

Press release

Baio Labs receives CHF 150,000 from Venture Kick to accelerate drug discovery with generative AI

St.Gallen/Zurich/Lausanne, October 6, 2026 — The EPFL spin-off Baio Labs has obtained CHF 150,000 from Venture Kick to advance its generative AI platform for early-stage drug discovery. By designing novel molecules for specific therapeutic targets in seconds, the biotech startup aims to help researchers identify promising drug candidates faster and at significantly lower cost.

Finding new drug candidates traditionally involves screening large libraries of existing molecules to identify those that could act on a specific disease target. Despite considerable time and expense, these approaches explore only a tiny fraction of the vast number of possible molecules. Depending on the target, such discovery campaigns can take several years and cost millions of dollars.

[Baio Labs](#) is developing its platform, Drugon, to shift this process from searching existing chemical libraries to rationally designing new molecules for a specific target. Powered by a generative AI model that considers the three-dimensional structure of the target, the platform can generate novel small molecules in seconds. Drugon brings molecular design, synthesis, and experimental validation into one integrated ecosystem, enabling medicinal chemists to move more efficiently from a therapeutic target to potential drug candidates.

With Drugon, Baio Labs targets a rapidly expanding computational drug discovery market. The team aims to work with pharmaceutical companies to materially reduce their development timelines and bring down the cost of the drug discovery process.

The CHF 150,000 from Venture Kick will help Baio Labs to scale up R&D efforts and implement their go-to-market strategy.

Baio Labs was founded by Ilia Igashov, Arne Schneuing, and Bruno Correia, two EPFL PhD students and a professor who are pioneering the use of generative AI for structure-based drug design.

“Venture Kick’s support has been instrumental for us to achieve our early business development goals and get ready for future equity investments,” highlighted Ilia Igashov.



Co-founders: CTO Arne Schneuing and CEO Ilia Igashov

[Baio Labs' profile on Venture Kick](#)

About Venture Kick

The Venture Kick philanthropic initiative provides more than 1 million in seed funding to Swiss startups and offers a well-structured entrepreneurial path toward building a winning business. Startups pitch to Venture Kick juries in three stages to obtain CHF 150,000, gain direct feedback, and access a network of 250 international investors. Winners of Venture Kick are eligible for an InnoBooster grant of CHF 150,000 and an additional CHF 850,000 investment from the Kickfund.

Since its launch in 2007, Venture Kick has supported 1,286 Swiss startup projects with CHF 103 million from private donors. Thanks to financial support, coaching, and networking with investors, this initiative has led to the emergence of 1,000+ thriving startup companies and the creation of 16,100+ jobs. Venture Kick alumni companies have attracted investments of CHF 10.2 billion and represent 66 companies ranked in the Top100 Swiss Startups in 2025 (<https://www.top100startups.swiss>).

Venture Kick is an initiative by the Kick Foundation, supported by a private consortium and operated by Venturelab. The supporting foundations and private philanthropic partners include Gebert Rűf Stiftung, Ernst Gűhner Stiftung, Fondation ALCEA, Hauser-Stiftung, Andrű Hoffmann,

Hansjörg Wyss, Martin Haefner, Fondation ProTechno, ESA BIC Switzerland, Swisscom, Lichtsteiner Foundation, and Deep Tech Nation Switzerland Foundation.

Find more information on venturekick.ch, with [all startup projects supported by Venture Kick](#), and follow the success stories of our startups on [LinkedIn](#).

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