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INTERVIEW

## Unlocking Single-Photon Vision by NovoViz

Interview with Dr. Andrada Muntean, CEO of NovoViz

[NovoViz](#) is a Swiss deep-tech start-up based in Neuchâtel that develops ultra-sensitive image sensors able to detect even single particles of light, known as photons. Instead of simply capturing standard images, their technology can “see” extremely fast and faint signals, which opens up new possibilities in fields such as medical imaging, industrial inspection, robotics, and security. In this interview, **Dr. Andrada Muntean**, CEO and founder of NovoViz, explains how her team is working to make this advanced technology more compact, more affordable, and easier to use by building part of the data processing directly into the chip itself.

Dr. Muntean, please explain what inspired the founding of NovoViz. From early on, I wanted the freedom to design exactly the circuits I envisioned, not just iterating on what already exists. Over the years, I saw how single-photon technology remained trapped in academia, locked behind complex, expensive setups that very few could access. That pushed me to take a different path and learn what it really means to bring technology to the market. In the end, it does not matter how “cool” the tech is: if the story does not resonate, there is no market. Building that story and product together is a different kind of challenge, one that fits me and that I truly wanted to pursue.

Can you explain NovoViz's core innovation in on-chip processing for their sensors and how it tackles the data overload challenges in single-photon detection?



Dr. Andrada Muntean is the CEO of NovoViz © NovoViz

NovoViz builds “smart” single-photon cameras that don't just capture data, they also think on the chip. Instead of flooding the computer with millions of raw single-photon frames, the sensor already cleans, combines and interprets a big part of the information directly on the chip. This means you only send out what really matters for the image or measurement, which massively reduces data overload and makes single-photon technology much easier to use in real systems.

Your NV04ASC sensor excels in high dynamic range imaging and low-light applications like depth sensing. What key performance metrics set it apart from competitors?

Our NV04ASC stands out because it combines true single-photon sensitivity

with an event-driven readout that only outputs data when and where photons arrive. This architecture delivers an effective equivalent frame rate of up to one hundred million frames per second, so it can efficiently handle very dark scenes with fast dynamics.

NovoViz has engaged with Japan through events like Mass-Trans Innovation Japan and Swissnex pitches. What opportunities do you see for your technology in the Japanese market?

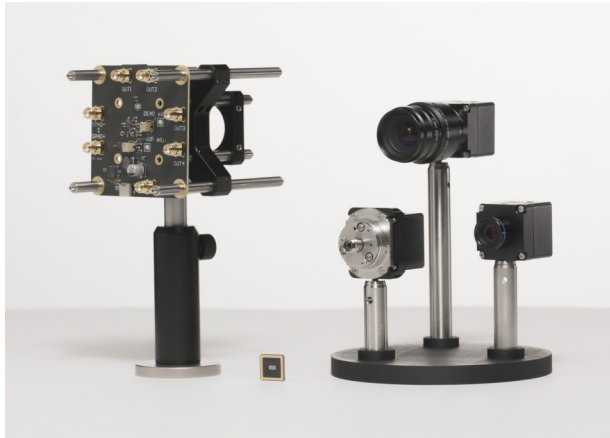
Japan is a very natural fit for NovoViz. The Japanese ecosystem is exceptionally strong in semiconductors, precision manufacturing and advanced R&D, with a high concentration of world-class labs and OEMs pushing the limits of imaging

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INTERVIEW



NovoViz showcases its innovative solid-state LiDAR technology developed in Switzerland. The images above feature compact prototypes, including a small CMOS-based sensor chip (left), modular camera-like systems on sturdy mounts, and precision components for high-speed 3D vision. © NovoViz

and sensing. Having spent the past year in Japan, I have seen first-hand how open many Japanese partners are to co-developing next-generation technologies when they see clear, long-term value. This creates strong opportunities to combine their strengths in system integration and volume manufacturing with our expertise in single-photon imaging, enabling joint solutions in various fields.

Are there specific collaborations or adaptations of your sensors targeted at Japanese partners or clients?

At this stage, we do not have Japan-exclusive sensor variants or collaborations that are publicly defined as “for the Japanese market only.” Our current portfolio is available globally, and in addition to standard products we offer custom sensor and system design tailored to specific applications and performance requirements. These custom developments are driven primarily by the use case, rather than by geography.

What are the next milestones for commercializing your camera systems and modules?

Next, we are focused on moving from early adopters to broader industrial deployment. Near-term milestones include scaling production of our existing imaging sensors, strengthening distribution through key partners, and finalizing new designs.

Looking ahead, how do you see NovoViz expanding its technology to make advanced, high-sensitivity imaging more affordable and accessible?

NovoViz sees accessibility coming from both technology and product strategy. The focus is on integrating more intelligence directly on the sensor, so users get clean, application-ready data instead of huge raw streams that require expensive hardware and expertise to handle.

This reduces system cost and complexity. In parallel, NovoViz plans to offer a broader range of camera modules and development kits at different performance and price points, so researchers, startups and established OEMs can all adopt high-sensitivity imaging without needing a custom, high-budget setup.

*Thank you for the interview!*

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To keep up-to-date with NovoViz, make sure you follow them on [LinkedIn](#).

## World Economic Forum (WEF) 2026 in Davos

*The 2026 World Economic Forum in Davos confirmed Switzerland's role as an important venue for discussions on trade, geopolitics and innovation. Under the theme "A Spirit of Dialogue", more than 60 heads of state, over 400 political leaders and many business representatives addressed global economic developments, security issues and the impact of technological change and sustainability on growth.*

Switzerland was represented by 4 Federal Councillors, with President Guy Parmelin focusing in particular on international economic developments, global trade policy and Switzerland's bilateral trade relations. On the sidelines of the meeting, he held talks with numerous heads of state and government on trade and economic cooperation and discussed European policy, security and multilateral issues with several partners. Parmelin's agenda included bilateral meetings with leaders from Europe, North America, Asia and the Middle East, where trade policy and economic ties were central topics. These discussions highlighted Switzerland's commitment to open markets amid global tensions. He also used the platform to strengthen relations with key trading partners, underscoring Davos as a space for pragmatic diplomacy.

A key element of this year's WEF was the informal ministerial meeting on World Trade Organization (WTO) issues chaired by President Parmelin, which brought together 21 trade ministers and WTO Director General Ngozi Okonjo Iweala in preparation for the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon. The ministers concentrated on areas where negotiations are close to convergence, including the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement and the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions, and underlined the importance of a functioning rules based multilateral trading system.

Through the "House of Switzerland", Switzerland also presented itself as a hub for dialogue on cross cutting global challenges. Events there addressed multilateral cooperation, international AI governance, global cybersecurity, the sustainable space economy, innovative financing for humanitarian aid and long-term energy security, which reflected priority themes on Switzerland's international agenda.

Sources: [World Economic Forum](#), [admin.ch](#), [admin.ch](#), [admin.ch](#)

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EVENT

## Key Findings of JETRO's Survey on Business Conditions of Japanese -Affiliated Companies Overseas

*From late August to September 2025, JETRO carried out an online survey examining the operational landscape of Japanese-affiliated companies, encompassing local subsidiaries (with a minimum 10% Japanese investment), branches, and representative offices across 82 countries and regions, identified through JETRO's global network of overseas offices.*

About 66.5% of responding companies expect to turn a profit in 2025, marking a second year of improvement. Profit expectations exceeded 70% in the Middle East, Southwest Asia, and Latin America, while Africa surpassed 60% for the first time. Over 40% foresee higher operating profits in 2026, though firms with strong U.S. trade links reported more pessimistic forecasts. Business growth remains most active in the Global South, particularly in

manufacturing, with more than 70% of pharmaceutical and agricultural firms planning expansion.

Roughly 40% of exporters to the United States said additional U.S. tariffs had a significant negative impact, with the share rising above 50% in Mexico and China. Around half of the companies in the auto sector were affected. Key challenges include weaker U.S. demand and stronger competition from third-country suppliers. Many firms are cutting costs, diversifying procurement, and enhancing local production and sales networks to respond.

Labor shortages have worsened over the past two years, with more than 30% reporting hiring difficulties, especially in Vietnam, Brazil, and India. While many are improving pay, benefits, and workplace

conditions, others strengthen recruitment via universities and social media and boost retention through training and internal events. Human rights initiatives are also advancing: Over 30% now conduct due diligence, with most noting fewer internal human rights risks and better employee engagement.

Source: [JETRO](#)

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## 革新

INNOVATION

## Swiss Company Santhera Closes Deal with Japan's Nxera Pharma

Swiss company [Santhera Pharmaceuticals](#) from Pratteln (BL) has sealed an exclusive licensing agreement with Japan's [Nxera Pharma](#) for its drug AGAMREE (vamorolone) in key Asia-Pacific markets. Announced on 8 January 2026, the deal targets treatment for Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD) in Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand.

Santhera develops and commercializes drugs for unmet needs in neuromuscular and pulmonary conditions, employing around 79 people across subsidiaries in Switzerland, the US, Canada, Germany, and Finland. Nxera Pharma, formerly known as *Sosci Heptares*, is a Tokyo-based biopharma with over 350 staff in Japan, the UK, Switzerland, and South Korea, running 30+ programs in neurology, GI, immunology, metabolic disorders, and rare diseases. It leverages the proprietary NxWave platform for structure-based drug design and handles late-stage development and commercialization in Japan/APAC.

Santhera receives USD 40 million upfront: USD 30 million in cash and USD 10 million via equity investment in about 530'000 shares at CHF 14.91 each—a 20% premium over the 30-day volume-weighted average price. The agreement could reach USD 205 million in total, including up to USD 165 million in milestones for sales and approvals, plus double-digit royalties on net sales. Shares come with a standard lock-up period post-closing.

Nxera takes charge of development, regulatory approvals, like a bridging study, and commercialization in these territories, drawing on its APAC expertise and past work with vamorolone from acquiring *Idorsia's* Japan business. Santhera keeps global rights elsewhere, building on AGAMREE's approvals in the US, EU, UK, China, Hong Kong, and Canada. Leading Swiss law firm *Homburger* advised Santhera on Swiss corporate, capital markets, and financing elements.

AGAMREE offers a novel steroid alternative for DMD, matching efficacy to traditional corticosteroids but with fewer side effects like growth restriction or bone issues, as shown in the VISION-DMD study. Santhera's CEO Dario Eklund called it a milestone for global access, praising Nxera's regional strengths. Nxera's CEO Christopher Cargill highlighted AGAMREE's potential to shift DMD care standards in these markets.

Sources: [Santhera website](#), [swisstrade](#), [Homburger News](#)

## Agenda

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AGENDA

✓ Stay tuned!

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online:  
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

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