PRESS RELEASE

Digital Innovation Hub Photonics: Support for founders and young entrepreneurs in photonics

Together with the head of Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering and Institute of Applied Physics of the Friedrich Schiller University Jena, Prof. Andreas Tünnermann, Thuringia's minister for economic affairs and acience, Wolfgang Tiefensee, has launched the »Digital Innovation Hub Photonics« today. The aim of the project is to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups to turn their ideas into marketable products as quickly as possible. The project is being coordinated by the High Performance Center for Photonics in Jena.

New technologies are the fundamental drivers of innovation in photonics. Often founders and start-ups, however, lack the scientific, technological and financial capacities to independently pursue research and development with the highest standards or initiate risky innovation projects.

With the pilot project »Digital Innovation Hub Photonics«, the High Performance Center for Photonics, based in Jena, has set itself the goal of actively supporting innovative start-ups and SMEs in the fields of optics and photonics on the path of product development and market introduction to turn innovative ideas into marketable solutions as quickly as possible and to ensure sustainable development and unique position.

On February 21st, 2019, on the occasion of the official launch, a kick-off meeting with a round table and laboratory tour took place at the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering IOF in Jena. The project was presented in the presence of Thuringian Minister for Economic Affairs, Science and Digital Society, Wolfgang Tiefensee.

Accelerate transfer of knowledge into business

»Optics is one of Thuringia's innovative showcase industries«, said Minister Tiefensee in his greeting words. »But the challenge remains to accelerate the transfer of knowledge from research to industry and to get from the first idea to the marketable product, from the research result to the start-up. We want to achieve exactly that with the Digital Innovation Hub Photonics as a regional transfer center.«

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He also referred to the Thuringian optics companies, which account for almost twelve percent of sales for research and an export quota of 66 percent and in whose environment more than 1,300 employees are active. Especially Jena, with its university, university of applied sciences and the Fraunhofer IOF, is a center of the Thuringian photonics industry.

Prof. Andreas Tünnermann, head of Fraunhofer IOF and Institute of Applied Physics of the Friedrich Schiller University Jena, added: »Photonics offers solutions in almost all fields of demand of a modern society. With the Digital Innovation Hub Photonics, we offer the opportunity to translate creative ideas and concepts from the field of photonics together with founders quickly and efficiently into successful products.«

Support through know-how and infrastructure

From now on the team around project manager Dr. Robert Kammel is available for anybody interested in questions about technology and innovation management. »With our design and tech teams, we help start-ups both in product definition and in the development of viable business models and market-driven demonstrators. Because these are an essential prerequisite for successful cooperation with partners, customers and lenders.«

The project »Digital Innovation Hub Photonics« is an initiative of the Thuringian Ministry of Economics, Science and Digital Society. By the year 2020, it will be supported with a sum of 1 million euros. The goal of the project is the future development into a national photonics start-up and transfer center.

About the partners

High Performance Center of Photonics

The »Photonics Performance Center« is a joint initiative of the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering IOF, the Friedrich Schiller University Jena, the Leibniz Institutes HKI and IPHT and the Helmholtz Institute Jena. It develops new solutions with light for important future fields and promotes their implementation and application in science, industry and society.

Institute of Applied Physics (Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena)

The Institute of Applied Physics (IAP) at the Friedrich Schiller University Jena has a long tradition and extensive expertise in the design, manufacture and application of active and passive optical elements, both for optical and optoelectronic devices. Cooperation with companies guarantees practical relevance and feasibility.

Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering IOF

The Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering IOF in Jena conducts application-oriented research in the field of photonics and develops innovative optical systems for the control of light. The services offered by the institute cover the entire photonic process chain - from system design to the production of custom-specific solutions and prototypes.