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Smart agriculture and water management

Fraunhofer establishes new research center in Portugal

Fraunhofer has joined forces with Portugal's national funding agency for science, research and technology (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia FCT) to establish a new research center focusing on the topics of smart agriculture and water management. The Fraunhofer Center is set to commence its work in Portugal at the end of 2018. Both parties have put their name to a cooperation agreement, signed in Porto.

"Portugal is the ideal partner for Fraunhofer in terms of putting its smart agriculture concepts into practice. The country provides a wealth of scientific expertise, as well as the climatic conditions we need to supplement and expand our knowledge in this field," says Prof. Reimund Neugebauer, President of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft.

"There's huge potential for applying modern information technology to optimize processes in the agriculture and forestry sector. Our application-oriented research will benefit not just Portugal and Germany, but other countries across the EU as well."

Launch at end of 2018

The partners will be pooling their expertise in information and software technology, process and energy systems, as well as in sensors and new materials to tap into new applications for the digitalization of processes in the agriculture and forestry sector. There will be a particular focus on water management – availability, quality and recycling – extending beyond agricultural considerations.

Over the first five years, Fraunhofer and the FCT will each be contributing 500,000 euros a year of basic funding to the Center. Portugal will also be providing start-up investment amounting to 5,000,000 euros. A joint steering committee will put in place the operational framework over the coming months with a view to the Center commencing its work at the end of 2018. The plan is for the new Center to work in close collaboration with the Fraunhofer Center for Assistive Information and Communication Solutions AICOS in Porto, which was set up 10 years ago, as well as the Fraunhofer Institute for Ceramic Technologies and Systems IKTS in Saxony and Thuringia.

Editorial Notes

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Building on collaboration

Both partners have also agreed to continue their successful collaboration in the work of AICOS in Porto, extending the Center's funding to 2023. The researchers in Porto will be working closely with the new Smart Agriculture Center, providing IT and software expertise. Fraunhofer and the FCT are also looking to explore further collaboration schemes. Both partners have identified research into renewables and sustainable energy concepts as a potential avenue.

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Fraunhofer Portugal

Since 2008, Fraunhofer has run the Fraunhofer Center for Assistive Information and Communication Solutions AICOS in Porto in conjunction with the University of Porto under the umbrella of the Fraunhofer Portugal Research association. Researchers at the Center develop concepts and solutions for the information technology of tomorrow.

<https://www.fraunhofer.de/en/institutes/international/europe/portugal.html>

Smart agriculture

Satellites in space; drones flying over fields, meadows and forests; sensors installed in agricultural vehicles: there is a whole range of technology out there collecting data and submitting it to be analyzed via smartphones, tablets and apps. The goal of this "smart agriculture" is to manage farmland more efficiently, combat pests more effectively, implement sustainable circulation systems for nutrients, and develop new energy-efficient solutions for agriculture and forestry.

Link

Fraunhofer drives forward smart agriculture:

<https://www.fraunhofer.de/en/press/research-news/2017/december/fraunhofer-drives-intelligent-agriculture-forward.html>



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Vineyards in the Douro Valley near Porto: Fraunhofer finds a new Smart Agriculture Center in Portugal. © iStockphoto | Picture in color and printing quality: www.fraunhofer.de/en/press

The **Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft** is the leading organization for applied research in Europe. Its research activities are conducted by 72 institutes and research units at locations throughout Germany. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft employs a staff of more than 25,000, who work with an annual research budget totaling 2.3 billion euros. Of this sum, almost 2 billion euros is generated through contract research. Around 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.