

KEY FIGURES IN THE 17TH FINANCIAL YEAR

Funds totalling CHF 14.9 million (2013: 14.6; 2012: 11.1) were used for the foundation's activities (cash-out). CHF 13.8 million (13.6; 10.2) were channelled into direct and implementation grants for 66 (66; 47) support projects. Of these projects, 18 (14; 14) were \leq CHF 50,000, 47 (50; 31) between CHF 50,000 and CHF 500,000 and 1 (2; 2) \geq CHF 500,000. Total foundation expenditure amounted to 74% (71; 8.5) of the funds used, of which 2.2 % (2.1; 2.6) were administrative expenses and 5.2% (5.0; 5.9) were direct project expenses for the themes supported. Foundation assets as at 31.12.14 amounted to CHF 175.3 million (173.4; 170.6). In the year under review, a net portfolio performance of 8.43% (8.06; 8.07) was achieved with a largely passive asset allocation.

SELECTION

The evaluation of projects is based on a grant-making strategy comprising a two-stage process of selection by the Board of Trustees. If a project proposal is approved, an invitation is extended to submit an application. Not all projects that meet the grant-making strategy criteria can be financed. This is why, in a final step, a ranking is drawn up which in many cases leads to the exclusion of applications as "approved but not funded".

TRANSPARENCY

The website grstiftung.ch presents the foundation's policy and strategy (target domains, areas of activity), openly discloses the support criteria and provides information on procedures. The following information is given for every project supported: project managers, total grant amount, abstract, project status and results. All information reported, which is structured by project stages, is continuously updated.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Gebert RUF Stiftung complies with the Swiss Foundation Code 2009, is a member of Swiss Foundations and works closely with the University of Basel's CEPS (Center for Philanthropy Studies). Relying on an internal control system (ICS), the Board of Trustees carries out an annual risk assessment of all foundation activities.

MANAGEMENT

Board of Trustees: Prof. Dr. Rudolf Marty (since 2005; chairman), Prof. Dr. Peter Forstmoser (since 1997; deputy chairman), Prof. Dr. Richard Bühler (since 2011), Prof. Dr. Susan Gasser (since 2006), Dr. Katja Gentinetta (since 2013), Prof. Dr. Jürg Schifferli (since 2007), Prof. Dr. Roland Siegwart (since 2012); **Executive Team:** Dr. Philipp Egger (CEO / Director), Dr. Pascale Vonmont (Deputy Director), Jacqueline Grollimund (Project Support / Controlling), Corinne Burkhardt (Assistant / Back Office); **Committees and Advisory Boards:** Chairman's Committee, Nomination and Finance Committee, Eastern Europe Committee, various ad hoc committees, "venture kick" Strategy Board, "Modellprojekte Fachhochschulen" Advisory Board, "Rare Diseases" Advisory Board

EXTERNAL UNITS

Investment concept / strategic pooling partners: ECOFIN Portfolio Solutions AG, Zurich; **fund management:** Swiss & Global Asset Management AG, Zurich; **asset management / fund management:** State Street Global Advisors (SSgA), Boston (global equities and government bonds); Syz Asset Management S.A., Zurich (CHF bonds); Rogge Global Partners Plc, London (global corporate bonds); **investment controlling:** ECOFIN Investment Consulting AG, Zurich; **accounting:** Bourcart Treuhand AG, Basel; **auditors:** Copartner Revision AG, Basel; **supervisory authority:** Swiss Federal Supervisory Board for Foundations, Berne

PUBLISHING DETAILS

The present short report by the foundation's management is also available in German and French. The full annual report of the Board of Trustees in accordance with Swiss GAAP ARR can be downloaded from grstiftung.ch.

Zurich / Basel, February 2015



RESOURCE DEPLOYMENT – MAKING AN IMPACT

CLUSTER IMPACT

Illustrated by the area of activity
 “Science Entrepreneurship”:

- Entrepreneurship
- Themes with gaps
- Sustainable start-up support
- Cooperations with partner institutions



BRINGING OWLS TO WHERE THERE ARE NONE

In his comedy “The Birds”, Aristophanes comments on a passing owl: “Who brought the owl to Athens?” The satirist was playing on the fact that Athenian silver coins bore an owl as a symbol of the city’s patron goddess Athena. By this he meant that it was superfluous to bring silver coins to wealthy Athens.

Given the modest proportions of their resources compared with the contents of government coffers, it is equally superfluous for foundations to invest in areas which the state or others have either committed to fund or no longer wish to support. Foundations should not provide supplementary funding for themes considered mainstream or fashionable, nor should they take on phased-out projects. On the contrary, foundations can achieve the greatest leverage where gaps exist or where potential is going to waste, where the risk – and, in the event of success, the reward – is especially great. In order to find suitable niches and fill them credibly, foundations must never cease investing in developing their own competencies.

SHAPERS, NOT ADMINISTRATORS

The idea that foundations should not give away money (donor foundations) but instead make investments (grant-making foundations) is gaining acceptance in the foundation sector. But how is their return on investment to be measured? How can a return on grant-making be reported? Based on the annual accounts, only the cash-out and, at best, the amount of support provided can be expressed in figures.

The question as to the impact of grant-making activities does not relate to output but to outcome, while distinguishing between individual project impact and thematic cluster impact. Quantitative measuring methods can deliver selectively significant results. However, to achieve the maximum possible return on grant-making (impact) calls for an underlying system designed to support and control grant-making activities that is adapted to the foundation’s structure. The key words here are specialized knowledge, focusing, selection, support agreement, reporting, evaluation, networking.

A KICK-START, NOT JUST A NUDGE

Foundations like to see themselves as flexible, pragmatic enablers. This somewhat unfettered approach works very well for individual projects with strong built-in safeguards. But something new, bigger and innovative needs more than a mere nudge, it has to be given a firm kick-start fuelled by ample grant support.

Successful start-up financing is not just about making a one-off grant. There are usually several phases to navigate with dogged determination when it comes to breaking new ground and overcoming inertia. Grant-making institutions are afraid of creating long-term dependencies leaving them with grant commitments that they can no longer get out of. This is why foundations need to factor into their planning the complete cycle of any major commitment: The initial phase is followed by a consolidation phase and, ultimately, by a systematic outphasing stage to evaluate whether something new has made an impact on the (grant-making) market.

SUPPORT AND CONTROLLING 2014

- 244 project inquiries, 140 project ideas
- 84 project proposals, 72 project applications
- 9 areas of activity, 138 running projects
- 58 contract discussions, 42 debriefings
- numerous project, programme and Advisory Board meetings
- 4 quarterly meetings of the Board of Trustees
- 1 strategy workshop for the Board of Trustees