

Realizing Project Ideas by Crowdfunding

KIT Is One of the First German Science Institutions Running an Own Crowdfunding Platform to Support Technical and Philanthropic Projects



At www.kitcrowd.de, KIT projects present themselves. Sponsoring is appreciated.
(Photo: KIT)

For good ideas to grow, they need an appropriate environment. At KIT, promising ideas, technologies, and also talents are supported by public funds. On their way to implementation, however, many ideas also need private support. To find sources of funding, KIT has now established the new crowdfunding platform KITcrowd. As of March 2015, projects try to attract additional funding and attention on KITcrowd.

“The KIT with its 25,000 students and about 9,000 employees is a rich source of promising project ideas,” says Dr. Eric Braun, project manager of the KITcrowd platform. “To give a maximum number of ideas a chance of implementation, we initiated the KIT crowdfunding platform.”

As of March 2015, www.kitcrowd.de presents projects in the areas of “Technology & Founding” and “Campus & Community”. Private persons and companies can support these ideas financially and morally. If many supporters are found, even smaller amounts may result in successful project funding.

“No all project ideas of KIT members can be financed from the KIT budget and, hence, from public funds to demonstrate their maturity,” explains Dr. Jens Fahrenberg, who heads the KIT Innovation

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Management Service Unit. “With the new platform, we want to close an important gap in the funding chain and to give a startup aid to as many innovative projects of the KIT and its environment as possible.”

Among the first technology projects presented on www.kitcrowd.de in the area of “Technology & Founding” is the spinoff easierLife GmbH. The easierLife system helps friends and families find out that their elderly parents or relatives at home are doing well. Sensors installed in the apartment detect movements and habits. On the smartphone, the family members can inform themselves about the well-being of their relatives and receive a message in case of irregularities. The VARIOBOT team, by contrast, develops bionically inspired, mobile robots with a simple analog control to give young people exciting and fascinating access to electronics.

“Many graduates of KIT are interested in engineering, socially committed, and wish to remain in contact with their university,” Dr. Dennis Nitsche, Head of the Relationship Management Service Unit of KIT, emphasizes. “This new platform gives them the opportunity not only to fund innovations, but also to support campus life at KIT.” For this reason, not only technology projects are presented on www.kitcrowd.de. In the area “Campus & Community” initiatives of student groups, scholarships, and other campus projects can be supported.

For example, the KIT student group Engineers without Borders collects money for a project in Sri Lanka. Near the city of Kilinochchi, civil war widows run a bakery that now reaches its technical and spatial limits. For the women to be able to earn their living and that of their families, KIT students plan, fund, and build a new bakery. www.kitcrowd.de also looks for helpful sponsors of the Deutschlandstipendium (German Scholarship) or of the building and modernization of learning facilities on the KIT Campus.

To cover the entire range of crowdfunding options, the KIT also cooperates with commercial crowdfunding platforms, such as Startnext Crowdfunding GmbH. Since 2010, this Germany-wide portal has successfully funded 2300 projects and collected about 17 million euros.

In the starting phase of KITcrowd, two to three projects in the areas of “Technology & Founding” and “Campus & Community” each will be presented. Other projects are being examined internally at the moment and will be published within the next few months. KITcrowd will promote the projects in all established KIT networks, such as

alumni, friends, sponsors, KIT employees, and students as well as in selected company networks. These groups are closely related to KIT and have a high affinity for the areas of work. In addition, the platform addresses all persons and companies who are interested in innovative ideas of the KIT and its environment.

All projects can be found at www.kitcrowd.de.

KIT Founders Forge

KITcrowd is a project of the KIT Founders Forge. By means of this initiative, students and employees are informed about entrepreneurship in new teaching and education formats and supported in establishing their business by advice services and the supply of infrastructure facilities and funding options. All offers of the KIT Founders Forge are funded under the EXIST-IV program "Gründungskultur" of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy.

More information: www.kit-gruenderschmiede.de

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is a public corporation pursuing the tasks of a state university of Baden-Württemberg and of a national research center of the Helmholtz Association. The KIT mission combines the three strategic lines of activity of research, higher education, and innovation. With about 9,400 employees and 24,500 students, KIT is one of the big institutions of research and higher education in natural sciences and engineering in Europe.

This press release is available on the internet at www.kit.edu.

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