

PRESS RELEASE

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Major advance for battery cell technology in Germany

Decision in favor of Münster as location for new research facility for battery cell production

Energy-storage technology is set to play a key role in the future development of major sectors of the economy such as the energy and automotive industries. Electric vehicles, for example, require powerful batteries in order to deliver an acceptable operating range, and electricity generated from renewable sources depends for its long-term viability on stationary energy-storage systems. In order to help Germany establish itself as a leading industrial player in this field of technology, an interdisciplinary Fraunhofer team has drawn up plans for a research facility for battery cell production. On this basis, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) has appointed a founding commission and commissioned the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, as the organization responsible for the future facility, to supervise the process to select the facility's location. As the BMBF announced today, this decision has now fallen in favor of Münster.

For many years now, numerous Fraunhofer Institutes have been looking at battery cells and energy-storage systems with a view to securing a leading role for Germany in this highly promising field of technology. At the beginning of February 2019, a number of research organizations throughout Germany with proven expertise in the field of battery cell design and production were requested to submit proposals for the location of a future research facility for battery cell production, to be known as FFB ("Forschungsfertigung Batteriezelle"). Following a detailed selection procedure, the BMBF has now announced that the FFB is to be located in Münster, in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, at MEET (Münster Electrochemical Energy Technology), a research facility at the University of Münster.

"A strategically important project like FFB can only succeed in a region with sound, all-round expertise in battery technology that stretches all the way from qualified technicians to top scientists," said Fraunhofer President Prof. Reimund Neugebauer. "We would therefore like to congratulate the winning consortium. In the field of energy-storage technology, time is of the essence. Other players in the global market are already forging ahead. We're therefore delighted about this partnership. MEET's expertise in developing materials and cells for batteries and RWTH Aachen's expertise in the production of cells and batteries are an ideal complement to Fraunhofer's expertise in production technology and the transfer of knowledge to industry. Our aim is to create

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a top-class research center for battery cell production that will organically accelerate innovation in the manufacture of new battery cell designs and their advance to the mass-production stage.”

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Germany has a wealth of research and production expertise in battery technology

The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is the organization responsible for establishing and operating the FFB. The underlying concept was drawn up during intensive groundwork by an interdisciplinary team from the Fraunhofer Groups for MATERIALS, Production, and Microelectronics, under the leadership of Prof. Hans-Martin Henning, director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems ISE, and Prof. Gunter Reinhart from the Fraunhofer Research Institution for Casting, Composite and Processing Technology IGCV. Following an initiative by Prof. Jens Tübke, head of Applied Electrochemistry at the Fraunhofer Institute for Chemical Technology ICT, there is to be close collaboration with the Fraunhofer Battery Alliance – chaired by Tübke – and other Fraunhofer Institutes working in the field of production technology. This will ensure the identification of further innovative approaches in the field of battery-cell production.

“There was a total of six highly qualified applications, which underlines the importance of battery technology to Germany on a local, regional and national level,” said Prof. Neugebauer. “At the same time, the lead-up to establishing the FBB has demonstrated the wealth of research and production expertise that we have in this country. The task of the FBB and of Fraunhofer, as the organization responsible for this new facility, will now be to progressively harness this expertise and advance the technology to the mass-production scale, so that Germany can establish technological leadership along the entire value chain – from the procurement of raw and other materials, to the production of battery cells, modules and systems, and all the way to recycling and the recovery of raw materials.”