

GENEVA
SCIENCE & DIPLOMACY
ANTICIPATOR
GESDA

PRESS RELEASE

**The Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA)
starts operations and unveils its priorities**

Geneva, 9 December 2019 - The Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA), announced on 20 February 2019 as a joint initiative by the Swiss Federal Council and the Canton and City of Geneva, will start operations on 1 January 2020. This initiative with a global outlook and reach will leverage both International Geneva's ecosystem and well-recognized innovation worldwide for the benefit of the planet and its inhabitants. Meeting on 7 and 8 December 2019 at Campus Biotech Geneva, the GESDA Board of Directors agreed on the Foundation's priorities to explore over the next three years.

Use the future to build the present

Humanity is facing global challenges putting people and planet under stress. At the same time, the world is experiencing breakthrough science and technological discoveries at an unprecedented speed. The world's most advanced laboratories are already developing the future through their work on frontier science and technologies. Convinced that the world community cannot afford to miss this potential for well-being and inclusive development, especially for people currently living in less advanced, developing and emerging countries, GESDA's ambition is to help do so by anticipating cutting-edge science and technology and translating them into effective tools for humanity.

In order to achieve this, GESDA will:

- Build new bridges between the scientific and policy communities;
- Identify laboratories around the world working at the frontiers of science;
- Map cutting-edge scientific initiatives that have the potential to address new global challenges;
- Anticipate their potential to help address existing and emerging challenges;
- Build consensus among relevant public and private stakeholders;
- Develop exploratory initiatives and projects aimed at improving well-being by addressing emerging challenges of our time;
- Define governance to translate next-generation technologies into early-stage applications;
- Establish public-private impact funds to assist in the implementation of large-scale projects.

Focus on three fundamental questions for the world population

GESDA will address three fundamental questions about people, society and planet through the anticipation of scientific frontier issues and the related emerging challenges :

- WHO ARE WE? What does it mean to be human at the age of robots, gene editing and augmented reality?
- HOW ARE WE GOING TO LIVE TOGETHER? Which deployment of technology can help reduce inequality and foster inclusive development and well-being?
- HOW CAN WE ASSURE MANKIND'S WELL-BEING WITH THE SUSTAINABLE HEALTH OF OUR PLANET EARTH? How can we supply the world population the necessary food and energy and regenerate our planet?

Anticipate, accelerate, translate

The foundation will focus during its 30-month pilot phase on:

- i. **Anticipation:** focus on anticipating a limited number of the next-generation science, technology and societal frontier issues and emerging challenges;
- ii. **Acceleration:** ensure that the world population and diplomacy actors are central to the discussions on those emerging challenges through collaborative creative coalitions;
- iii. **Translation:** deploy anticipatory solutions in order to address sustainable needs of the world community.

As a starting point, the Academic Forum and the Diplomacy Forum will work together on the following frontier scientific issues and related emerging challenges:

Scientific Frontier Issues	Examples of Emerging Challenges
Quantum revolution & advanced Artificial intelligence	Individual identity protection, control mechanisms, inclusiveness
Human augmentation	Longevity, germline gene editing, brain-machine interface
Eco-regeneration and geoengineering	Synthetic biology, decarbonation, regenerative agriculture
Science and diplomacy	Conflict modelling, forecasting and prevention

Building creative coalitions to enhance inclusive growth and well-being

GESDA will bring together different actors to map science trends, the related emerging challenges, enabling and regulating solutions, and concrete actions that ad-hoc public-private partnerships can finance. To do this, GESDA is composed of the Board of Directors, the General Secretariat, an Academic Forum, a Diplomacy Forum and an Impact Fund. Their collaborative role will be to create a common language and shared objectives between actors with different identities and to turn them into creative, impactful coalitions bringing together diplomacy-at-large, science, business, NGOs and society.

In this perspective, and in order to gain experience, GESDA will start by accompanying two first experimental projects in 2020:

1. I-DAIR (International Digital Health & AI Research Collaborative) in the field of Artificial Intelligence for Health, chaired by Indian Ambassador Amandeep Gill, former co-director of the High Level Panel of the UN General Secretary on Digital Transformation.
2. The creation of a Geneva-Zurich Center for Science Diplomacy in the field of conflict modelling initiated by the University of Geneva and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH) along with other national and international partners.

30 months to become a respected multilateral science diplomacy start-up

GESDA's initial start-up phase is three years. Deliverables include:

- 2020 – establish the four thematic platforms and produce relevant position papers;
- 2021 – implement and finance concrete projects;
- Start 2022 – Board of Directors evaluates progress to develop a proposal for the future of the initiative for GESDA's founders.

GESDA will provide regular updates about its activities to the public.

Located at Campus Biotech Geneva, Switzerland

The Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator will leverage Geneva's vibrant national and international ecosystem to strengthen global science diplomacy. It will build on Geneva's and Switzerland's scientific and innovative strengths and their reputation for innovation, peace and neutrality.

GESDA will closely collaborate with key international organizations and NGOs based in Geneva, including the United Nations, the multitude of UN technical organizations, the World Economic Forum, the Cyber Peace Institute and the Swiss Digital Initiative on digital ethics.

GESDA will operate from Campus Biotech Geneva, an international centre of excellence in biotechnology and life sciences (Neuroscience & Neurotechnology, AI driven Digital Health, Global Health and Digital Continuous Education) which was founded in 2013 by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), the University of Geneva (UNIGE), the Bertarelli Family and Hansjörg Wyss. GESDA will collaborate with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), a world-class research and higher learning institution dedicated to the study of world affairs, with a particular emphasis on the cross-cutting fields of international relations and development issues.

More about GESDA

Website

www.gesda.global

Contact

Please contact Daria Robinson at info@gesda.global

Phone: +41 (0) 58 201 02 61

Address

Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA)

Campus Biotech Geneva

Chemin des Mines 9

CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland

More about GESDA People

Board of Directors

- **Peter Brabeck-Letmathe**, Chairman
Austrian entrepreneur; Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the World Economic Forum (WEF); spent 50 years at Swiss multinational company Nestlé, acting as CEO from 1997 to 2007 and as Chairman of the Board of Directors from 2005 to 2017.
- **Patrick Aebischer**, Vice-Chairman
Professor of Neuroscience; former President of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) from 2000 to 2016.
- **Samantha Besson**
Professor at the Collège de France in Paris (holder of the Chair in *The Law of International Institutions*) and Professor of Public International Law and European Law at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.
- **Micheline Calmy-Rey**
Former President of the Swiss Confederation and former Swiss Minister of Foreign Affairs; currently Professor at the Global Studies Institute (GSI) at the University of Geneva.
- **Matthias Egger**
President of the Research Council of the Swiss National Research Foundation and Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at the University of Bern, Switzerland.
- **Sir Jeremy Farrar**
Director of the Wellcome Trust, London, and former Professor of Tropical Medicine at the University of Oxford.
- **Fabiola Gianotti**
Director-General of CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research), Geneva, and Professor of particle physics.
- **Mamokgethi Phakeng**
Vice-Chancellor (President) of the University of Cape Town, South Africa and Professor of Mathematics Education.
- **Chorh Chuan Tan**
Singapore's Chief Health Scientist, former President of the National University of Singapore (NUS) and of the World Economic Forum's Global University Leaders Forum (GULF).

Commissions

- **Academic Forum**
Joël Mesot, Chair
President of the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH), Switzerland; Professor of Physics (Dynamics of Strongly Correlated Materials and Nuclear Magnetic Resonance).
- **Diplomacy Forum**
Michael Møller, Chair
Former Director General of the United Nations Office in Geneva from 2013 to 2019.
- **Impact Fund**
tbd

Executive Team

- **Stéphane Decoutère**, Secretary-General
- **Gérard Escher**, Senior Advisor to the Board (as of 1 January 2020)
- **Martin Müller**, Executive Director, Academic Forum
- **Daria Robinson**, Executive Director, Diplomacy Forum