Green light for the Global Horizon Program. Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) has acquired EUR 2.2 million funding for the next phase of the EXIST program of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi). KIT will be made the hub of international technology startups.

“Young entrepreneurs from KIT have demonstrated again and again how a good idea can be turned into an innovation for the common good. As society, we depend on their entrepreneurial acting and courageous thinking to reasonably and constructively cope with the challenges of our time,” says the President of KIT, Professor Holger Hanselka. “But a successful startup does not develop in a vacuum. Entrepreneurial spirit and specific funding belong together. The EXIST program has proved to be a highly successful instrument in supporting startups and spinoffs at KIT. I am very happy that we can continue to work along this line with the Global Horizon Program at KIT and I congratulate all parties involved in this success.
“International überzeugen” (internationally convincing), under this heading, KIT submitted a proposal for funding in the next project phase of four years under the EXIST funding program. And the proposal of KIT convinced the experts. Together with the universities of Mannheim and Heidelberg, KIT plans to connect the startup scenes as well as the founders in Karlsruhe and in the Rhine-Neckar region with the world. The BMWi will fund this Global Horizon Program (GHPro) for strategic internationalization of startup support with EUR 2.2 million in the next four years. In this way, KIT plans to become the single most important interface between technology startups in South-west Germany and the global markets.

“For more than two decades, we have systematically developed startup support at KIT with the help of EXIST,” says Professor Thomas Hirth, KIT Vice-President for Innovation and International Affairs. “During this time, we have not only funded a number of highly successful startup teams, but also established instruments, such as co-working, incubators, and accelerator programs. Now, we will specifically focus on internationalization. Our successful proposal of the Global Horizon Program with strong cooperation partners shows that we are on the right way.” Apart from the universities of Mannheim and Heidelberg, associated partners of GHPro are Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences (HsKA), the Karlsruhe Gründerallianz (startup alliance), the Cyber Forum, and Fraunhofer Venture. DAX companies, such as Merck, SAP, or BASF, have promised their support.

KIT as an International Startup Hub

Within the alliance, the cooperation partners Heidelberg University, KIT, and Mannheim University plan to pool their competencies and develop new offerings. KIT will act as first entry point for startups from the region that wish to open up global markets, talented entrepreneurs, and investors from abroad. “KIT already is an internationally visible deep-tech competence center,” says Thomas Neumann, who is responsible for startups and participations at KIT and was among the developers of the new concept. “As a university, we have excellent international networks. Now, we plan to specifically use and extend them for startup support.” KIT pursues more than 1000 collaborative projects in more than 70 countries at more than 450 places, which have largely focused on research and academic education so far.

Find more information about the support of startups at KIT at [http://kit-gruenderschmiede.de/](http://kit-gruenderschmiede.de/) (in German).
About the EXIST Funding Program

EXIST-Potentiale is a funding program of BMWi. It is intended to improve the startup climate at universities and non-university research institutions. In particular, technology-oriented and knowledge-based startups are funded. BMWi supports university graduates, scientists, and students with startup grants, among others, that can be applied for via the participating universities. Since 1998, EXIST has organized competitions to foster a viable and sustainable startup culture.

More information:

https://www.exist.de/EN/Home/home_node.html;jsessionid=1D9D5D3BE2562BE21B2B1FB69860B9A1

Being “The Research University in the Helmholtz Association,” KIT creates and imparts knowledge for the society and the environment. It is the objective to make significant contributions to the global challenges in the fields of energy, mobility and information. For this, about 9,300 employees cooperate in a broad range of disciplines in natural sciences, engineering sciences, economics, and the humanities and social sciences. KIT prepares its 25,100 students for responsible tasks in society, industry, and science by offering research-based study programs. Innovation efforts at KIT build a bridge between important scientific findings and their application for the benefit of society, economic prosperity, and the preservation of our natural basis of life. KIT is one of the German universities of excellence.


The photo in the best quality available to us may be downloaded under www.kit.edu or requested by mail to presse@kit.edu or phone +49 721 608-21105. The photo may be used in the context given above exclusively.

This year’s anniversary logo recalls the milestones reached by KIT and its long tradition in research, teaching, and innovation. On October 1, 2009, KIT was established by the merger of its two predecessor institutions: the Polytechnic School and later University of Karlsruhe was founded in 1825, the Nuclear Reactor Construction and Operation Company and later Karlsruhe Research Center in 1956.