

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Pooling competencies: Fraunhofer creates new group for innovation research**

**Understanding the complex effects of new technologies is critical for the success of entire economies. Structural changes through technological developments must therefore be recognized and understood at an early stage in order to actively shape the long-term economic, social, political and cultural impact on society and the economy. With the new Fraunhofer Group for Innovation Research, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft aims to strengthen its future role in research, technology and innovation policy dialogue with industry, politics and society, thus further cementing its position as a leading player in the German innovation arena.**

Technological changes such as digitalization merge a wide variety of living and working environments and experiences. They open up new design opportunities, but at the same time go hand in hand with fundamental change processes. It is precisely these rapid developments surrounding digital transformation that are a pressing issue for industry, politics and society. They sometimes necessitate quick action so that the political framework can keep pace with technological development. "With its broad range of competencies, Fraunhofer has been a reliable scientific partner to industry for decades. Our excellent pre-competitive research and market knowledge help us contribute original technology transfer services that secure value creation in Germany and in Europe. We are also fully committed to supporting policy makers with our expertise as best we can," explains Fraunhofer president Prof. Reimund Neugebauer. "Germany needs to secure its position as a front-runner in important innovations as well as in innovations that have the potential to disrupt. With this in mind, we decided to create the Fraunhofer Group for Innovation Research with a focus on socio-economic and socio-technical research."

#### **Key technologies for future-oriented innovations**

The new Fraunhofer Group for Innovation Research will commence work on July 1, 2017, initially comprising four research institutes with over 500 employees: the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO in Stuttgart, the Fraunhofer Center for International Management and Knowledge Economy IMW in Leipzig, the Fraunhofer Institute for Technological Trend Analysis INT in Euskirchen, and the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI in Karlsruhe. "By founding the new group, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft wants to further consolidate its role in

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#### **Editorial Notes**

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researching and supporting innovation processes and the technological, economic and social conditions that shape them," says chairman of the alliance and Executive Director of Fraunhofer IAO Prof. Wilhelm Bauer. "Throughout Europe, we have the broadest diversified technology profile, with expertise in areas such as resource-efficient production, transport and mobility, energy and housing, information and communication, protection and safety as well as health, nutrition and environment. The link between our range of competencies and socio-economic and socio-technical research is what makes us stand out from the crowd."

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### **Addressing system-relevant technological issues in the future**

Initially, the new group will focus on strengthening the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft in research, technology and innovation policy dialogue with politics, industry and society. It also sees itself as a platform for addressing system-relevant technological issues in the future. In its capacity, the new group will support an important aspect of the newly launched Research Fab Microelectronics Germany (FMD). Funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the project has furnished eleven Fraunhofer and two Leibniz Institutes with state-of-the-art equipment and systems costing around 350 million Euros. It aims to pool together technological skills for addressing topics related to the future. "The project deals with developing existing and new market or customer needs, evaluating disruptive business models and innovative services as well as providing recommendations for technology roadmaps and innovation strategies. Microelectronics is set to gain more importance in the international arena as a major German technology. This requires us to work together across all disciplines," adds Neugebauer. "After all, developing and implementing new technologies invariably allows you to be at the forefront of strategically important transformations. This is how we can drive pioneering innovations today and create enormous innovation potential for tomorrow."

Institutes working in closely related fields join forces to form the Fraunhofer Groups and compete together on research and development in the market. These groups are actively involved in corporate policy as well as implementing the tried and tested function and financing models of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. The Fraunhofer Group for Innovation Research brings the total group count to eight – the other groups deal with information and communication technology (ICT), life sciences, light and surfaces, microelectronics, production, defense and security research as well as materials and components (MATERIALS).



**The Center for Virtual Engineering ZVE, Headquarters of the Fraunhofer IAO, founding member of the new group.**

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The **Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft** is the leading organization for applied research in Europe. Its research activities are conducted by 69 institutes and research units at locations throughout Germany. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft employs a staff of 24,500, who work with an annual research budget totaling 2.1 billion euros. Of this sum, 1.9 billion euros is generated through contract research. More than 70 percent of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft's contract research revenue is derived from contracts with industry and from publicly financed research projects. International collaborations with excellent research partners and innovative companies around the world ensure direct access to regions of the greatest importance to present and future scientific progress and economic development.