

One way of doing this, he says, is to help these young companies begin relationships that may lead to open innovation deals with multinationals. "Open innovation gives a real dynamic for small companies," Mr. Mesnier explains. "It encourages them to go ahead and it opens doors to business models that they may not have considered."

Multinationals based here also benefit from synergies with local players, he says. "The big ICT players implanted in Switzerland, like Google, Yahoo, HP and Logitech, are more and more interested in looking at local innovation," he says.

Catalyst

ALP ICT's role is to be a "facilitator", to bring all the players involved in ICT together towards an end objective: creating a source of economic value for the entire region. To help start-ups connect with multinationals, ALP ICT sponsors their participation at industry events and assists them in meeting potential partners and clients.

Before each event, ALP ICT issues a "call" for projects across the seven cantons in Western Switzerland. "We contact all the universities, incubators and science parks and go through our data-base, and then we select projects on the basis of their promise," he says. In October, the global ITC companies will be co-funding to Geneva for ITU World Telecom 09. ALP ICT will be part of a major Lake Geneva Region stand including Swisscom, research institutes, start-ups and SMEs.

"ALP ICT brought the theme 'Green City' that was picked up by the other participants," says Didier Mesnier. "We will create a showcase to present projects on three themes: mobility, domotics and the environment. Among the projects we'll be showing are drones that can detect changes in ozone over traffic and networks of captors that can measure the difference in flow, temperature or pollution in water. ■"

www.alpict.ch



A view of the Lake Geneva Region stand at ITU World Telecom 09

How the digital economy can help revive the global economy

World Telecom is a trade fair where the most important global companies show their newest technology. It is also a high-level conference, the Forum, where the CEOs of those same companies debate with each other, ministers, industry regulators, standard-setters and the general public.

This year's Forum should be most interesting. In a period of economic crisis, **ITU Secretary-General Hamadoun Touré** reminds us that the ICT sector is "the powerhouse of the global economy, in terms of GDP". "Investment in ICTs makes as much sense now," he says, "as it did in building the physical infrastructure of roads and railways during the great depression of the 1930s."

Managing the downturn while providing a platform for new growth is the essence of the Forum program, says **Bosco Fernandes, Forum Chairman**. The subjects and speakers have been chosen to explore the many challenges facing the industry,

from new investment and employment opportunities, technical change and new business models and environmental sustainability. The environmental issue is a relatively new consideration in the ICT sector, but one that may soon prove determining, he says.

"The amount of power used in telecom networks – the electricity consumption of switches, radio stations for wireless, back office equipment, etc. – is bigger than used by some major cities," says Mr. Fernandes. "This has a cost impact and an impact on our lives and is a fact that must be looked at. For the ITU, it is very important, especially in terms of emerging markets. This will be the chance to hear where the industry is going." ■

www.itu.int/WORLTD2009

ITU World Telecom 09 returns to Geneva October 5-9 at the Palexpo conference and exhibition center, 10 minutes from the city center and within walking distance of Geneva International Airport.

Green Finance: exploring the risks and the returns

We all know by now that climate change is a threat to the planet and to the global economy, but is it also an investment opportunity? What about the energy crisis? Or the scarcity of clean water? Problems or opportunities? Well, both, according to JetFin, a Geneva-based financial consulting company and organizer of professional conferences. To examine the strategies and risks involved in these new investment fields, JetFin is holding a specialized conference for investors and fund managers in Geneva in September.

Green investing is not new, explains **Pierre Lavaud, founder of JetFin**. What has suddenly made "green" more topical is a change in perception due to volatile oil prices and the economic crisis. "In trying times, it is essential to have political backing," says Mr. Lavaud. "The Obama Administration's strong support of an independent energy strategy will have an impact on finance." Another factor, he says, is the struggles of the automobile industry in the US: "if it is going to survive, it will survive green – it has no chance to stay like it is now." A third is the growing acceptance of stricter controls of CO2 emissions. "The mechanisms of carbon-trading that will be put in place to counter climate change represent opportunities for smart investors who understand them," he says. A fourth is the change in the perception of wind, geothermal and solar power as increasingly mainstream, as well as the need to replace aging infrastructure with environmentally sustainable technology.

"Every bank, every asset manager will, sooner or later, have products in the green field," says Pierre Lavaud. ■

www.jetfin.com/green2009

JetFinGreen 2009

- focuses on investment funds in developing countries
- advises investors on strategy and fund selection