INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI WEEK 2025

Karlsruhe and Stuttgart, Germany

ECOSYSTEMS OF INNOVATION

PROGRAM BOOKLET

October 12 – 18, 2025

INNOVATIONCAMPUS FUTURE MOBILITY
KIT Karlsruhe Institute of Technology
University of Stuttgart Germany
DAAD Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst German Academic Exchange Service

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 demands 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.

CLUSTER
PLATFORM
INDUSTRIAL COMMONS
NETWORK
INNOVATION DISTRICT
TECHNOLOGY PARK
HUB
SCIENCE PARK / RESEARCH PARK
COMPETENCE CENTER
LIVING LAB
KNOWLEDGE CORRIDOR
INNOVATION SYSTEM
CO-CREATION ECOSYSTEM
COLLABORATIVE NETWORK
OPEN INNOVATION ENVIRONMENT
TRIPLE HELIX / QUADRUPLE HELIX MODEL
KNOWLEDGE ECOSYSTEM
ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

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	Sustainable and Digital: International Mobility, Collaboration & Research	Sustainable and Digital: Methods, Approaches, Projects	Sustainable and Digital: City of the Future	Sustainable and Digital: Mobility	Sustainable and Digital: Production	Closing Day
MORNING 09:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.	Arrival	9:00 a.m. Welcome at KIT and Networking 11:30 a.m. Research in Germany – Funding Opportunities and International Networking: with representatives of DAAD, DFG, AvH, KIT and University of Stuttgart	9:00 a.m. Between Utopia and Dystopia there Is Xtopia – Designing Images of the Future - Xtopian Circuit Training	9:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m. Lunch & Networking Future Mobility – Introduction of ICM Projects and Stakeholders » Guided Tour of ICM Exhibition » Networking » Poster session » Discussion	9:00 a.m. Alumni CoLab – Mobility of the Future Topic by Alumni 12:00 p.m. Lunch & Networking with ICM researchers / stakeholders	9:00 a.m. Transfer to Stuttgart 11:00 a.m. Alumni CoLab – Production of the Future Topic by Alumni + Transformation of Production	9:00 a.m. Guided tour of the Daimler Museum in Stuttgart 12:00 p.m. Ecosystems of International Mobility – Shaping the Future Together Final Discussion, Feedback,
AFTERNOON 1:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.	2:00 p.m. Welcome and Get-Together Dr. Klaus Rümmele, Head International Affairs of KIT » Registration » Networking Visiting ZKM “200 Years of KIT – 100 Objects. Parts of the Whole. Selected Objects from the History of KIT”	1:00 p.m. Lunch & Networking with stakeholders 2:30 p.m. International CoLab Unconference 2025 – Agenda Setting by Alumni & Participants » Shaping the agenda » Facilitating a creative environment » Bringing together relevant stakeholders (int. Alumni, Alumni Coordinators, International Office, Student reps, Cluster- & Network manager, ...)	1:00 p.m. Lunch & Networking 2:30 p.m. Excursion to KIT Campus North / Energy Lab, FR2 Research Reactor, Carbon Cycle Lab, Startups – Energy for the City of the Future Networking Opportunity with Lab Representatives	1:30 p.m. Participation in the City of the Future Conference within KIT Science Week 4:00 p.m. Participation in the ICM Urban Mobility Discussion, followed by Get-Together at the Audimax with Exhibition Hosted by the InnovationCampus Future Mobility (ICM)	3:00 p.m. Alumni CoLab – City of the Future Topic by Alumni + A Look into the Circular Factory as a Collaborative Research Center	1:00 p.m. Lunch & Networking with ARENA3036 2:30 p.m. Guided Tour „Future Work Lab“ Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering IAO 4:00 p.m. Time for Networking	1:00 p.m. Farewell Lunch Departure
EVENING 5:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.	6:00 p.m. Dinner & Networking	6:00 p.m. Welcome at KIT – Reception and Dinner Hosted by Vice President of KIT, Prof. Dr. Thomas Hirth	5:00 p.m. Time for Networking 7:30 p.m. Opening of KIT Science Week Keynote, Panel Discussion, Market of Opportunities	5:00 p.m. Shaping the City of the Future: the Impact of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Meet-up with Start Ups 7:00 p.m. Open Space Networking with Beer and Bratwurst	7:00 p.m. Tollhaus - Central Panel Discussion of the Science Week „City of the Future“ at Tollhaus Karlsruhe Highlight: Evening Networking Event	Evening of free disposal	

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

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

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 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

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

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

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

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.

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