



UNIL and the Indo-Swiss Research Programme

UNICA IRO Meeting

ULB-VUB, Tuesday, May 7, 2013



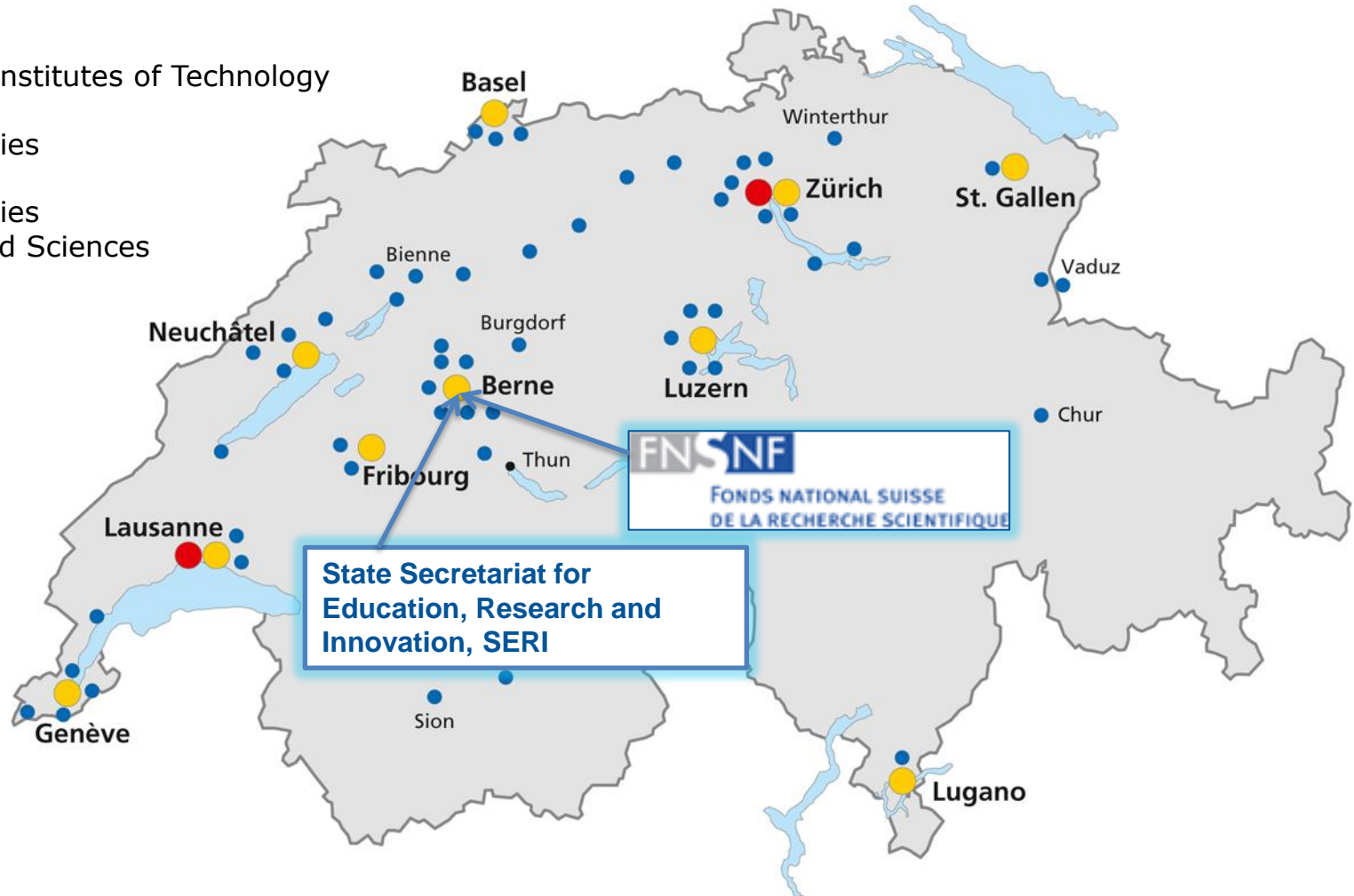
UNIL | Université de Lausanne

Switzerland: small, beautiful and... complex

● Federal Institutes of Technology

● Universities

● Universities of Applied Sciences



For each ●: 1 Ministry of Education!

Swiss international bilateral agreements on science

- > In 2005, a new **Secretary of State for Education, Research and Innovation** (SERI, C. Kleiber) had ideas for international research policy but no budget ...
- > At that time, the **Federal government** was entitled only to sign multilateral programmes such as the EU FP and the Bologna Process but no bilateral agreements with partner countries
- > The **Swiss National Foundation for Research**, who is independent from the central government, was used only to a bottom-up approach at the national level, and had no international policy

But, **SERI** succeeded

- > in convincing the national Parliament of the interest for all Switzerland to develop research relations with BRICS states, starting with China and India
- > and, ... that a budget was needed.



How did it start?

- > The first bilateral programmes were started as a pilot in 2005 – 2007 and, since no central agency was ready to run this new type of collaboration, launched only by the 2 Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology
- > They divided the world between them :
 - ETH Zurich for China
 - EPF Lausanne for India...

But

- > The Universities disagreed and complained about the selected research topics oriented towards the Federal institutes researchers, the rather discreet calls, etc...



The next steps

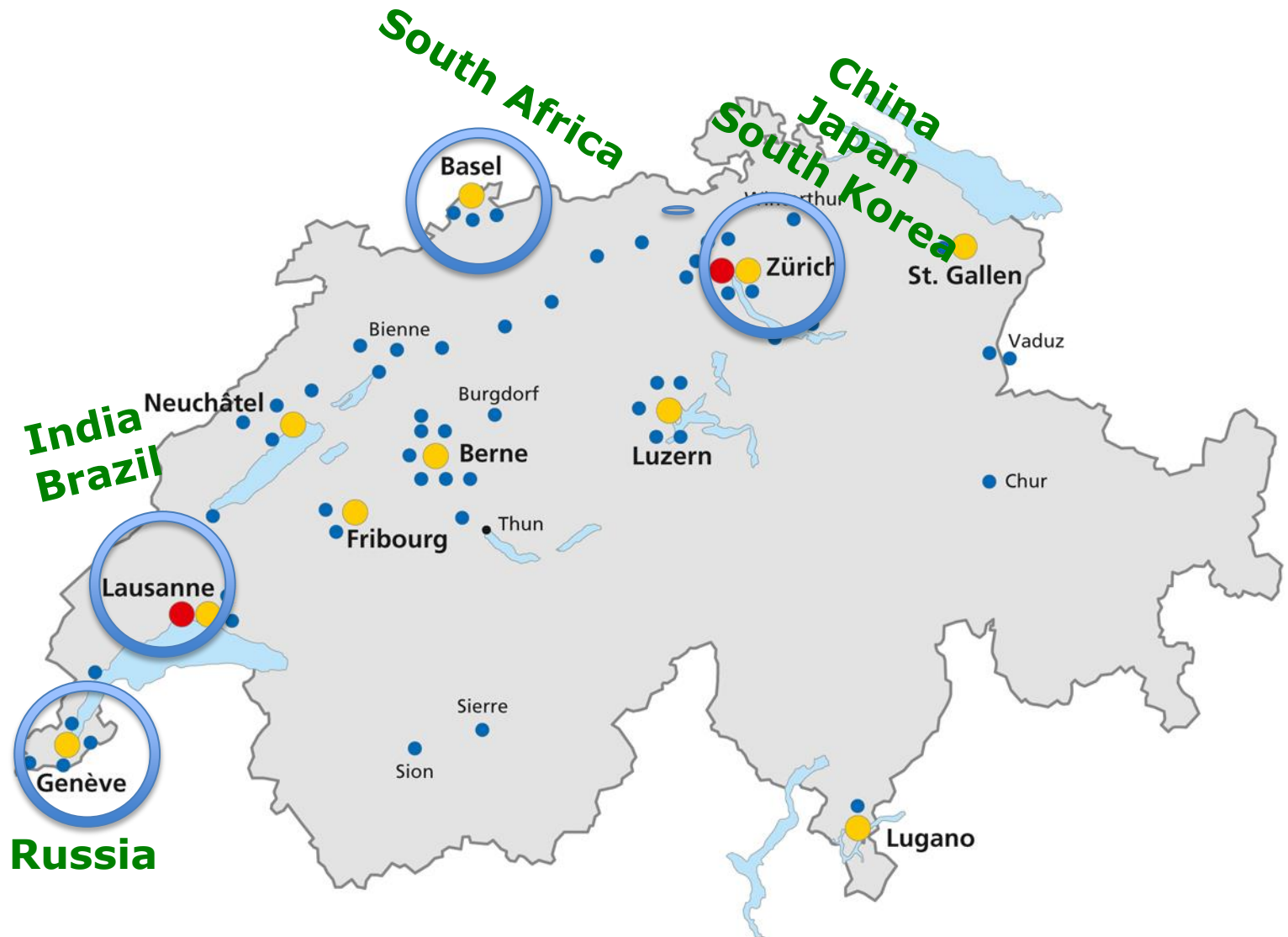
- > In 2008, Universities were admitted as Leading Houses or Associated Leading Houses
 - UNIL became Associated Leading House to the EFPL for India
 - our International Relations Office was designated to run this programme
- > The programme was enlarged to Russia, South Africa and later to Brazil and South Korea

BUT still

- > Not an impressive budget :
 - for each region, 8-10 millions € for 4 years (i.e. 2 million /year) from Switzerland plus 'matching funds' in the partner country.



Bilateral co-operation became complex too, ...



Funding Instruments: General Principle

> **A small number of « large » projects:**

- Joint Research Projects (2-3 years) in different priority areas depending on partner country

> **A large number of « small » projects, depending on partner country:**

- Institutional Partnerships
- Faculty Exchange Grants
- Student Exchange Grants (Postdoc, PhD, Master)
- Special initiatives like workshops, seminars, etc.



Why UNIL Associated Leading House to EPFL for India?

- > UNIL has a longstanding tradition of **Indian studies** starting in 1903
- > UNIL **strenghts** in Medicine, Life sciences, Human and Social sciences, Environmental sciences are well-matched to the EPFL engineering strenghts
- > UNIL is **geographically** very **close** to EPFL as we share the same campus facilities, several research platforms, teaching hours (6'000 per y.) etc.



Which partners in India?

1. Engineering, hard and natural sciences, medicine

- > The most important part of the research collaboration programme is in «The Agreement» signed between
 - **SERI** in Bern and
 - **DST** (Department of Science and Technology) in New Delhi
- > On the Swiss side, the **EPFL and UNIL teams** run the programme for all the Swiss HE and research eligible institutions
- > With the support of the **Swiss National Research Foundation** for the scientific (and paid!) evaluation of the Joint Research Projects.



Which partners in India?

2. Social sciences

- > UNIL particular mission in joining EPFL was to develop a collaboration with India in Social sciences : UNIL has a strong social sciences component including the SCESS (Swiss Center of Expertise in the Social Sciences)
- > However, in India, no governmental Department is covering research in Social sciences as there is no Central Agency for all research fields
- > In 2011, we approached the Indian Council for Social Sciences Research (ICSSR)
- > In February 2012, after a visit to ICSSR, an agreement on behalf of the State Secretariat was signed between ICSSR and UNIL-ALH for all the Swiss HE institutions and we started working together



Impact of the programme with India on the UNIL

> Research collaborations

- New research collaborations in Microbiology, Biochemistry, Ecology an evolution, Risk analysis, Governance, Urban Development, Physiopathology, Biotechnology, etc
- Creation of an UNIL – India Transdisciplinary network of researchers

> Institutional partnerships

From 2 partners in 2005 to 8 in 2013

> Rabindranath Tagore Chair on Modern India Studies

October 4, 2011: Signature of an Agreement with the *Indian Council for Cultural Relations* on the creation at the UNIL of a *Chair of Modern India Studies* in the presence of the two countries Presidents.



BEFORE, ...

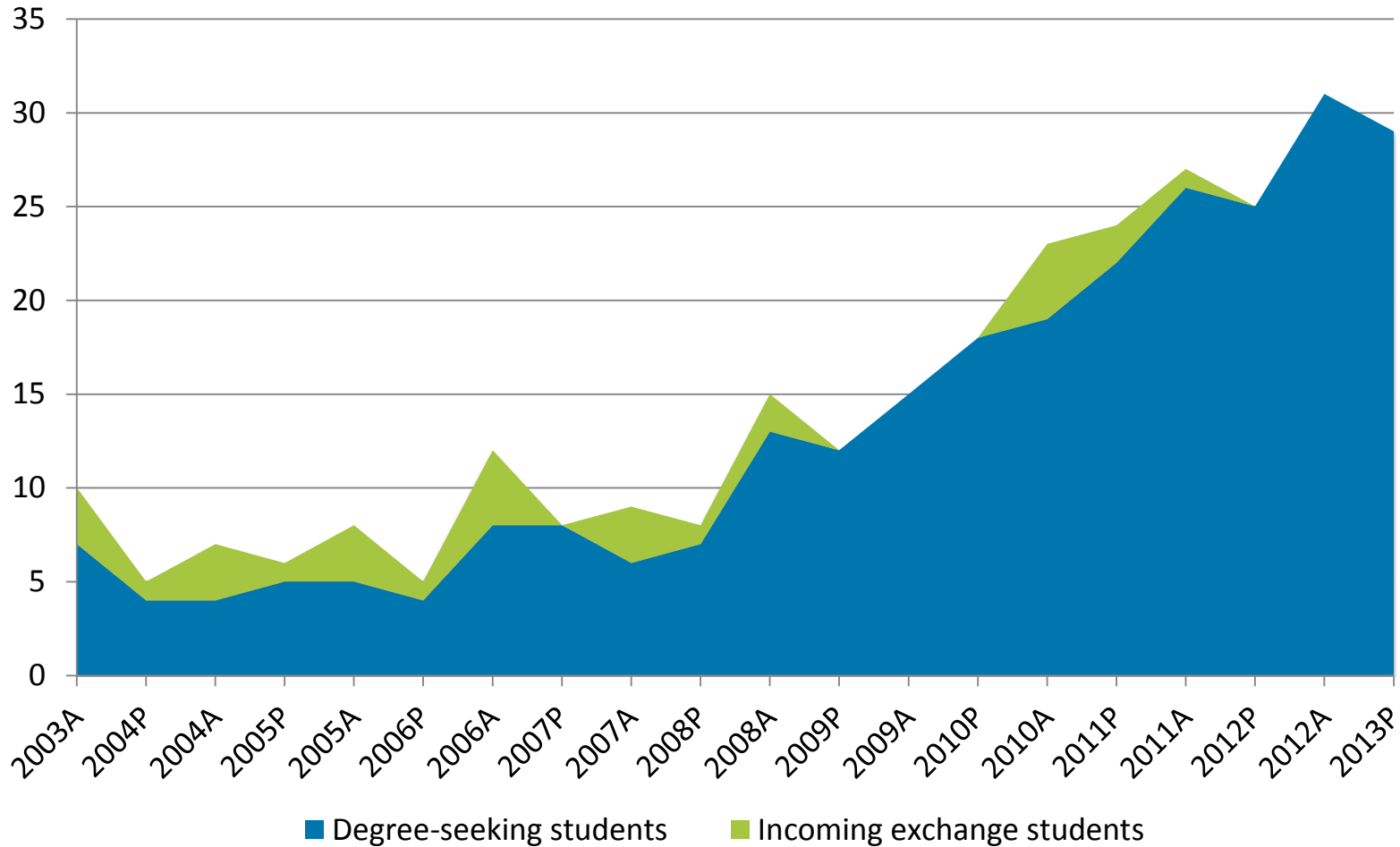


2 Ladies and 1 Nobel Prize



Impact of the programme on the UNIL

Increasing presence of Indian students at the UNIL ?



Impact of the programmes on the UNIL International Office

The bilateral programmes helped to improve our relationships

1. with UNIL researchers:

- a. Thanks to the calls for BRICS we discovered which academics within the UNIL were interested in collaborative work with these countries and function with them also in other contexts for other purposes
- b. In addition to the bilateral programmes, we are more and more involved in international research projects (information, support, promotion, etc.)

2. with our neighbour, EPFL



3. with other Swiss institutions including the new Swiss Universities for Applied Sciences

4. with various partners in India: ICSSR, more and more Indian institutions with the very efficient support of Swiss representatives such as Scientific Consultate "swissnex" in Bangalore and the Swiss Scientific Counsellor at our Embassy in New Delhi



Impact of the programme on the UNIL International Office

The programme with India also helped us to

- > improve our knowledge of the Indian governance and HE system
 - > adapt to the complexity of its functioning and try to explain ours!
 - > become more visible to their multifaceted HE institutions
 - > develop new and additional intercultural skills
- > and above all, improve our ability to practice patience!*



And here is our secret weapon:



the Swiss Alps are extremely bollywoodian!

