the system is entering a period of transformation. The Great Wealth Transfer is shifting a growing share of capital to women and younger generations, creating a unique opportunity to improve how capital is allocated. However, without changes to how investment decisions are made and who participates in them, new capital risks will flow through existing frameworks, reinforcing current inefficiencies rather than correcting them.

Switzerland's challenge is therefore not the creation of innovation, but the conversion of innovation: how to translate its full talent base into funded, scalable, and commercial ventures.

To address this, **the FE+MALE Think Tank Roadmap 2026–2030 moves from awareness to execution** through three targeted, complementary initiatives:



Education Initiative

Builds entrepreneurial confidence and reduces bias early by equipping children with practical skills, role models, and inclusive mindsets.



Funding Bridge

Connects high-potential female founders with sponsors and investors to improve funding readiness and increase access to capital.



Helvetia2030

Activates collective support to identify and scale high-impact ventures in underserved regions, with a focus on female-led and diverse teams.

Together, **these initiatives address the core system constraints — pipeline formation, access to networks and trust, and capital allocation** — through a lean, partnership-based model that leverages existing ecosystem actors. Ultimately, the roadmap positions gender equality not only as a social objective but as a strategic lever for economic performance, capital efficiency, and sustainable growth.

3. The Roadmap 2026 - 2030 at a glance

3.1 From mindset to capital to scale

Approach & Initiatives

Strategic approach

System-level interventions across the lifecycle
Pipeline → Capital → Scaling

Model

Lean partner-based
Pilot → Evidence → Scale

Education initiative

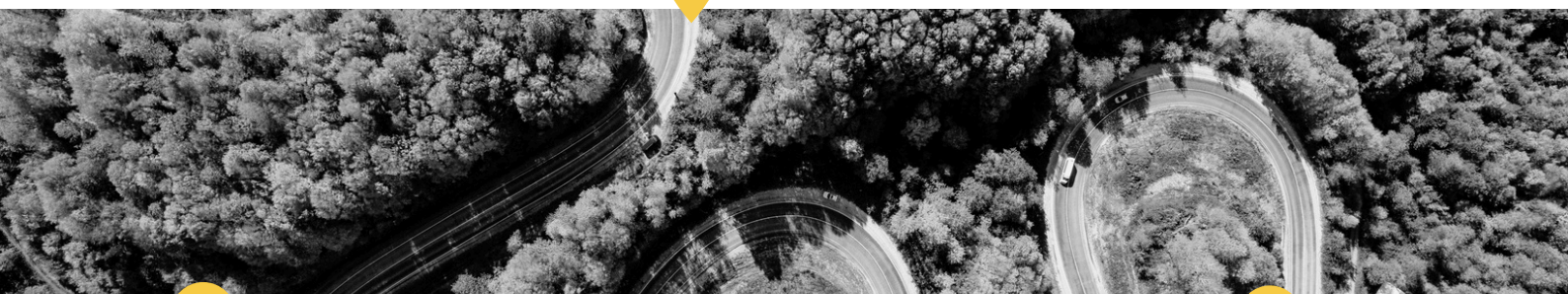
Builds pipeline (confidence, exposure, mindset)

Funding bridge

Converts the pipeline into funded ventures

Helvetia2030

Supports scaling and regional inclusion



Challenge and Opportunity

The Challenge

- Capital allocation inefficiency
- Early pipeline leakage
- Limited access to networks
- Structural bias in decision-making

The Opportunity

- CHF 3bn annual VC market
- Great wealth transfer
- Untapped entrepreneurial potential

Outcomes & Impact

Expected outcomes 2030

- More female-led ventures funded
- Improved access to investors and networks
- Stronger pipeline and scaling outcomes
- Broader participation across regions

System-level impact

- More efficient capital allocation
- Reduced structural barriers
- Stronger innovation performance
- More inclusive ecosystem

Findings in the [EY Startup Barometer Switzerland 2025](#) highly support the strategic formation of the Roadmap 2026 – 2030. The Barometer:

- underlines the need for better data infrastructure and transparency,
- states that Switzerland's challenge is not talent supply, but talent activation, underscoring the need for education and generational capability building rather than awareness alone,
- confirms that access to funding is mediated by dense networks, reinforcing the need for intentional redesign of access to trust and sponsorship.

3.2 Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Roadmap 2026 – 2030 is designed to be aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The strongest contribution is to SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and in addition, the roadmap targets clear contributions to SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Across the initiatives, the focus is heavily on forming partnerships, therefore including SDG 17 (Partnerships) for the Goals.

Gender equality, inclusive growth, innovation, and reduced inequality are mutually reinforcing.



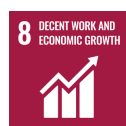
By aligning SDGs 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, and 17, **the Roadmap 2026–2030 positions gender equality as a foundational enabler of sustainable economic systems**, rather than a standalone social objective.



The roadmap advances inclusive and future-oriented education by addressing early biases, building entrepreneurial skills, and equipping individuals across generations with the confidence and capabilities to participate in innovation and economic life.



Gender equality is the central objective of the roadmap. All initiatives are designed to remove structural and institutional barriers that limit women's equal participation in entrepreneurship, innovation development, investment, and economic leadership.



The roadmap supports inclusive economic growth by unlocking the full potential of female-led businesses as drivers of innovation, job creation, and SME resilience.



The roadmap strengthens the infrastructure of inclusion required for diverse and resilient innovation ecosystems.



Reducing inequality is a cross-cutting objective embedded across all initiatives. The roadmap focuses on eliminating unequal access to capital, networks, trust, and influence.



The roadmap is built on cross-sector collaboration, leveraging partnerships between public institutions, private sector actors, academia, and civil society to align resources, share knowledge, and drive coordinated system change.

4. System diagnosis

4.1 Funding Bias as Capital Allocation Failure

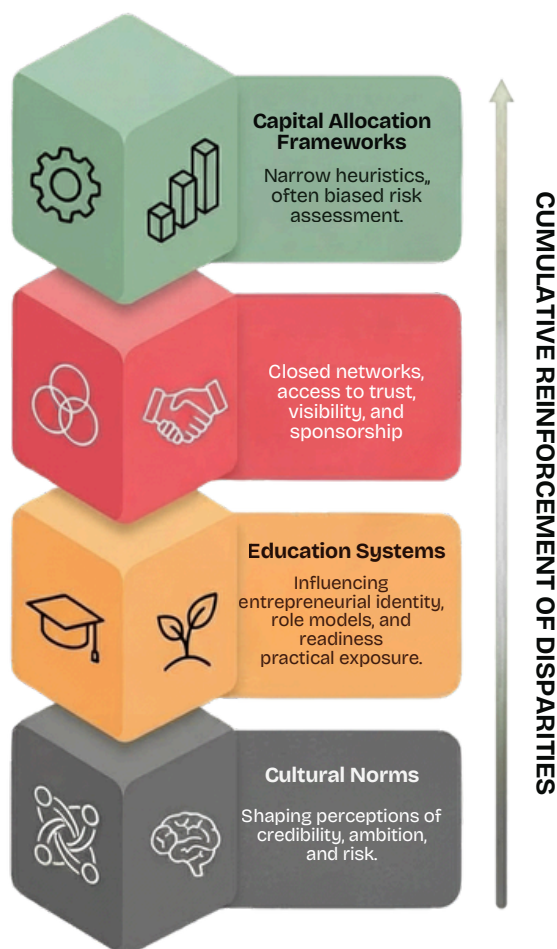
Funding disparities in Switzerland should not be understood as isolated biases at the investment stage. They are the result of a system-wide capital allocation failure that emerges across the entrepreneurial lifecycle.

Women participate in entrepreneurship, but not proportionally in funding outcomes. The gap widens at later stages, where capital becomes more concentrated and selective (EY Startup Barometer Switzerland 2025, p.31). At the same time, capital is highly concentrated in specific sectors.

In Switzerland, the health sector alone accounts for approximately 45% of total startup investment (EY Startup Barometer Switzerland 2025, p.5).

However, female founders are more strongly represented in sectors that receive comparatively less growth capital. This creates a structural mismatch between capital flows and entrepreneurial activity, reinforcing inefficient outcomes.

THE INTERACTING SYSTEM LAYERS



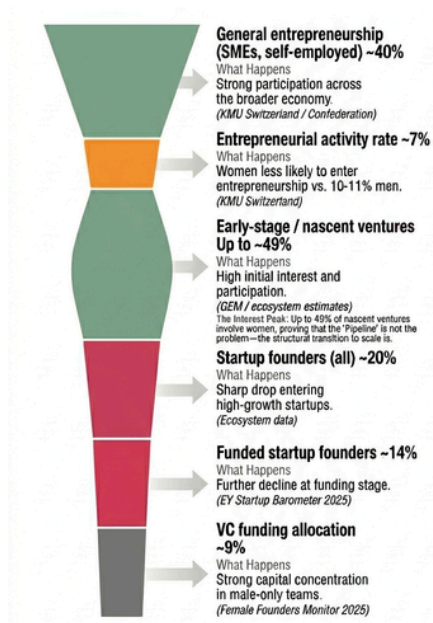
Source: EY Startup Barometer Switzerland 2025

This systemic failure is produced by interacting system layers of cultural norms shaping perceptions of credibility, ambition, and risk, education systems influencing entrepreneurial identity and exposure, networks determining access to trust, visibility, and opportunity, and capital allocation frameworks relying on narrow and often biased heuristics.

These layers operate cumulatively, reinforcing disparities long before investment decisions are made.

4.2 Pipeline Formation and Founder Continuity as Structural Constraints

A key structural driver of this inefficiency is early pipeline leakage.



Source: Female Founders Monitor 2025

Evidence shows that **only 21% of female students consider entrepreneurship**, compared with **40% of male students**, and that women are more likely to prioritize job security over entrepreneurial risk-taking (Female Founders Monitor 2025, p. 6-7).

Women also tend to enter entrepreneurship later than men, which reduces early exposure, network access, and confidence in entrepreneurial pathways (Female Founders Monitor 2025, p.6-7).

As a result, although participation in early-stage entrepreneurial activity is relatively high, there is a significant drop when transitioning into high-growth startups and venture-backed companies (Female Founders Monitor 2025, p.6).

The Interest Peak: Up to 49% of nascent ventures involve women, proving that the 'Pipeline' is not the problem-the structural transition to scale is.

This phenomenon - referred to as pipeline leakage - reduces the number of ventures reaching funding stages and leads to a distorted input pool for capital markets. Importantly, this is not only a participation issue. It represents a structural risk to the innovation system, as it limits the diversity, quality, and resilience of ventures entering the market.

In Switzerland, **founders face limited access to social protection mechanisms, including restricted eligibility for unemployment benefits in case of startup failure** (Startup Agenda Schweiz, 2026, p.10). At the same time, 81% of women and 60% of men identify work-family compatibility as a key factor in reducing the gender gap in entrepreneurship (Female Founders Monitor 2025, p.6). **Work-family compatibility is often treated as a social issue.**

It is a core component of economic infrastructure that directly affects founder participation, capital allocation, and venture performance.

Despite this, care responsibilities are often interpreted in investment processes as individual risk factors rather than predictable lifecycle conditions. This misalignment leads to distorted risk assessments, founder attrition, and underinvestment in viable ventures.

To improve capital allocation accuracy, **work-family compatibility must be treated as a system design challenge**, requiring coordinated action across policy, corporate governance, and investment frameworks.

4.3 The Great Wealth Transfer as a Structural Opportunity

The system is now entering a period of structural change through **the Great Wealth Transfer**. A growing share of private capital in Switzerland is being transferred to women and younger generations, including through inheritance structures and family offices.

This represents not only a shift in ownership but a potential shift in capital allocation power. This transition creates a unique opportunity to improve how capital is deployed. A broader base of decision-makers has the potential to expand investment perspectives, diversify sourcing networks, and better align capital with the full range of entrepreneurial activity. However, this outcome is not automatic.



Many new capital owners remain underrepresented in investment decision-making and governance structures. At the same time, existing allocation frameworks continue to rely on established networks and patterns.

Without intervention, new capital is likely to flow through existing systems, limiting its impact. The opportunity, therefore, lies in enabling active and informed capital participation, ensuring that shifts in ownership translate into improved allocation outcomes.

4.4 From System Failure to Strategic Opportunity

Taken together, these dynamics define both **the system failure and the opportunity for change.**

Early pipeline leakage reduces the number and diversity of ventures entering the system, while work–family incompatibility distorts risk assessment and limits founder continuity. At the same time, capital allocation frameworks continue to rely on narrow networks, pattern recognition, and historically homogeneous decision-making structures, reinforcing existing imbalances. These factors collectively weaken the system's ability to convert available talent into funded, scalable ventures. Switzerland's challenge is therefore not the creation of innovation, but the conversion of innovation, ensuring that its full entrepreneurial potential is reflected in capital allocation and venture outcomes. This transition is a unique, time-sensitive opportunity to improve capital allocation outcomes. As capital ownership

diversifies, there is potential to broaden investment perspectives, expand definitions of risk and value, and align capital flows more closely with a wider range of entrepreneurial activity, including ventures currently underrepresented in traditional funding channels. However, this outcome is not automatic. Evidence suggests that structural gaps persist in financial agency, investment participation, and governance representation. Many women, despite increasing levels of wealth ownership, remain less actively involved in investment decision-making and are underrepresented in leadership roles within financial institutions and investment committees. At the same time, institutional frameworks, networks, and evaluation criteria continue to reflect legacy patterns.

At the same time, the system is entering a period of structural transformation. The Great Wealth Transfer is shifting a significant share of private capital to younger generations and to women, not only as asset holders but increasingly as participants in capital allocation processes.

In Switzerland, inheritance structures and family offices play a central role in this transition, with a large proportion of family offices explicitly designed to manage generational wealth transfer. This highlights how capital is not only accumulated but actively governed and redistributed across generations.

This creates a central risk. New capital may continue to flow through existing systems without changing allocation outcomes. In this context, the wealth transfer should not be viewed as a passive demographic shift, but as an active lever for system redesign. Translating ownership into impact requires strengthening financial agency, increasing representation in decision-making roles, and expanding access to the networks and structures where capital allocation decisions are made.

The Roadmap 2026–2030 is designed to respond to this convergence by positioning the current moment not only as a challenge, but as an **opportunity to improve capital efficiency, unlock underutilised talent, and strengthen the long-term performance of the Swiss innovation system.**



5. FE+MALE Think Tank

Boosting inclusive entrepreneurship

5.1 A word from Patricia M. Montesinos

FE+MALE Think Tank exists to advance a more inclusive, innovative, and economically resilient Switzerland by working towards making sure that entrepreneurial opportunity and access to capital are open to every entrepreneur.

Our mission is to identify, understand, and reduce the structural and behavioural barriers that prevent underrepresented entrepreneurs, particularly women, from accessing growth capital and fully participating in entrepreneurship.

We approach this work as an economic and societal priority linked to innovation capacity, competitiveness, and sustainable growth.

I see our role as threefold:

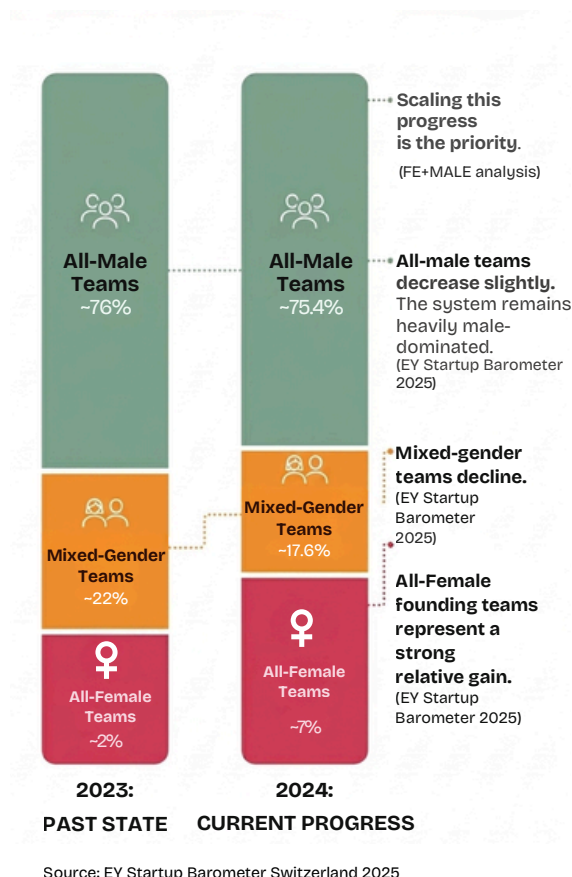
- 01 We operate as a system orchestrator with the ultimate objective of joint action. We connect stakeholders from the entrepreneurial ecosystem - entrepreneurs, investors, corporates, academia, SMEs, NGOs, and policymakers by creating space for honest dialogue toward shared solutions.
- 02 We operate as a connector between worlds. We translate research into actionable solutions and identify the right partners for project execution. For example, the Beat the Funding Bias initiative, inspired by research, engages men through masterclasses, online programs with certification, and awareness-raising activities.
- 03 We want to operate as a catalyst for collective action. We find new ways for the existing actors in the ecosystem to align and to co-operate and co-create together. Our goal is to ensure that responsibility for reducing funding bias is shared across ecosystem rather than placed on individual women to “adapt” and find a way to work inside the biased systems.

FE+MALE Think Tank is an independent and neutral organization that **aims to redesign how the ecosystem functions** so that talent and ideas can flourish on equal terms.

Recent data from the EY Startup Barometer Switzerland 2025 highlights a notable shift in the composition of startup founding teams, pointing to early but meaningful progress in gender diversity.

Between 2023 and 2024, the share of all-female founding teams increased significantly from 2% to 7%, representing a strong relative gain and indicating growing momentum in female entrepreneurship.

At the same time, mixed-gender teams declined from 22% to 17.6%, while all-male teams decreased slightly from 76% to 75.4%. While the overall system remains heavily male-dominated, the sharp rise in all-female teams suggests that targeted advocacy, increased visibility, and evolving cultural and ecosystem dynamics are beginning to translate into tangible change.



Sustaining and scaling this progress will require continued effort to ensure that these emerging teams not only form but also gain equitable access to funding and growth opportunities. These shifts may be driven by increased advocacy and evolving cultural norms, financing, and team formation.

Organizations like **FE+MALE Think Tank** play a vital role in promoting gender diversity in entrepreneurship and sustaining this momentum.

5.2 Building the foundations

- awareness building and ecosystem engagement

Since its inception, **FE+MALE Think Tank** has focused on building the foundational conditions required for systemic change. The initial phase has combined **research, awareness-building, and ecosystem engagement** to establish both credibility and momentum across Switzerland's entrepreneurial and innovation landscape.

This work has resulted in measurable outputs and significant reach. The Think Tank has launched **four core projects, published five reports and eight articles, and conducted eleven scholar interviews**, ensuring a strong foundation in academic evidence while remaining accessible to practitioners.

Through **eight national roadshows, ten roundtables**, as well as **webinars and workshops**, FE+MALE has engaged **over 150 organisations** across the innovation, policy, and education sectors, reaching more than **500 participants** via **15 webinars** and over ten in-person workshops. These efforts were further amplified through the **Biennial and Award**, held at the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute in **March 2026**, convening **over 100 participants**, extending engagement into regional ecosystems, and fostering local dialogue and co-creation.



At the same time, **FE+MALE Think Tank** has invested in building scalable tools such as the **Bias Breaker**, an online modular CPD-accredited program, and communication platforms. This includes the launch of an AI-powered, gamified learning tool designed to address bias in decision-making, alongside a growing digital presence with over **2,800 LinkedIn followers, more than 70 content publications, and a dedicated newsletter**.

Knowledge translation has been strengthened through 12 impact-driven infographics and broader media visibility, including features in multiple publications. Importantly, the **Think Tank has also secured both public and private funding**, demonstrating early institutional trust and support for its mission.

Together, these achievements represent more than activity. They mark **the creation of a shared evidence base, a growing ecosystem network, and initial tools for behavioural change**.

This foundation now enables the transition from awareness and engagement to structured, scalable interventions that can deliver measurable impact across the entrepreneurial system.



The Core Initiatives

Beat Funding Bias Initiative (BFBI)

BFBI addresses bias in investment and decision-making processes by equipping ecosystem actors with practical tools, frameworks, and structured learning formats. It is designed to build institutional capacity for bias-aware decision-making and improve the efficiency and fairness of capital allocation.

A central component of BFBI is the **Bias Breaker Online Modular Program**, a research-based learning program that translates behavioural science and decision-making theory into practical application. The course provides participants with tools to identify unconscious bias, understand cognitive decision patterns, and apply structured frameworks to improve investment and strategic decisions. It combines theory with interactive case studies, self-reflection, and applied exercises, enabling participants to move from awareness to behavioural change.

Beyond awareness, the course focuses on building long-term decision-making capabilities, helping investors, founders, and institutions challenge assumptions, reduce bias in evaluation processes, and ultimately make more accurate and effective funding decisions.

As part of the broader BFBI ecosystem - which includes workshops, advisory, and stakeholder engagement - the online course represents a scalable intervention that enables consistent knowledge transfer and behavioural change across the innovation system.

Innova Trends

Innova Trends bridges the gap between research and practice by curating and translating academic insights on gender and entrepreneurship into accessible knowledge. It ensures that decision-makers across the ecosystem benefit from evidence-based perspectives and emerging trends.

The Inclusive Way Initiative (TIWI)

TIWI is a multi-stakeholder initiative that brings together actors from business, academia, and policy to identify structural barriers and co-create solutions. It established a shared understanding of systemic challenges and laid the foundation for coordinated action across the Swiss ecosystem.

5.3 FE+MALE Think Tank - The Value Proposition

FE+MALE Think Tank turns research on structural dynamics in entrepreneurship into practical insights, tools, and programs that improve how we evaluate, fund, and scale innovation and sustainability.

At its core, the Think Tank provides evidence-based analysis of how systemic patterns and decision-making, for example, bias, structures influence entrepreneurial outcomes.

This knowledge is transformed into practical applications, including training programs, decision-support frameworks, and ecosystem initiatives that enhance the efficiency, quality, and inclusiveness of innovation systems.

01 For innovation leaders and investors

It provides tools to identify and reduce bias in funding and selection decisions, improving investment quality, risk assessment, and long-term performance.

02 For founders and ecosystem participants

It equips them with capabilities to better understand institutional dynamics -for example, biased systems- improve strategic positioning and increase access to funding and growth opportunities.

03 For institutions and funders

It offers scalable, research-backed interventions that drive measurable change across organisations and innovation ecosystems—moving beyond awareness toward systemic impact.

By bridging research and implementation, **FE+MALE Think Tank helps align capital, talent, and opportunity more effectively**, strengthening the overall performance, resilience, and adaptability of the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem.



Partners

ERNST GÖHNER STIFTUNG



WISSENSCHAFT.
BEWEGEN
GEBERT RUF STIFTUNG

Biennial Partners

Media Partners



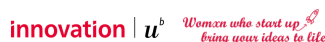
Network Partners



Location Partner



Knowledge Partners



Publishing Partner



5.4 The Inclusive Way Initiative (TIWI) 2022 – 2023 and Transition to the Roadmap 2026–2030

The Inclusive Way Initiative (TIWI), conducted in 2022-2023, marked FE+MALE Think Tank's first structured effort to address female entrepreneurship and funding bias in Switzerland, built on research from the Bern University of Applied Sciences "Für mehr Gründerinnen in der Schweiz: Ansatzpunkte zur Verbesserung gründungs- relevanter Rahmenbedingungen" TIWI confirmed that while Switzerland offers strong framework conditions participation and funding outcomes for women remain

unequal due to structural - not legal - barriers, including cultural norms, education gaps, care responsibilities, and the design of funding systems. Through workshops, roundtables, and a public forum, TIWI brought together stakeholders across the ecosystem to build a shared understanding of the problem, identify key barriers, and define priority areas for action. It established FE+MALE Think Tank as a credible convener and created momentum for coordinated change.

Impactful Workshop March

The purpose of the Impactful Workshop was to raise awareness, increase the market knowledge, exchange views, and deliberate prospective solutions on how to increase the percentage of women entrepreneurs in Switzerland.



The Inclusive Way Initiative Recap 2023



At the same time, TIWI revealed a critical limitation: awareness and dialogue alone are not sufficient to change systems. **Addressing funding gaps requires targeted interventions, dedicated funding, and long-term coordination.**

TIWI laid the seed for building a bridge in the funding gap by highlighting a research-based dynamic described in **"we ask men to win and women not to lose"** showing how evaluation standards can differ systematically across groups due to unconscious gender bias—often framing men in terms of "promotion" (what they gain) and women in terms of "prevention" (what they should avoid losing). This insight informed the foundation of the evolving Beat Funding Bias Initiative (2023–2026).

The Roadmap 2026–2030 builds directly on this foundation. **It represents a shift from understanding to execution**, introducing scalable, funded initiatives across legal frameworks, education, and networks to redesign how entrepreneurship is evaluated, financed, and scaled in Switzerland.

6. The Roadmap development process

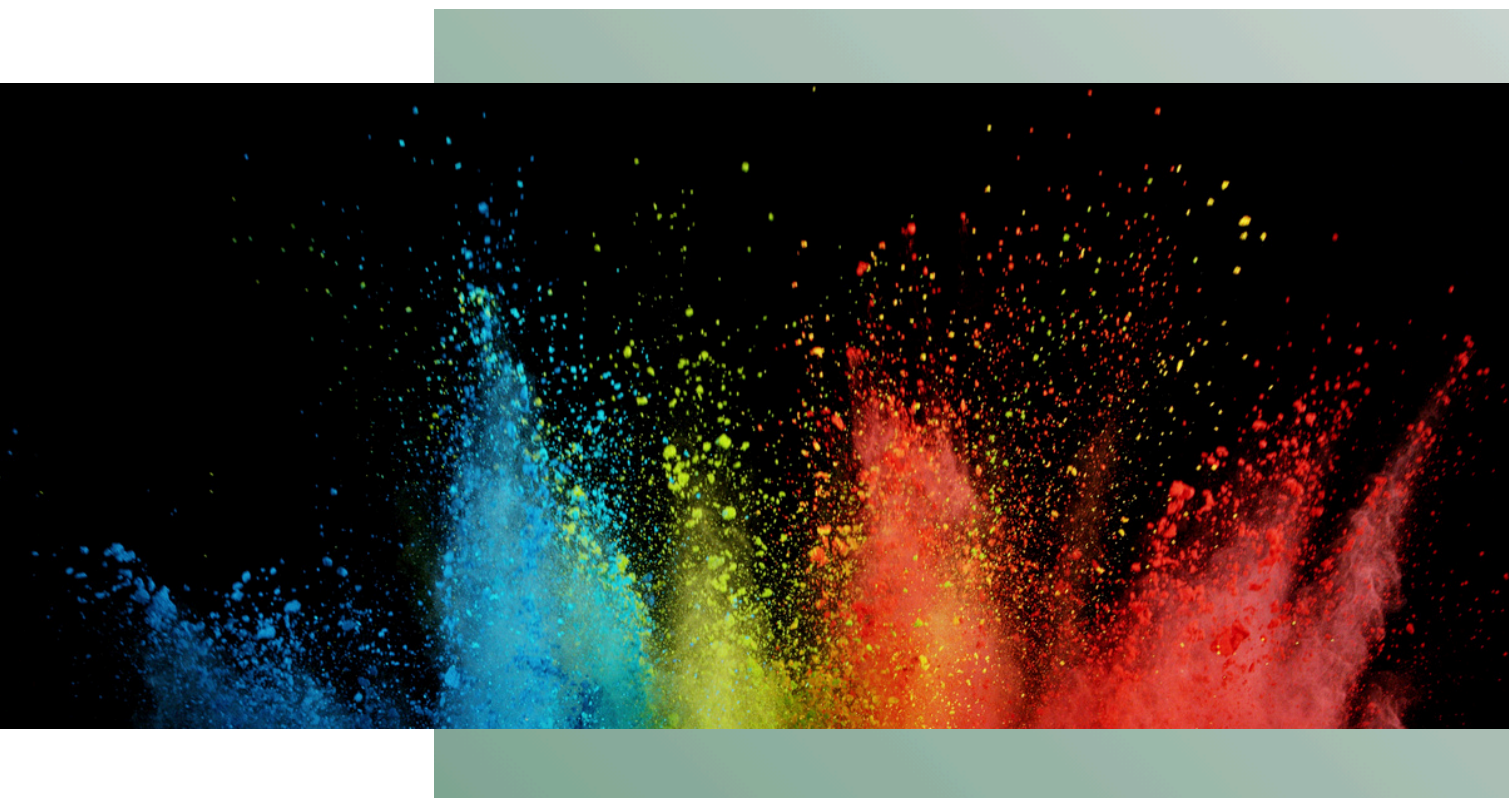


The next phase will focus on refining these initiatives, securing funding, establishing partnerships, and preparing for pilot implementation.

6.1 The Initiatives

– Summary section

The Roadmap 2026–2030 translates this system diagnosis into three targeted initiatives, each addressing a critical constraint in the entrepreneurial lifecycle.



Education Initiative

Strengthens early pipeline formation by building entrepreneurial confidence, reducing bias, and expanding exposure.



Funding Bridge

Improves conversion from pipeline to funding by enabling access to investor networks, sponsorship, and capital.



Helvetia2030

Supports venture development and scaling, particularly in underserved regions and high-impact sectors.

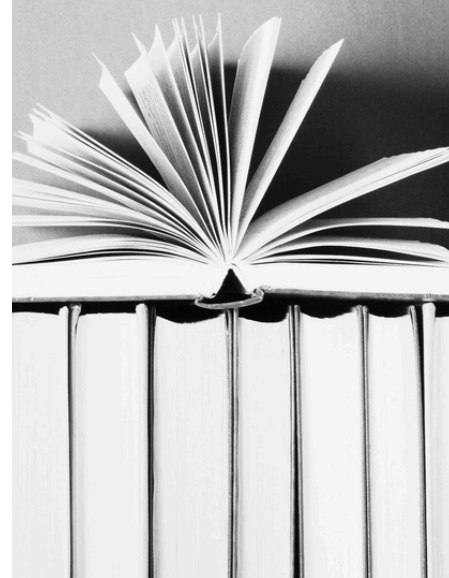
6.2 Early Entrepreneurship and Bias Education

Future Builders Lab (2026–2030)

- Strategic Rationale

Gender gaps in entrepreneurship do not originate at the funding stage; they emerge much earlier, shaped by societal norms, risk perceptions, and exposure to role models during childhood. While women represent a significant share of early-stage entrepreneurial activity, their participation declines as ventures scale. This suggests that confidence, risk perception, and perceived career pathways play a critical role long before funding decisions are made.

The Early Entrepreneurship and Bias Education Initiative addresses these root causes by introducing early, practical exposure to entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and bias awareness at the primary school level. The objective is not to “create entrepreneurs,” but to expand perceived possibilities, build confidence, and normalise risk-taking across genders.



Delivery model	Key approach	Expected outcomes by 2030	Expected impact by 2030
FE+MALE Think Tank: methodology, curriculum, coordination, evaluation Partners (schools, NGOs): program delivery, teacher engagement	• Short modular interventions • Focus on entrepreneurship, finance, critical thinking, bias awareness • Hands-on activities and role models • Teacher and parent engagement • Simple outcome measurement	• 300–500 students reached • Increased confidence and initiative • Improved openness to entrepreneurship • Teachers equipped with tools	• Reduced early-stage gender bias • Stronger long-term entrepreneurial pipeline • Broader participation in innovation and leadership

Early Entrepreneurship and Bias Education Roadmap 2026-2030

Phase 4: Selective Scale-Up

Objective

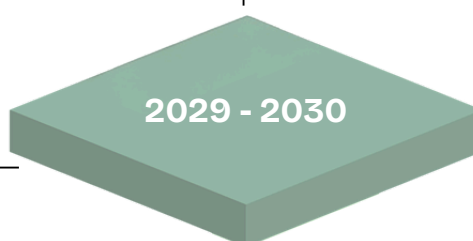
Expand program while maintaining quality and simplicity

Key Activities

- Expand to 10–15 schools
- Add partners (2–3) partners
- Introduce train-the-teacher
- Track outcomes & KPIs

✓ Key Outputs

- 300–500 students reached
- Scalable program



Phase 3: Evaluation & Refinement

Objective

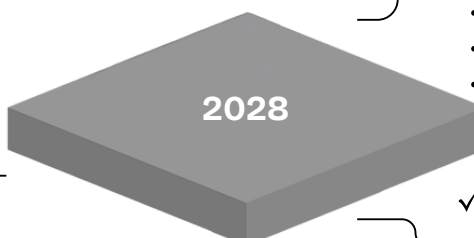
Assess effectiveness and optimize program design

Key Activities

- Analyse results
- Evaluate usability
- Refine content
- Define scale plan

✓ Key Outputs

- Evaluation report
- Improved curriculum



Phase 2: Pilot Implementation

Objective

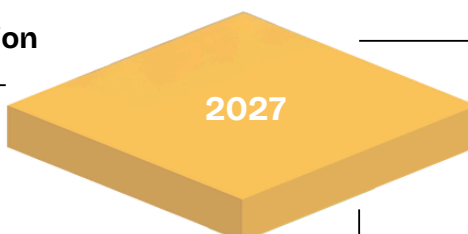
Test program in selected schools and gather initial data

Key Activities

- Deliver program in 6–8 schools
- Run workshops & activities
- Engage teachers and parents
- Collect baseline and follow-up data

✓ Key Outputs

- 150–250 students reached
- Initial impact data
- Feedback collected



Phase 1: Design & Setup

Objective

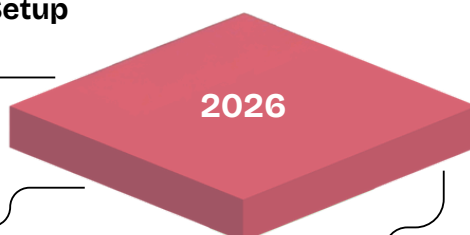
Develop pilot concept, secure partners, and prepare materials

Key Activities

- Secure funding
- Select 1–2 partners
- Choose pilot schools
- Adapt curriculum
- Define KPIs

✓ Key Outputs

- Pilot design ready
- Partners secured
- Materials developed



6.3 The Funding Bridge

Women Founder Sponsorship & Investor Access Program (2026–2030) - Strategic Rationale

Women founders in Switzerland face structural barriers in transitioning from early-stage entrepreneurial activity to funded ventures. These barriers are primarily linked to limited access to investor networks, lack of sponsorship, and biased evaluation processes, rather than a lack of talent or ambition.

The Funding Bridge addresses this gap by improving funding readiness and investor access through structured sponsorship and curated introductions. Rather than building new infrastructure, the program leverages existing accelerators, universities, and ecosystem partners to deliver targeted support.



Delivery model	Key approach	Expected outcomes by 2030	Expected impact by 2030
FE+MALE Think Tank: design, coordination, investor network and KPI tracking Partners (accelerators, universities, hubs): founder sourcing, program delivery, and mentoring	• Sponsorship matching with experienced investors and operators • Targeted investor introductions (quality over quantity) • Practical fundraising preparation • Light simulation formats • KPI tracking on funding outcomes	• 60–80 founders supported • 20–25% secure funding • 150–200 investor introductions • 15–25 sponsors engaged	• More efficient capital allocation • Reduced structural access barriers • Proven model for funding readiness and access

The Funding Bridge Roadmap 2026-2030

Phase 4: Selective Scale-Up

Objective

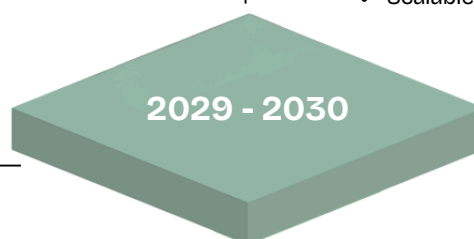
Expand program while maintaining quality and focus

Key Activities

- Expand to 3–5 partners
- Increase cohorts selectively
- Strengthen investor network
- Track outcomes longitudinally

✓ Key Outputs

- 60–80 founders supported
- 150–200 introductions
- Scalable model



Phase 3: Evaluation & Refinement

Objective

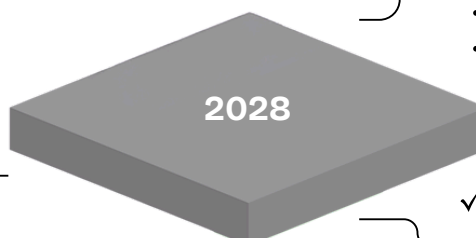
Assess outcomes and improve program model

Key Activities

- Analyze funding outcomes
- Collect stakeholder feedback
- Refine model and partner roles

✓ Key Outputs

- Evaluation report
- Improved program model



Phase 2: Pilot Implementation

Objective

Test program with small, high-quality cohorts

Key Activities

- Run 2–3 cohorts (10–15 founders)
- Match founders with sponsors
- Facilitate investor introductions
- Deliver targeted workshops
- Track KPIs

✓ Key Outputs

- 30–45 founders supported
- 80–120 investor meetings
- Initial funding outcomes



Phase 1: Design & Setup

Objective

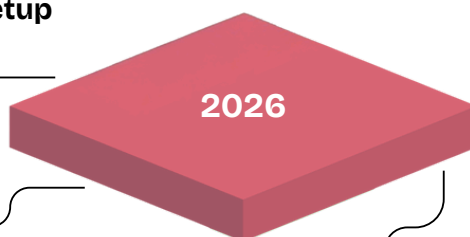
Establish program concept, partnerships, and core framework

Key Activities

- Secure funding
- Select 2–3 partners
- Define target founder profile
- Build sponsor pool
- Design sponsorship model and KPIs

✓ Key Outputs

- Program framework finalized
- Delivery partners secured
- Sponsor & investor pool established
- KPI system defined

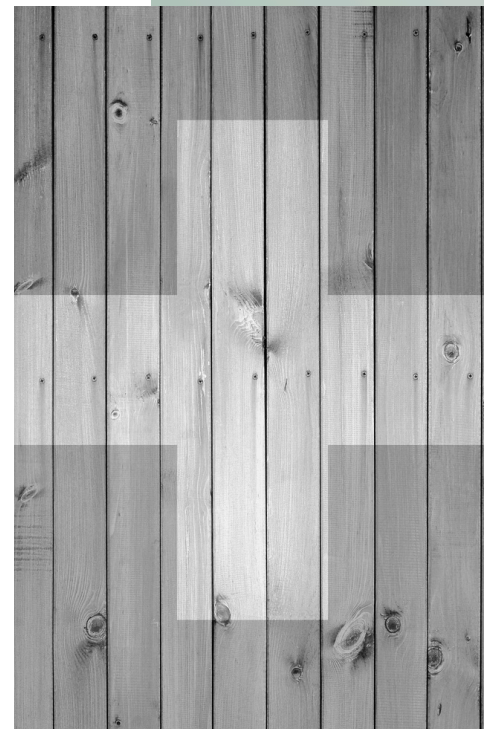


6.4 Helvetia2030

Collective Support Model for High-Impact Ventures in Underserved Regions- Strategic Rationale

While Switzerland has a strong innovation ecosystem, ventures outside major hubs and those led by women or underrepresented founders remain under-supported, particularly in rural or regionally anchored sectors.

Helvetia2030 addresses this gap by creating a lightweight, collaborative support model that combines mentorship, visibility, and selective capital access for high-potential ventures in underserved areas. Rather than building a new investment vehicle, the initiative focuses on mobilising existing actors-corporates, foundations, regional organisations, and investors.



Delivery model	Key approach	Expected outcomes by 2030	Expected impact by 2030
FE+MALE Think Tank: coordination, capital connection, impact tracking Regional partners: venture sourcing, local support, ecosystem engagement	• Select small number of high-potential ventures • Provide targeted mentorship and network access • Facilitate investor and corporate connections • Encourage collaborative (non-financial + financial) support • Prioritise female led and diverse teams	• 20-25 ventures supported • 30-40% diverse-women led teams • 5-10 ventures funded/partnered • Regional partner network established	• Reduced geographic and structural funding gaps • Activation of underutilised innovation potential • More inclusive capital deployment

The Helvetia2030 Roadmap 2026-2030

Phase 4: Selective Scale-Up

Objective

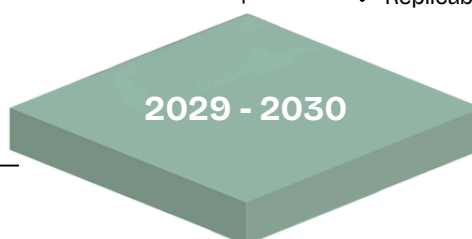
Expand the program gradually and strengthen ecosystem integration

Key Activities

- Expand to 20–25 ventures
- Grow partner network (3–5)
- Strengthen capital partnerships
- Track impact (jobs, growth)

✓ Key Outputs

- 20–25 ventures supported
- Strong partner network
- Replicable model



Phase 3: Evaluation & Refinement

Objective

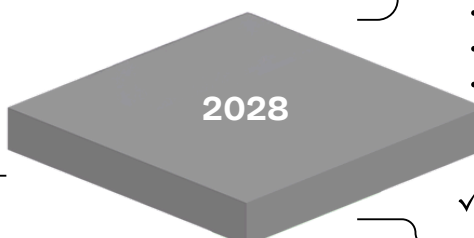
Assess impact and optimize support model

Key Activities

- Analyse venture outcomes
- Gather feedback
- Refine model & selection
- Define scaling plan

✓ Key Outputs

- Evaluation report
- Refined mode



Phase 2: Pilot Implementation

Objective

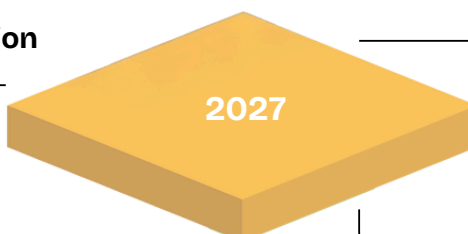
Test collaborative support model with small venture cohort

Key Activities

- Select 8–12 ventures
- Provide mentorship & advisory
- Facilitate investor / corporate access
- Enable peer exchange
- Track KPIs

✓ Key Outputs

- 8–12 ventures supported
- Initial partnerships and funding pathways
- Pilot data collected



Phase 1: Design & Setup

Objective

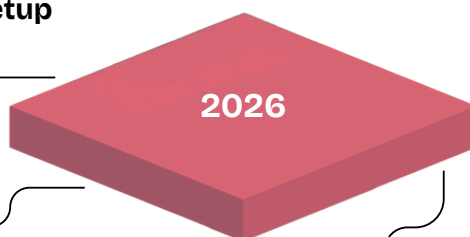
Establish concept, partnerships, and pilot structure

Key Activities

- Secure funding
- Select 2–3 regional partners
- Define venture criteria
- Design support model
- Set KPIs and tracking framework

✓ Key Outputs

- Program framework
- Regional partners secured
- Selection criteria
- KPI system



7. Impact, research, and measurement framework

The Roadmap 2026–2030 is designed to deliver measurable economic and systemic impact, moving beyond awareness to coordinated, evidence-based action across the entrepreneurial lifecycle.

Through its three initiatives: Early Entrepreneurship & Bias Education, Funding Bridge, and Helvetia2030, the Roadmap addresses key stages of the system: early mindset formation, access to capital, and venture scaling. Together, these interventions target funding bias as a structural inefficiency in capital allocation, aiming to improve how talent is developed, how opportunities are accessed, and how capital is deployed.

Impact will be assessed across three interconnected dimensions.

01 At the economic level

The roadmap seeks to increase funding success, venture growth, and job creation by supporting female-led and diverse businesses.

02 At the ecosystem level

It focuses on improving access to investor networks, sponsorship, and collaboration, strengthening how founders, investors, and partners interact.

03 At the systemic level

The roadmap aims to reduce early-stage bias, expand participation, and create more inclusive pathways into entrepreneurship and leadership over time.

To support this, **FE+MALE Think Tank will act as a coordinating and learning platform, working with partners to track outcomes, generate evidence, and continuously refine its approach.**

A **focused research agenda** will explore key questions such as bias in investment decision-making, effectiveness of sponsorship models, barriers in underserved regions, and the early formation of entrepreneurial identity. **Data collection and reporting** will remain lightweight but consistent, enabling transparency, comparability, and practical decision-making through regular updates and simple dashboards. **Progress will be guided by**

a structured Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning approach, with a baseline established in 2026, a midterm review in 2028, and a final assessment in 2030 to inform scaling decisions. **We'll turn insights** from these initiatives **into practical tools for investors, policymakers, educators, and ecosystem actors, so research leads to action.** An Advisory Council will support this process, helping to maintain methodological rigor and strategic alignment.

Ultimately, **the Roadmap is designed as a learning system in which targeted interventions across education, funding access, and venture support** reinforce one another, driving more inclusive, efficient, and resilient innovation outcomes in Switzerland.

8. Funding and Partnership Opportunity

8.1 The Values



01 Investment Rationale

Unequal funding reflects inefficiencies in capital allocation, where high-potential ventures remain underfunded due to restricted access to networks, biased evaluation, and limited sponsorship pathways. Addressing this improves both innovation outcomes and capital efficiency.

02 Strategic Opportunity

Switzerland combines strong innovation capacity with increasing capital availability (~CHF 3bn annually) and a generational shift in capital ownership. This creates a timely opportunity to realign capital allocation with the full talent pool.

03 Value for Foundations and NGOs

- Targets measurable, system-level impact
- Alignment with the fender equality, social, and economic development goals
- Scalable, evidence-based intervention models

04 Value for Public Entities / Government

- Targets measurable, system-level impact in innovation and economic development
- Supports alignment with gender equality, social inclusion, and economic development policies
- Improves the effectiveness of public funding through evidence-based, scalable interventions
- Strengthens regional innovation ecosystems and long-term competitiveness

05 Value for Organizations

- Access to diverse innovation pipelines
- Strengthening ESG, reducing risks, and diversity positioning
- Insights into emerging ventures and markets
- Positioning as leaders in inclusive innovation

8.2 Strategic Engagement Framework



01 Partnership models

Strategic partner

Co-fund or sponsor the initiative, and could be involved in the strategic direction

Initiative partner

Supports scaling a specific initiative or program

Ecosystem partner

Contributes expertise, networks, or infrastructure

Academic partner

Contributes research, scientific expertise, and evidence-based insights

02 Funding Objective

Support the development and implementation of scalable, evidence-based interventions that improve pipeline formation, access to capital, and venture scaling.

03 Funding Approach

Lean, partner-based model focusing on

- Program design & coordination
- Partner enablement & delivery support
- Tools, content, and measurement systems
- Ecosystem engagement & knowledge translation

8.3 Impact & Governance



01 Leverage & Outcomes

- 100+ founders/ventures supported
- 150–200 investor introductions
- Activation of ecosystem partners across Switzerland
- Development of scalable intervention models

02 Governance & Accountability

- Defined KPIs and reporting
- Annual impact updates
- Midterm (2028) & final (2030) evaluation
- Oversight via The Board of FE+MALE Think Tank

Call to Action

The Roadmap 2026–2030 is a timely opportunity to improve how capital is allocated in Switzerland, as both capital availability and ownership are shifting.

FE+MALE Think Tank invites foundations, corporates, and ecosystem partners to co-invest in the pilot phase or in the entire program (2026–2030) and help build scalable solutions that unlock underutilised entrepreneurial potential.



9. Acknowledgement

Some documents are written. This one was built by people who gave their time, their thinking, and their belief that something better is possible.

It started with **Katja Einesalo**. She is the author and the intellectual engine behind this roadmap - the person who turned a shared conviction into a structured, evidence-based plan for change. We are enormously grateful.

And then there is **Agota Balai**, who gave this work its visual voice. Good ideas deserve to be seen clearly - and Agota made sure they were, with a design that is as thoughtful and purposeful as the content it carries.

A special word of thanks goes to the **FE+MALE Think Tank Board of Directors - Patricia M. Montesinos, Kaitlin Barbier, Julia Maria Trzicky, Francesca Ronzio, and Frédéric Lauchenauer.**

Each of them brought far more than governance to this work. They brought curiosity, courage, determination, and an unwavering belief that changing the system is not only necessary but possible. To **our Advisory Council** and the **Biennial & Awards Steering Committee**, we are deeply grateful for their trust, their leadership, and the generosity with which they gave their time and energy to something that matters.

Beyond these, **this roadmap belongs to a much wider community.** It began to take shape at the Sustainability Forum on 4 November 2025, where **Line Pillet, Julia Maria Trzicky, Estie Alessandrini, and Karen Wendt** joined as panelists and helped name the challenge with honesty and clarity. The forum was co-organised with the **University of Bern Innovation Office**, a special thank you to

Elsa Callini for making that collaboration possible and for welcoming this work into that space. The roadmap deepened through three online labs, each guided by a remarkable expert: **Jessica Gauch** on legal frameworks, **Johanna Aebi** on education, and **Carol Constant** on networks. Their expertise shaped the thinking that runs through every initiative in these pages. From those conversations, twelve ideas emerged. Six were selected by the Board and presented at the **FE+MALE Think Tank Biennial & Award 2026**. The community voted, and three initiatives rose to the top: the three that now form the heart of this roadmap.

This work would not have been possible without the generous support of those who believed in it before the results were in. A heartfelt thank you to the **Bern Economic Development Agency** for their early institutional trust and support. To the **Gebert R f Stiftung**, our innovation partner for the Biennale & Award, for backing the idea that inclusive entrepreneurship is worth investing in. And to the **Ernst G hner Stiftung**, thank you for your confidence in this work and for the contribution that made it possible.

That insight belongs to everyone who participated, and we're grateful to the more than 100 individuals and our Biennial Partners who gave their time, shared their experiences, and cast their votes for the most promising initiatives. Your voices shaped this roadmap more than you know.

Thank you.
FE+MALE Think Tank

10. Annex

How to get involved

Join us — every step counts

Step 1 - Right now: show your support

The most important thing you can do right now is let us know you are with us. A letter of support - even before any financial commitment - tells the ecosystem that this work matters, strengthens our ability to secure further funding, and opens the door to everything that follows.

01 Get in touch.

Write to us at hello@femalethinktank.com. We would love to hear from you: tell us about your organisation, your interests, and how you see yourself contributing.

02 Sign a letter of support and a manifesto

Use the template at the end of this document, adapted to your organisation and preferred form of contribution. It takes just a few minutes, and it means the world to us.

03 Join the Coalition

We will add you to our partner network and keep you informed as momentum builds.

Step 2 - Once the strategic papers are ready, go deeper

We are preparing a dedicated strategic paper for each of the three initiatives — **Education Initiative, Funding Bridge, and Helvetia2030**. Each paper sets out the full evidence base, implementation model, partnership opportunities, and funding requirements in detail.

01 Introductory call

We will invite you to a relaxed online conversation, a chance to ask questions, and explore the initiatives together.

02 Choose how you want to contribute

Financial sponsorship, in-kind expertise, delivery partnership, regional networks, research collaboration — every form of contribution has a defined and valued place.

03 Join the Alliance

Founding partners confirmed by Q4 2026 are recognised across all roadmap publications, events, and communications through 2030.

11. Our Shared Commitment

The FE+MALE Think Tank Manifesto

We Believe...

... that Switzerland's **greatest untapped resource** is its people and that every founder, regardless of gender, background, or where they grew up, deserves a fair chance to build something that matters

We Believe...

... that **inclusive entrepreneurship is not a charity**. It is an economic strategy. When gender-diverse entrepreneurs participate fully in innovation, economies grow stronger, investment returns improve, and the companies being built are better, more creative, more resilient, and more connected to the full range of human experience.

We Believe...

... that **the barriers holding talented people back are both structural and personal**, and that lasting change requires solutions that address both. That means changing how capital is allocated, how networks are accessed, how decisions are made, and how the next generation is taught to see itself.

We invite every organisation and individual that shares this belief to stand with us as a **partner**, a **sponsor**, a **collaborator**, or a **champion**.

**Together, we can build a more
inclusive future.**



12. Letter of support

Template

The letter below can be signed on your organisation's letterhead. **Simply fill in the bracketed fields.** It does not need to be long — what matters is that your voice is part of this. Once finalized, please submit your signed letter [here](#).

Letter of Support – FE+MALE Think Tank Roadmap 2026–2030

[City, Date]

To the FE+MALE Think Tank and the broader Swiss entrepreneurial ecosystem,

[Organisation name] is pleased to express its support for the FE+MALE Think Tank Roadmap 2026–2030 and its commitment to building a more inclusive, competitive, and resilient Swiss sustainable and innovative economy.

We share the conviction that when gender-diverse communities participate fully in entrepreneurship, the benefits extend across the whole of society through stronger economic growth, greater social cohesion, and a more diverse and resilient business landscape. We believe this is both the right thing to do and the smart economic choice for Switzerland.

We recognise that achieving this requires structural change in how talent is nurtured, how capital is allocated, and how the next generation is inspired to build. The Roadmap 2026–2030 offers a credible, evidence-based, and co-created path toward that change, and we are proud to support it.

As a [Strategic/Initiative/Ecosystem/Academic] partner, [Organisation name] commits to contributing to the realisation of this roadmap through [funding / in-kind support via expertise, networks, media, research, etc. / or a combination of both].

We look forward to being part of this alliance, using verified evidence by 2030 to demonstrate what becomes possible when the full talent of Switzerland is given a real chance to succeed.

We encourage other organisations to join us.

[Name] [Title] [Organisation] [Date]



Contact us

hello@femalethinktank.com

Submit Your Support Here

[Fill out the support form](#)

Follow us

fe-male-think-tank.com

[Follow us on LinkedIn](#)

Credits Publisher and Initiator:

FE+MALE Think Tank

The BFBI (Beat Funding Bias Initiative) Concept:

Patricia M. Montesinos in cooperation with the FE+MALE Think Tank

Author: Katja Einesalo

Editor: FE+MALE Think Tank

Design and layout: Agota Balai

Data collection was primarily conducted during a Forum in Bern and three online Labs dedicated to legal frameworks, networks, and education. Supplemented by various research papers, participant feedback was used to draft the core ideas for the initiatives.

Disclaimer: The authors and publishers cannot be held responsible for any errors or for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this publication.



ERNST GÖHNER STIFTUNG

WISSENSCHAFT.
BEWEGEN
GEBERT RUF STIFTUNG