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Further development and strengthening of the research portfolio

Structural adjustments within the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft

In an effort to further develop the portfolio of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft in both subject-specific and commercial terms and ensure the research organization's future viability, the executive board has adopted a package of measures involving the partial closure of the Fraunhofer Center for International Management and Knowledge Economy IMW and the elimination of the center's independence. The remaining departments are to be integrated into the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI. In addition, the Fraunhofer Institute for Technological Trend Analysis INT is to be integrated into the Fraunhofer Institute for Communication, Information Processing and Ergonomics FKIE. These decisions are subject to the approval of the senate of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft.

One of the central tasks of the executive board of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is to assess the further development of the research organization, its structure, and its topics with the interests of all employees and partners in mind and to reorganize where this is determined to be necessary. Against this background, and following in-depth analysis and evaluation, plans call for two structural adjustments to be made within the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft.

Fraunhofer IMW: preserving innovation research in Leipzig and partial closure

Fraunhofer IMW pools together its expertise and range of services in the areas of internationalization and the knowledge economy at the Leipzig location. The institute's employees have demonstrated hard work and dedication in their research and established a large number of successful projects. In addition, various structural improvements and activities have been implemented. However, in spite of these efforts, Fraunhofer IMW has not been able to operate successfully in the long term within the framework of the Fraunhofer model and the Fraunhofer R&D portfolio. Based on in-depth analysis and detailed considerations, the executive board has therefore concluded that Fraunhofer IMW cannot continue to operate as a commercial entity and research institution in its current form. The board therefore felt a management decision had to be made and decided to submit a resolution to this effect to the senate for approval. The resolution is on the integration of the Knowledge and Technology Transfer and the Regional Trans-

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formation and Innovation Policy departments into Fraunhofer ISI as well as on the closure of the remaining parts of Fraunhofer IMW, meaning that Fraunhofer IMW will no longer be independent.

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The executive board has the clear goal of strengthening the Leipzig location in the field of innovation research, focusing on structural transformation and regional policy advice. This goal is best achieved by integrating the two departments into Fraunhofer ISI and utilizing their local expertise and networks. After a thorough suitability assessment and at the request of the executive board, Fraunhofer ISI in Karlsruhe agreed to integrate these departments, forming a new ISI site in Leipzig. According to current planning, the integration is scheduled for January 1, 2025.

However, dissolving the Corporate Development in International Competition and the Technology Economics and Management divisions, the Data and Platform-Based Value Creation unit and the institute staff department and institute management is unavoidable. Fraunhofer IMW's administration will be adapted to the new requirements. This partial closure is expected to affect around 70 fixed-term and permanent employees. Subject to the approval of the senate, the partial closure is to take effect on March 31, 2025.

Fraunhofer INT: integration into Fraunhofer FKIE

The Fraunhofer Institute for Technological Trend Analysis INT has been a reliable partner to the German Federal Ministry of Defence (BMVg) for 50 years now. Fraunhofer INT also conducts research for civilian public-sector clients and companies, at both the national and international levels. Especially considering the ramifications of the 2021 flood disaster for the institute, Fraunhofer INT has achieved outstanding results over the past three years thanks to the great personal commitment of all of its employees. However, current research policies and budgetary conditions are also having an impact on the opportunities for further development of Fraunhofer INT. Nevertheless, there are definitive plans to retain the institute's strong core expertise in the long term at the Euskirchen location with an eye to the research portfolio of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. With this in mind, the executive board has decided to integrate Fraunhofer INT into the Fraunhofer Institute for Communication, Information Processing and Ergonomics FKIE. The move will establish a large, shared unit that is viable for the future. The executive board firmly believes this will create an opportunity to preserve Fraunhofer INT's core expertise as part of the Fraunhofer portfolio for the long term and forge ahead with its development and evolution. Plans call for Fraunhofer INT to merge with Fraunhofer FKIE as of January 1, 2026.

Forward-looking development of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft

The executive board has taken these two measures to preserve the long-term development of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. It is aware of the implications of these decisions,

especially with a view to the daily commitment demonstrated by each and every employee at the institutes. However, the board is convinced that effective decisions are essential to ensure and strengthen the long-term development of our locations and the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft as a whole.

The senate of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is to make its final decision on the full set of measures in June.

Update from June 5, 2024, 9:30 a.m.: Change in the target date for the integration of the Fraunhofer IMW Knowledge and Technology Transfer division as well as the Regional Development and Innovation Policy department into Fraunhofer ISI.

Update from June 17, 2024, 10:00 a.m.: In the senate meeting held on June 12, the senate approved the executive board's proposed structural measures.

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