



PRESS RELEASE

A Spirit of Transformation: The Metropolitan Region and Hydrogen Experts Drive Forward Clean Tech Innovations

Heidelberg, Germany, November 14, 2024 – Collaborative efforts are the cornerstone of tackling complex fields such as green hydrogen production. The inaugural Clean Tech Innovation Day, hosted by InnovationLab in partnership with Metropolregion Rhein-Neckar and H2UB at the Heidelberg Congress Center, showcased a wide range of technological solutions in the field of electrolysis. This symposium sparked a spirit of transformation, especially within the Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region, which is recognized as a key hub for hydrogen technology.

“What I am particularly pleased with is the strong participation and interest from the metropolitan region. With the Clean Tech Innovation Day, we reached not only industry experts but also companies that have a strong interest in green hydrogen yet limited access to it,” reflects iL Managing Director Dr. Michael Kröger. “When approached effectively, we can align prosperity and economic independence with environmental responsibility. This motivates me to say: Let’s make it happen here in the metropolitan region. Dr. Doris Wittneben and the Metropolregion Rhein-Neckar GmbH are pivotal drivers in this mission.”

A Nuanced Perspective by Dr. Gunther Kegel

The central keynote, delivered by Dr. Gunther Kegel, CEO of Pepperl & Fuchs, offered a nuanced, constructively critical view on industrial transformation. Dr. Kegel emphasized that while technology in Germany holds vast potential, its application requires careful calibration. “The energy transition is fundamentally an energy efficiency transition,” argued Kegel, advocating for a balanced approach to all energy carriers. He stressed that reliance on renewable energies and their price dynamics demands careful orchestration.

Partnerships and alliances are essential for successful collaboration, as highlighted by the networking opportunities available in Heidelberg. “We are now intensifying our cooperation with Noord-Brabant. Our goal is to connect companies from Baden-Württemberg and Noord-Brabant through iL as a technology platform,” Kröger reports, sharing promising prospects for both domestic and international collaborations.

Kröger further underscored the crucial role of start-ups in the innovation landscape and technology transfer. Start-ups, he noted, “must be integrated into industrial value chains.” Effective support is essential to advancing the state of technology in global competition. He cited examples including material science-focused start-ups such as Ionysis, ElementarHy, and Hydrogenea, as well as Icodos, a systems provider for green methanol, and CibusCell, which offers software solutions that can reduce costs in the hydrogen industry by up to 20 percent, analogous to SAP’s role in other sectors.

A Call to Action for Academia, Industry, and Government

The expert conference in Heidelberg received positive feedback from attendees, including a welcome address from Heidelberg’s Mayor, Dr. Eckart Würzner: “Our aim must be to make hydrogen use even more efficient and durable in the future. This calls for innovative solutions, and I am confident that the Clean Tech Innovation Day has sparked new ideas. Federal and state governments must accelerate renewable energy expansion and hydrogen infrastructure to bolster green hydrogen and ease local implementation. Hydrogen is essential for the energy transition and climate protection.”

Academia, industry, and government are called upon to ensure broad-based collaboration and to assess decarbonization, risk management, digitalization, and demographic factors within the intricate hydrogen ecosystem.

About InnovationLab GmbH

Founded in 2008 in Heidelberg’s Bahnstadt district, InnovationLab GmbH is a joint venture of globally leading companies (HEIDELBERG, BASF, and SAP) and two of Germany’s top universities, the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and the University of Heidelberg. InnovationLab offers extensive expertise in printed electronics and, in 2024, restructured itself through the spin-off FLEXOO. iL’s platform serves its five founding partners, as well as innovative start-ups and research institutions,

fostering close collaboration, future-oriented technology transfer, and industrial implementation. For more information, visit www.innovationlab.de.

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Image Captions

Image 1: InnovationLab Managing Director Dr. Michael Kröger welcomes participants to the Clean Tech Innovation Day. Photo: Lukas Adler.

Image 2: Dr. Gunther Kegel, CEO of Pepperl & Fuchs, delivers a dynamic and informative keynote to a full audience. Photo: Lukas Adler.

Image 3: Dr. Doris Wittneben (center), Head of Future Fields and Innovation at Metropolregion Rhein-Neckar, engages in discussions with hydrogen experts on industry innovations and applications. Photo: Lukas Adler.