

INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI WEEK 2025

Karlsruhe and Stuttgart, Germany

ECOSYSTEMS OF INNOVATION

PROGRAM BOOKLET

October 12 – 18, 2025

ECOSYSTEMS OF INNOVATION AS CATALYSTS FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND DIGITAL SOCIETY



In an era defined by disruptive technologies, global uncertainty, and the urgent call for ecological and social responsibility, innovation ecosystems have emerged as critical drivers of transformation. They go far beyond traditional innovation structures: they are dynamic, interconnected systems composed of companies, research institutions, start-ups, public actors, civil society, and funding mechanisms. Together, they create the fertile ground where ideas are born, tested, and turned into sustainable realities.

Unlike linear models of innovation, ecosystems thrive on complex interactions, co-evolution, and emergent order. They are characterized by openness, diversity, and the capacity to forge new alliances across sectors. Nowhere is their potential more evident than in the domains where transformation is most needed: mobility, production, and urban development.

Mobility systems

are undergoing a profound transition toward zero-emission, connected, and inclusive solutions. Innovation ecosystems provide the space where technological advancement meets societal acceptance, regulatory frameworks, and infrastructural readiness.

Sustainable production

demand more than incremental efficiency gains – it calls for new value chains, circular business models, and resilient supply networks. Innovation ecosystems bring together interdisciplinary expertise, strategic partnerships, and a critical mass of actors capable of driving systemic change.

Urban environments

are both the stage and the engine of transformation. Innovation ecosystems empower cities to become living labs – through real world experimentation, digital twins, and participatory innovation processes that render urban change tangible and inclusive.

In all three domains, transformation succeeds where openness to new ideas converges with institutional strength, collaborative spirit, and strategic foresight. Innovation ecosystems are therefore not merely instruments of change—they are actors in their own right, shaping the contours of a sustainable and digital future.

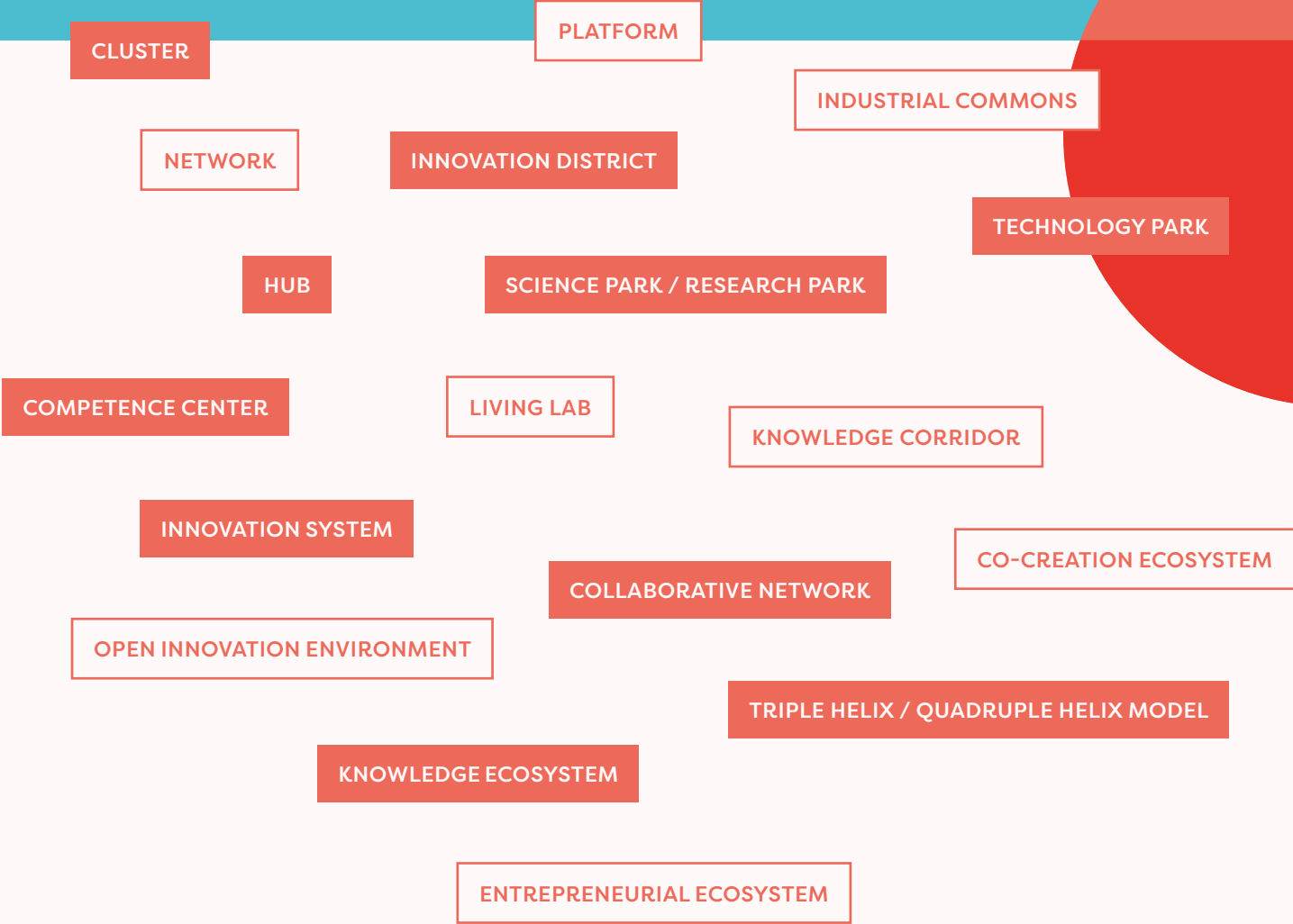
THE POWER OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IN INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

Innovation ecosystems do not evolve in isolation. Their strength lies in their capacity to connect across borders, harnessing global expertise, diverse perspectives, and shared ambitions. In an increasingly interdependent world, international collaboration is not a luxury—it is a strategic necessity.

Cross-border networks foster knowledge exchange, technology transfer, and policy learning. They open up new markets, align regulatory approaches, and accelerate the scaling of sustainable solutions. Moreover, global partnerships allow ecosystems to remain adaptive and resilient—learning from both successes and failures in other contexts.

Whether it is advancing climate-neutral mobility, building sustainable production networks, or reimagining the future of cities, no single actor or nation holds all the answers. International communities of practice create the conditions in which innovation can flourish: with trust, mutual respect, and a commitment to shared goals.

This event brings together leading minds from science, industry, policy, and civil society across the globe—united by the belief that true innovation emerges where global connectivity meets local relevance. Together, we shape the ecosystems that will define the future.



PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

| SUNDAY, OCT 12 | MONDAY, OCT 13 | TUESDAY, OCT 14 | WEDNESDAY, OCT 15 | THURSDAY, OCT 16 | FRIDAY, OCT 17 | SATURDAY, OCT 18 |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| Welcome & Orientation | Collaboration & Research | Collaboration & Research | Mobility & City | City & Production | Production & Mobility | Closing Day |
| <div>MORNING 09:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.</div> <div>Arrival</div> | <div>9:00 a.m. Welcome at KIT and Networking</div> <div>11:30 a.m. ● Exploration: Research in Germany – Funding Opportunities and International Networking</div> | <div>9:00 a.m. ■ Pulse: Building Xtopia</div> <div>Designing Images of the Future - Xtopian Circuit Training</div> | <div>9:00 a.m. ▲ Alumni CoLab Mobility of the Future</div> <div>Topic by Alumni & Topic by Researcher of KIT</div> | <div>9:00 a.m. ■ Pulse: Eucor MobiLab</div> <div>A co-creative workshop on gree- ning urban futures</div> | <div>9:00 a.m. Transfer to Stuttgart</div> <div>11:00 a.m. ▲ Alumni CoLab: Production of the Future with AI</div> <div>Topic by Alumni & Topic by Researcher of University of Stuttgart</div> | <div>9:00 a.m. ● Exploration: Guided tour of the Daimler Museum in Stuttgart</div> <div>12:00 p.m. Pulse Ecosystems of Internatio- nal Mobility</div> <div>Shaping the Future Together Final Discussion, Feedback, and Next Steps</div> |
| <div>AFTERNOON 1:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.</div> <div>2:00 p.m. Opening Alumni Week 2025</div> <div>with Representatives of International Affairs KIT / University of Stuttgart</div> <div>» Registration » Networking</div> <div>● Exploration: Visiting ZKM “200 Years of KIT</div> <div>100 Objects. Parts of the Whole. Selected Objects from the History of KIT”</div> | <div>1:00 p.m. Lunch & Networking</div> <div>2:30 p.m. ■ Pulse: Unconference 2025 – Agenda Setting by Alumni & Participants</div> <div>» Shaping the agenda together » Facilitating a creative environment » Bringing together int. Alumni, Alumni Coordinators, Interna- tional Offices, Student Reps,</div> | <div>1:00 p.m. Lunch & Networking</div> <div>2:30 p.m. ● Exploration: Excursion to KIT Campus North</div> <div>Discover the Energy Lab, FR2 Research Reactor, and Carbon Cycle Lab – where future energy systems take shape.</div> | <div>12:00 p.m. Lunch & Networking</div> <div>3:00 p.m. ■ Pulse: InnovationCampus Future Mobility (ICM)</div> <div>Experience cutting-edge mobility research – with demonstrators, exhibits, and interactive formats. Get together with stakeholders</div> | <div>12:00 p.m. Lunch & Networking</div> <div>3:00 p.m. ▲ Alumni CoLab: Production of the Future with Circular Economy</div> <div>Topic by Alumni & Topic by Researcher KIT</div> | <div>1:00 p.m. Lunch & Networking</div> <div>2:30 p.m. ■ Pulse: Future Mobility Transformation</div> <div>Looking at the big picture and actively shaping tomorrow’s transformation processes and innovation systems</div> <div>Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO</div> | <div>1:00 p.m. Farewell Lunch Departure</div> |
| <div>EVENING 5:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.</div> <div>6:00 p.m. Dinner & Dialogue</div> | <div>6:00 p.m. Dinner & Dialogue</div> | <div>6:00 p.m. Dinner & Dialogue</div> <div>7:30 p.m. KIT Science Week: Opening Reception</div> <div>Keynote, Panel Discussion, Mar- ket of Opportunities</div> | <div>5:00 p.m. KIT Science Week: Shaping the City of the Future: the Impact of Entrepreneurship and Innovation</div> <div>Meet-up with Start Ups</div> <div>7:00 p.m. Open Space Networking with Beer and Bratwurst</div> | <div>7:00 p.m. KIT Science Week: City of the Future“ at Tollhaus Karlsruhe</div> <div>Panel Discussion & Evening Net- working Event</div> | <div>6:00 p.m. Dinner & Dialogue</div> | |

Technological change is never an isolated phenomenon. This revolution takes place inside a complex ecosystem which comprises business, governmental and societal dimensions.

Klaus Schwab — Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum

Innovation ecosystems have to evolve dynamically. The actors involved must constantly recalibrate their strategies, ensuring that new technologies and business models can flourish.

David Teece — Dynamic Capabilities and Strategic Management

When part of this ecosystem was lacking... great concepts ended up being consigned to history's basement.

Walter Isaacson — The Innovators: How a Group of Hackers, Geniuses, and Geeks Created the Digital Revolution Value network

Innovation is a process of new combinations. Ecosystems of innovation depend on a constant interaction between new technologies, old ideas, and emergent practices.

Brian Arthur — The Nature of Technology: What It Is and How It Evolves

The best way to predict the future is to create it.

Peter Drucker — Management Challenges for the 21st Century

Complex systems evolve from simple rules, and innovation ecosystems depend on their ability to allow for interaction, integration, and open flows of knowledge.

Geoffrey West — Scale: The Universal Laws of Growth, Innovation, Sustainability, and the Pace of Life

Innovation involves seeing new possibilities where others see nothing, bringing together existing elements to create new knowledge.

James W. March — A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen

Innovation ecosystems are the foundation for sustainable growth, enabling industries to adapt and evolve in the face of new challenges, especially in the context of accelerating technological change.

Benjamin M. Friedman — The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth

Clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that compete but also cooperate.

Michael Porter — The Competitive Advantage of Nations

ORGANIZING INSTITUTIONS

UNIVERSITY OF STUTTGART

The University of Stuttgart is considered to be among the outstanding research universities in Germany and worldwide. For years, scientists here have conducted internationally competitive, cutting-edge research, and they prove their success again and again in the competition for funding and excellence projects. Thus the University offers excellent conditions for research with numerous interdisciplinary projects that are relevant worldwide and achieve international recognition.



KARLSRUHE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

As “The Research University in the Helmholtz Association”, KIT fully exploits its synergy potential resulting from combining tasks of national big research with those of a state university. It is the objective to make significant contributions to the global challenges in the fields of energy, mobility, and information. With about 10,000 employees, including roundabout 5,800 scientists and lecturers, and more than 22,800 students, KIT is a big science institution holding a leading position in Europe. KIT is one of the German Universities of Excellence.



INNOVATIONCAMPUS FUTURE MOBILITY – FROM PLATFORM TO ECOSYSTEM OF INNOVATION



The InnovationsCampus Mobility of the Future (ICM) was established in 2019 by the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and the University of Stuttgart to develop technologies that fundamentally challenge existing paradigms of mobility and production and enable entirely new approaches.

Since its inception, the ICM has become a key player within Baden-Württemberg's innovation system – a place where new alliances are formed and strategic future topics are explored collaboratively.

Today, the ICM brings together more than 300 researchers and over 70 companies as direct industry partners. It serves as a platform – but it holds the potential to become more than that: an innovation ecosystem for mobility and production.

WHY?

What makes the ICM distinctive is not just the technological excellence of its projects. It exemplifies a new form of institutional innovation – not through predefined structures, but through its potential to open up new spaces for thinking and acting.

Technological projects here function as catalysts that generate irritations at the edges of their respective domains – sparking discourse in adjacent societal, political, and scientific fields.

This very ability to create boundary spaces – at the intersections of technology, society, and policy – is what makes the ICM more than a platform. It is becoming a space of experimentation and possibility, where technical developments intersect with social, ecological, economic, and political questions of the future.

Looking at the logic of modern innovation ecosystems – as described by scholars like Jacobides and Adner – such structures do not emerge through centralized control, but through loosely coupled actors, shared interfaces, and distributed value creation.

The ICM is beginning to develop exactly these characteristics – through its strategically designed openness, visible in modular structures and numerous partnerships.

Transformation requires places that do not simply stabilize – but open up boundary spaces in which new perspectives can unfold.

It requires openness to what has not yet been thought.

It requires: innovation ecosystems.