

# PRESS RELEASE

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**Groundbreaking ceremony for the Engineering Center for Sustainability (IZN)**

## **Fraunhofer and the University of Freiburg collaborate for future-oriented research**

**The groundbreaking ceremony on July 22, 2025 marked the start of construction for the Engineering Center for Sustainability (Ingenieurzentrum Nachhaltigkeit – IZN) on Freiburg’s airport campus. The new building will foster closer collaboration between Freiburg’s five Fraunhofer institutes and the University of Freiburg under the umbrella of the Department of Sustainable Systems Engineering (INATECH).**

On July 22, about 90 guests from government, academia and industry gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony of the Engineering Center for Sustainability (IZN) on the airport campus. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft will dedicate the new building to closer collaboration between Fraunhofer and the University of Freiburg as part of their joint Department of Sustainable Systems Engineering (INATECH).

Spanning around 2,700 square meters, the IZN’s three-story-building will feature state-of-the-art technical infrastructure, a modern working environment and sustainable architectural design. Located in close proximity to the Faculty of Engineering, the Freiburg Innovation Center (FRIZ), the Fraunhofer Institute for Physical Measurement Techniques IPM and the new Hahn-Schickard-Gesellschaft building, the planned construction consolidates research activities on sustainability on the airport campus in one place. The 36-million-euro investment is financed by the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, with funds from the German federal government and the Land of Baden-Württemberg.

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Holger Hanselka, President of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Prof. Dr. Kerstin Kriegelstein, Rector of the University of Freiburg, Michael Kleiner, Ministerial Director at the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labor, and Tourism of Baden-Württemberg, Martin Horn, Lord Mayor of the city of Freiburg, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Frank Balle, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, as well as the managing directors of all five Fraunhofer institutes of Freiburg attended the festivity.

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### **Local innovation for more global sustainability**

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Seven professors jointly appointed by the University of Freiburg and the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft will be working at the new IZN building. The goal is to develop technical innovations that contribute to sustainability goals and create economic opportunities. Examples include the more efficient use of solar energy, measurement technology for resource-saving production and cost-efficient infrastructure maintenance as well as energy-efficient electronics and high-tech materials. Another university facility to house INATECH professorships nearby is already in the planning stages. "The new IZN building represents our commitment to bring research out of the academic sphere into the center of society as a driver of innovation for sustainable development, economic strength, and the responsible shaping of the future. With this new building, we are showing that as a society, we are ready to invest in a sustainable future, trust the power of science, and acknowledge that progress and responsibility go hand in hand," said Michael Kleiner.

### **More technological breakthroughs from Freiburg**

"With today's groundbreaking ceremony for the Engineering Center for Sustainability (IZN), we are taking an important step toward a sustainable future," stated Prof. Holger Hanselka, President of the Fraunhofer Society. "The IZN will not only intensify cooperation between the Fraunhofer institutes in Freiburg and the University of Freiburg but also contribute as an incubator for technical innovations to achieve global sustainability goals – from renewable energies to resource-efficient production. This is how we can shape the future of research and technology in Freiburg together."

### **Transfer for a key future field**

By establishing the IZN, the University of Freiburg and the Fraunhofer Society are expanding their partnership in a key future field, strengthening Freiburg as a research center. "Our collaboration with the Fraunhofer Institutes within the framework of INATECH allows us to shape the entire process, from basic research to application, together. This enables us to gain new scientific insights and contribute to genuine innovations in the future-oriented field of sustainable technical systems – a core topic of our research focus 'Pathways to Sustainability.' The IZN thus becomes an important building block on our way to a vibrant, networked, and innovative transfer ecosystem," explained Rector Prof. Dr. Kerstin Krieglstein.

## Further informationen

### Fraunhofer in Freiburg

Freiburg is one of the largest Fraunhofer locations in Germany. The five Fraunhofer institutes in Freiburg – Fraunhofer IAF, EMI, IWM, IPM and ISE – have been working on pioneering technologies for years. Together, they employ around 2,700 people and generate a total revenue of approximately 300 million euros through development and research of technologies in areas such as materials, semiconductors, safety, resilience, measurement technology, photonics and renewable energies. The IZN will serve as a new hub for sustainable technical innovations that will have a significant impact beyond the region.

[www.freiburg.fraunhofer.de](http://www.freiburg.fraunhofer.de)



Breaking ground to build the new Sustainability Engineering Centre on Freiburg's airport campus (from left to right): Prof. Dr. Karsten Buse (Fraunhofer IPM), Prof. Dr. Andreas Bett (Fraunhofer ISE), Prof. Dr. Rüdiger Quay (Fraunhofer IAF), Christopher Höfler (Sacker Architekten GmbH), Dr. Patricie Merkert (Fraunhofer IAF), Prof. Dr.-Ing. Holger Hanselka (Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft), Prof. Dr. Kerstin Krieglstein (University of Freiburg), Martin Horn (City of Freiburg), Michael Kleiner (Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labor, and Tourism of Baden-Württemberg), Prof. Dr.-Ing. habil. Stefan Hiermaier (Fraunhofer EMI), Prof. Dr. Chris Eberl (Fraunhofer IWM), Prof. Dr. Alexander Reiterer (Fraunhofer IPM), Prof. Dr. Hans-Martin Henning (Fraunhofer ISE), Prof. Dr.-Ing. Frank Balle (University of Freiburg)  
Picture: Kai-Uwe Wudtke

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The **Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft**, based in Germany, is a leading applied research organization. It plays a crucial role in the innovation process by prioritizing research in key future technologies and transferring its research findings to industry in order to strengthen Germany as a hub of industrial activity as well as for the benefit of society. Founded in 1949, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft currently operates 75 institutes and research units throughout Germany. Its nearly 32,000 employees, predominantly scientists and engineers, work with an annual business volume of 3.6 billion euros; 3.1 billion euros of this stems from contract research.