

Nicole Herzog named 'Business Angel of the Year 2026'

Rotkreuz/Zug, 24 June 2026 – The SECA (Swiss Private Equity & Corporate Finance Association) has named Nicole Herzog 'Business Angel of the Year 2026'. The jury has recognised her long-standing commitment as an investor, mentor and bridge-builder within the Swiss start-up ecosystem. Of particular note is her practical approach as a hands-on angel investor, her active support for founders in the early stages of their businesses, and her lasting contribution to the professionalisation of governance and financing within Switzerland's innovation hub.

Since the umantis exit in 2012, Nicole Herzog has been investing in Swiss and international start-ups and has a broadly diversified portfolio across various technology and innovation sectors. Her focus is particularly on early-stage investments, where she often gets involved at a very early stage of a company's development and supports founding teams through several funding rounds. In doing so, she regularly takes on an active role as lead investor and supports start-ups not only with capital, but also with strategic advice, governance expertise and access to relevant networks.

Her current investments include, amongst others, Pave Space, Stellar Alpina, Get More Brain, Casus, Skribble and Insphero. She is also actively involved in board and supervisory board roles. Nicole Herzog has been a member of the Board of Directors at VIU since 2015 and has served as its Chairwoman for the past two years. She has also been a member of the Board at Inyova since 2024. Previously, she was Chairwoman of Sherpany and supported the company from 2013 until its successful exit to Datasite.

Within the Swiss start-up ecosystem, the co-founder of b2venture and umantis is regarded as a dedicated mentor and key sparring partner for founders. Alongside her investments, she supports numerous founders through one-to-one mentoring, particularly female founders. In doing so, she facilitates contacts with venture capital investors, potential customers and industry experts, and supports start-ups in tackling strategic and entrepreneurial challenges.

"Nicole Herzog combines entrepreneurial thinking with a genuine passion for innovation and people. She invests at an early stage, supports companies over the long term and brings her experience to bear with great credibility and commitment. Founders particularly value her direct approach, her operational support and her ability to open doors," says Dr Thomas Dübendorfer, President of SICTIC. As a member of SECA's Venture Capital Section, SICTIC is responsible for coordinating the jury for the 'Business Angel of the Year' award.

Alongside her work as an investor, Nicole Herzog is actively committed to the further development of the Swiss innovation and investment ecosystem. She regularly speaks on innovation, venture capital and entrepreneurship, is a jury member for the Swiss Technology Awards and a member of the Advisory Board of the ESA Business Incubator. She also teaches a course at IMD on 'Best Practices in Start-up / Scale-up Governance' and acts as a mentor and role model for the next generation of entrepreneurs.

"I enjoy investing in companies at a very early stage because I find working with founders inspiring. Of course, I want to make money in the long term, but with such a high level of risk, it has to be enjoyable above all else. And that's exactly what it is for me," says Nicole Herzog.

The support of dedicated business angels such as Nicole Herzog plays a key role in ensuring that Switzerland remains an attractive location for innovative start-ups and technology-oriented companies. The 'Business Angel of the Year 2026' award was presented to her at the SECA event following a laudatory speech by Dr Thomas Dübendorfer.

For over two decades, SECA has been honouring outstanding business angels for their commitment and achievements as angel investors. The jury comprises representatives from SECA and its Venture Capital (VC) chapter, as well as from SICTIC. Previous winners include, amongst others, the independent management consultant Peter Kessel, Cornelia Gut-Villa, Managing Director of the Startfeld Foundation; Yello frontman and entrepreneur Dieter Meier; Logitech founder Daniel Borel; Joachim Schoss, founder of the Scout24 Group; Prof. Dr Cuno Pümpin from the University of St Gallen; Swiss fintech entrepreneurs Gian Reto à Porta and David Studer; and last year's winner, Thomas Dübendorfer.

About SECA

SECA (Swiss Private Equity & Corporate Finance Association) represents the Swiss private equity, venture capital and corporate finance sectors. SECA's aim is to promote private equity and corporate finance activities to relevant target groups and the general public. It also fosters the exchange of ideas and cooperation between its members and their clients. Promoting professional development, as well as developing and implementing ethical codes of conduct, are further areas of focus.

About SICTIC

SICTIC is Switzerland's leading business angel investor club, specialising in early-stage start-ups. SICTIC offers professional, institutional and corporate investors access to deal flow from Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Through its more than 500 active investors, SICTIC has helped over 400 start-ups in its portfolio secure funding rounds. SICTIC is led by volunteer board members. The SICTIC investor community is actively involved in the Swiss start-up ecosystem by participating in pitching events, providing close support to start-ups, appointing board members to portfolio companies, supporting numerous ecosystem organisations and their initiatives, and contributing its experience in building successful businesses. SICTIC is a long-standing member of SECA and its Venture Capital Section, and coordinates the jury for the 'Business Angel of the Year' award.

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