

EU Project Strengthens Collaboration in the Upper Rhine Region

For Knowledge and Technology Transfer across the Borders



The EU-funded KTUR project aims to strengthen collaboration of innovators in Germany, France, and Switzerland. (Photo: Markus Breig, KIT)

Universities, trade associations, and industrial companies in the Trinational Upper Rhine Metropolitan Region want to enhance future knowledge and technology transfer. The necessary basis will be established by the Knowledge Transfer Upper Rhine (KTUR) project funded by the European Union (EU) and coordinated by Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT).

The Trinational Upper Rhine Metropolitan Region connects markets in Germany, France, and Switzerland. The region is home to a number of science institutions, clusters, and companies which already make it a pioneer region for European collaboration. Future intensified cooperation in research and development, licensing, or in establishing cross-border startups might considerably enhance growth and employment in the region. To foster cross-border knowledge and technology transfer, the new Knowledge Transfer Upper Rhine (KTUR) project has been initiated. The EU will fund KTUR with EUR 1.6 million in the next three years. Twelve partners from universities and colleges are involved in the project that will be coordinated by

Monika Landgraf
Chief Press Officer,
Head of Corp. Communications

Kaiserstraße 12
76131 Karlsruhe, Germany
Phone: +49 721 608-21105
Email: presse@kit.edu

Press contact:

Dr. Martin Heidelberg
Press Officer
Phone: +49 721 608-21169
Email: martin.heidelberg@kit.edu

KIT. The two participating universities from northwest Switzerland will be funded with about EUR 300,000 from Swiss federal funds and funds of the cantons of Aargau, Basel Country, and Jura. The project budget totals EUR 3.9 million.

“Transfer to industry and society is one of the core tasks of KIT,” says Professor Thomas Hirth, KIT Vice-President for Innovation and International Affairs. “We want to transfer our long-standing experience and to learn from our partners, with the goal of further improving cross-border transfer. We look forward to three years of very close collaboration.”

KTUR was initiated within Eucor – The European Campus, in which the University of Basel, the University of Freiburg, the Université de Haute-Alsace, KIT, and the Université de Strasbourg form a trilateral higher education area with currently 115,000 students and 15,000 researchers. Eucor also is associated partner of KTUR.

A Corporate Identity in Knowledge and Technology Transfer

By establishing a long-term network on the Upper Rhine, universities and trade associations want to learn from each other across the borders, create a corporate identity in knowledge and technology transfer on the Upper Rhine, and lower existing barriers to facilitate and enhance contacts and project initiation between universities and industry. “Moreover, joint thinking and acting will result in many opportunities for the international appearance of the region and further cooperation options worldwide,” says Dagmar Vössing, KIT, who is responsible for the project.

To reach these goals, solution approaches are developed for selected areas of action. These approaches will be implemented and tested in the project with active participation of at least 100 companies. Several aspects will be studied, such as structurization of collaboration of universities and colleges on the Upper Rhine and development and test of joint knowledge and technology transfer services for e.g. advanced training, startups, cross-border innovation events, a single entry point for industry, and a modular and adaptable research-to-business information and exchange platform. The most effective measures will be made permanent upon the completion of the project.



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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.

This press release is available on the internet at http://www.sek.kit.edu/english/press_office.php.

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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.