



SouthwestX

Startup Factory for Europe

September 2026

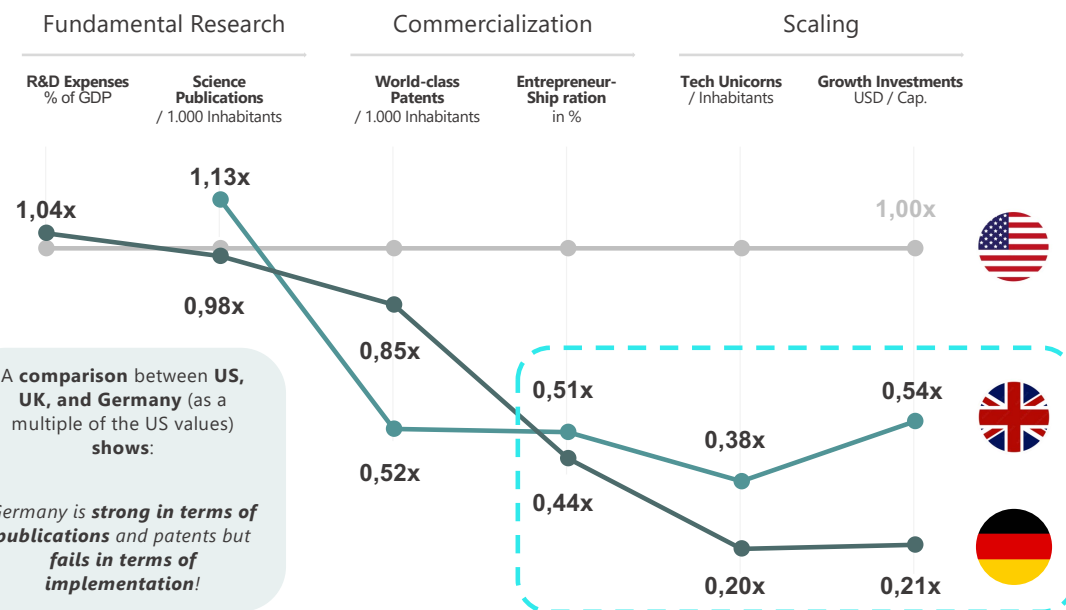
VISION OF SOUTHWESTX

We at SouthwestX believe in an future-ready Europe, which is characterized by strong economy, entrepreneurship and the consistent transformation of DeepTech companies from science. Our drive is to effectively bring innovations to the market, massively accelerate their scaling and at the same time raise cross-border cooperation to a new level - especially between Germany and France.

We are a leading Startup Factory in Europe with excellent offerings and a strong network. We multiply the founding output and the number of startups in the region, we sustainably strengthen existing corporates in their access to innovative power and outstanding entrepreneurial talent.

THE DEEP TECH PARADOXON

Innovation is the key to our wealth and democratic values, but while we are world-class in research, we are falling behind in building successful global leaders.



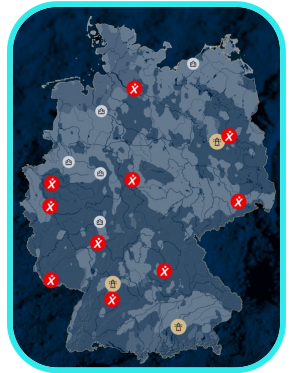
Discussion points

- **Excellent basic research**, but too little transfer to real-world applications
- **Science often operates detached** from market needs
- **Start-up culture at universities** is often not optimal
- **Incentives for professors** to actively promote spin-offs are too low
- Students with innovative potential are **not sufficiently systematically activated**
- **Involvement of established companies** is not systematic

Source: The 2023 European DeepTech Report, 11/2023

ONE ANSWER: STARTUP FACTORIES GERMANY

Scalable & exclusive innovation ecosystems (Startup Factories) help to transform research into successful enterprises by bringing together cutting-edge research institutes with startup entrepreneurs, corporates and investors.



A startup factory is...

- A **cross-regional** university associated startup ecosystem
- with strong **integration into private sector value chains** (corporates, VCs etc)
- **international** outreach,
- and the goal of significantly **increasing** the number and quality of innovative, **deep tech spin-offs**.

The German government has named **10 such internationally visible lighthouses** financed by **10+10 million** Euro each forming the **STARTUP FACTORIES GERMANY**.

THE GERMAN STARTUP ECOSYSTEM

SouthwestX is only one of two startup hubs which act both as startup factory and de:hub.



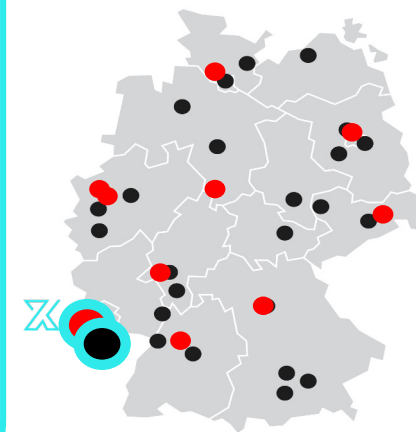
10+3 regional startup ecosystems strongly associated to universities
Existing since 2025



25 vertical focussed hubs fostering corporate startup collaboration
Strong national and **international outreach**
Existing since 2017



Worldwide Internationalisation formats
run by Start2Group



Startup Factories:

- UNITE (Berlin)
- NXTGN (Bawü)
- ZOHO (Nürnberg)
- Futury (Hessen)
- Impossible Founders (Hamburg)
- GOeFUTURE (Göttingen)
- Gateway (Köln, Aachen)
- BRYCK (Ruhr)
- boOst (Dresden)
- UnternehmerTUM (München)
- HPI (Potsdam)
- Campus founders (Heilbronn)

SOUTHWESTX: DEPTH, BREADTH AND IMPACT

We create tangible added value for the region and Europe

Strategically positioned for Europe

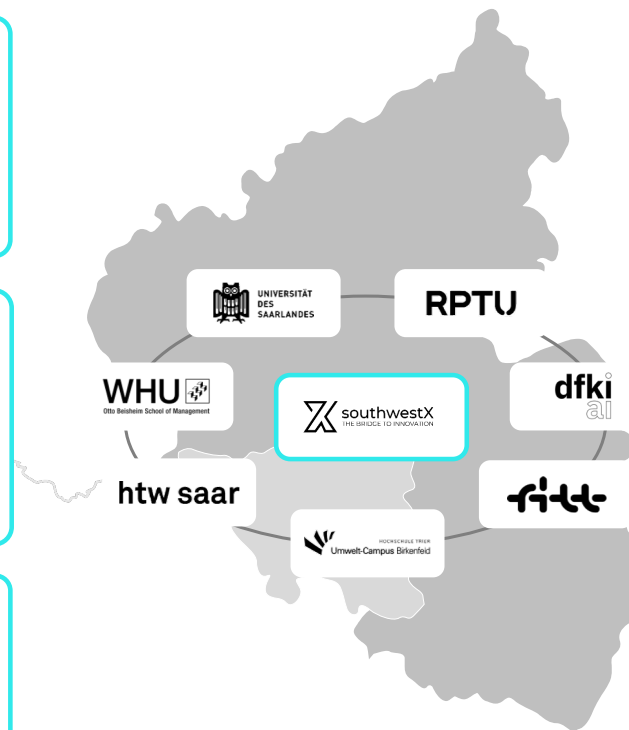
- SouthwestX is located in the heart of Europe - at the crossroads of France, Luxembourg and Germany
- This results in a unique opportunity for cross-border cooperation in innovation, research and business development
- This is not just a locational advantage - but a real lever for European innovation policy

Multidisciplinary partner competence

- Our partners bring together technological excellence AND entrepreneurial experience
- **Technology & deep tech** through universities, laboratories, research institutions, as well as **business & start-ups** through hubs, incubators, IHK, start-up teaching
- SouthwestX is the orchestrating bracket that bundles these competencies to real market problems

Size & Track Record

- Our network is not only broad - it has proven that it can deliver
- Examples from WHU, EXIST projects and previous programs show this: We have initiated start-ups, transferred research and activated talent - not just planned
- For us, scaling is not based on assumptions, but on experience



External validation & potential

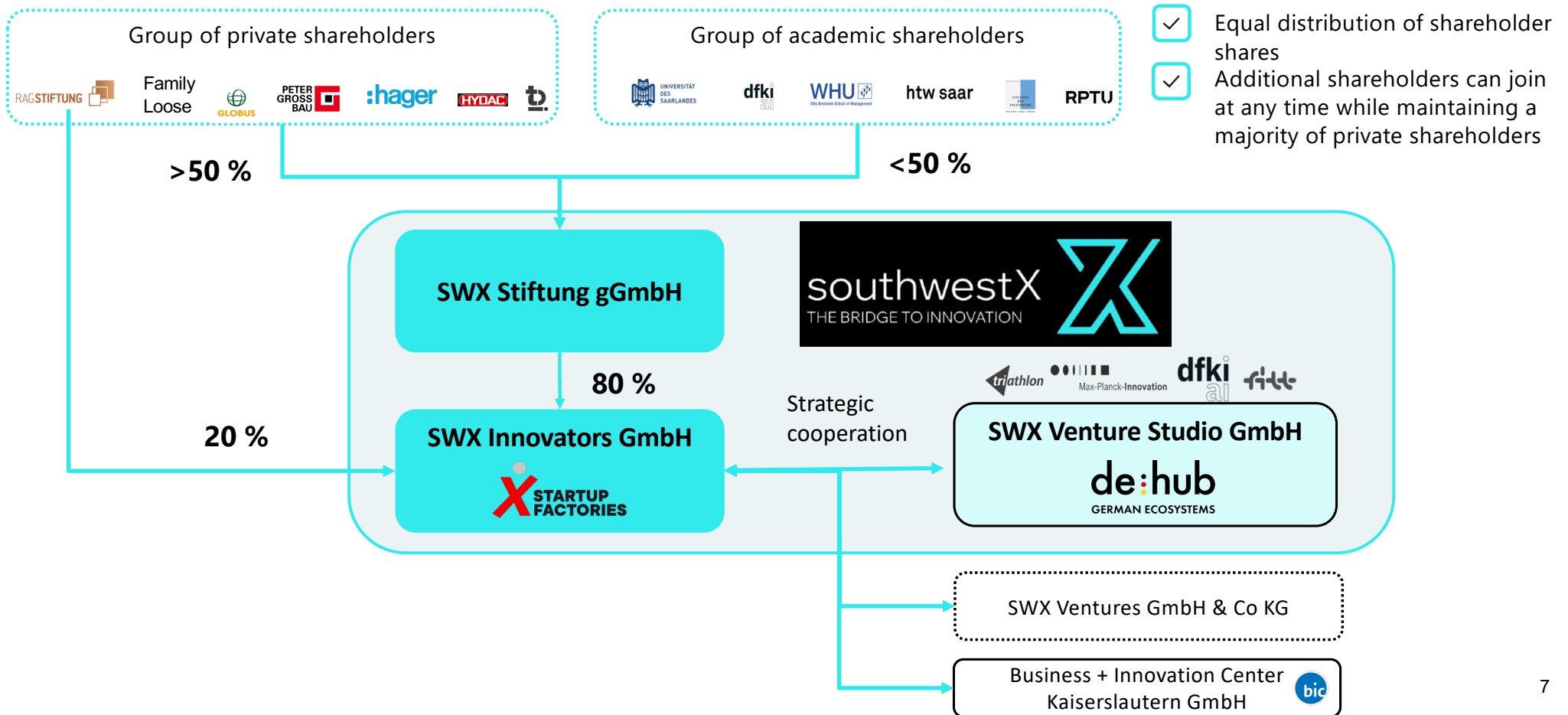
- Our strength is not just self-praise - it is confirmed by independent analyses, studies and partners
- SouthwestX combines technical, organizational and human potential - and is perceived as a strategic player

Momentum & connectivity

- The ecosystem is here - and growing
- Companies, universities, administrations, talents - they are ready to join SouthwestX
- This is not a theoretical structure, but a moving and growing space

OUR ORGANIZATION & OUR SHAREHOLDERS

An entrepreneurial public-private partnership as a social enterprise.



OUR USP

We have defined competence areas which gives us a special value proposition.

Artificial Intelligence



- **35 years** of **worldclass** research at DFKI, CISPA, Max-Planck Institutes, Saarland University,...
- Vast number of **highly educated talent available**

Entrepreneurial Talent



- **Community Enterprises** run by students, **16 unicorns**, >1000 Startups in total
- WHU represents **0,001%** of all students in GER, raising **7b €** (**10% of total VC funding**) in GER in the last 12 years.

Bridge to France



- **Historical connection** between Germany and France
- Multitude of **strong partnerships** with French world-class institutions like INRIA, Dauphine PSL, Collège des Ingénieurs, Agoranov etc.

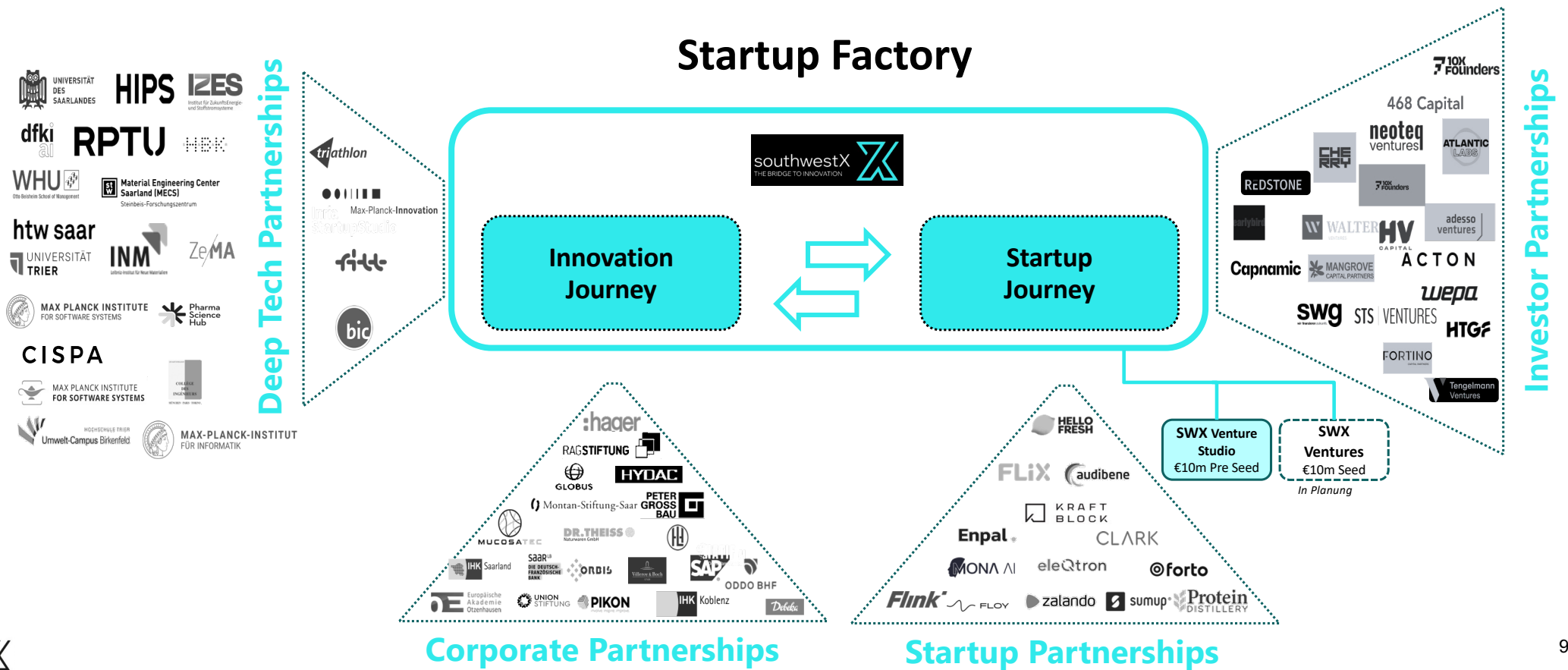
Green Transformation



- **>4.5 Billion €** investments into our coal and steel **region**
- Diverse Opportunities along the **value chain**

OUR SERVICE OFFERING

We synergistically combine services for startups (Startup Journey) with services for corporates (Innovation Journey).

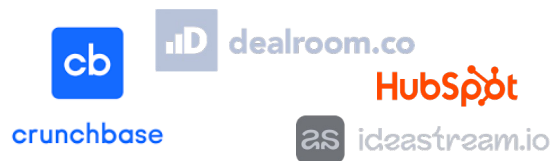


BENEFITS FOR OUR UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

The startup factory SouthwestX offers local ecosystems an unmatched reach and access

Access to professional tools

We provide our university partners with access to our professional IT toolbox



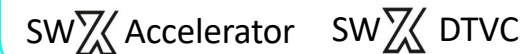
Access to our VC network

We invite our VC network to all key startup events of our university partners.



Access to our programs

We provide university partners access to all our programs under a consistent co-branding. This concerns post-incorporation programs which universities can typically cannot fund and excellence based cross regional pre-incorporation programs.



National and international Ecosystem access

As partner of the **Startup Factory** and **DE:Hub**, universities benefit from program access to (inter) national top events..



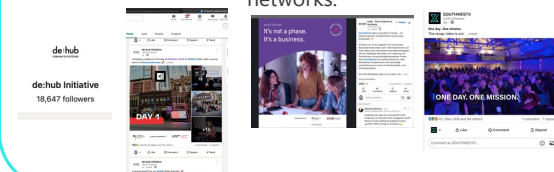
Access to our expert network

We maintain a network of highly professional coaches, mentors and industry experts. Our expert network is made available to our university partner programs.



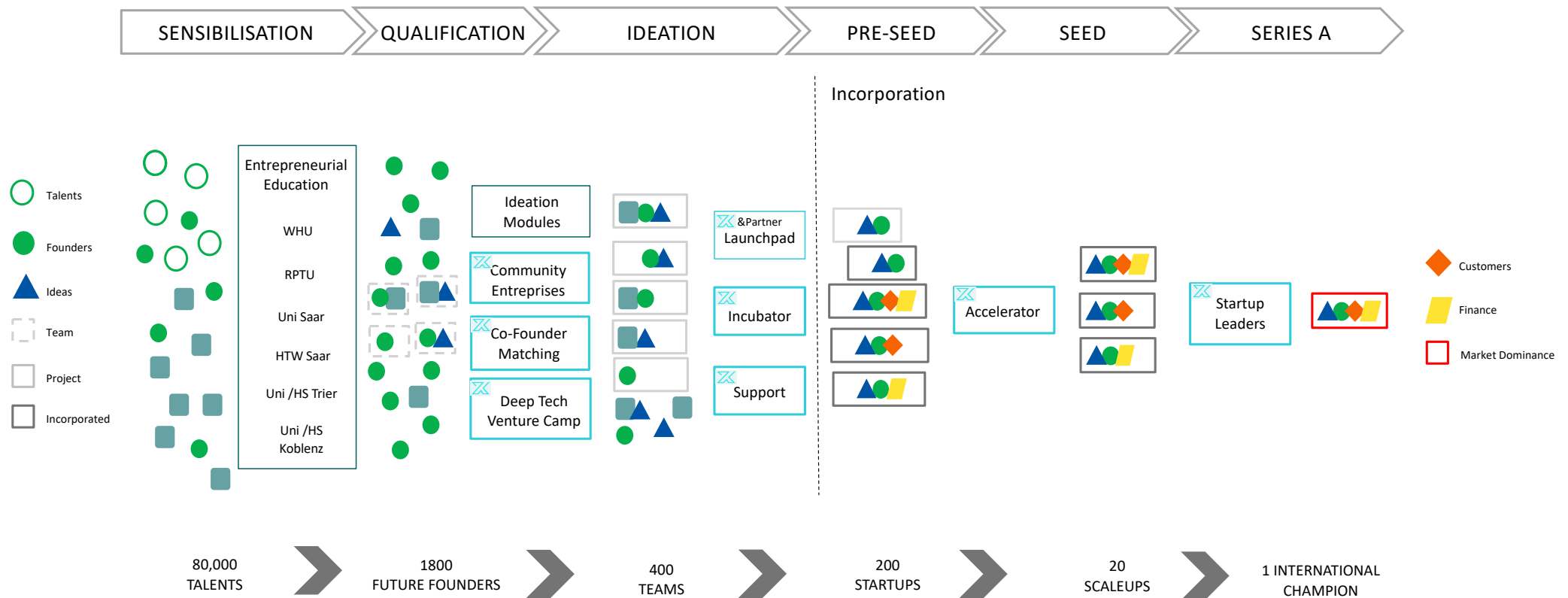
Visibility brand impact outreach

As a partner of the **Startup Factory** and **DE:Hub**, universities benefit from promotion outreach of our networks.



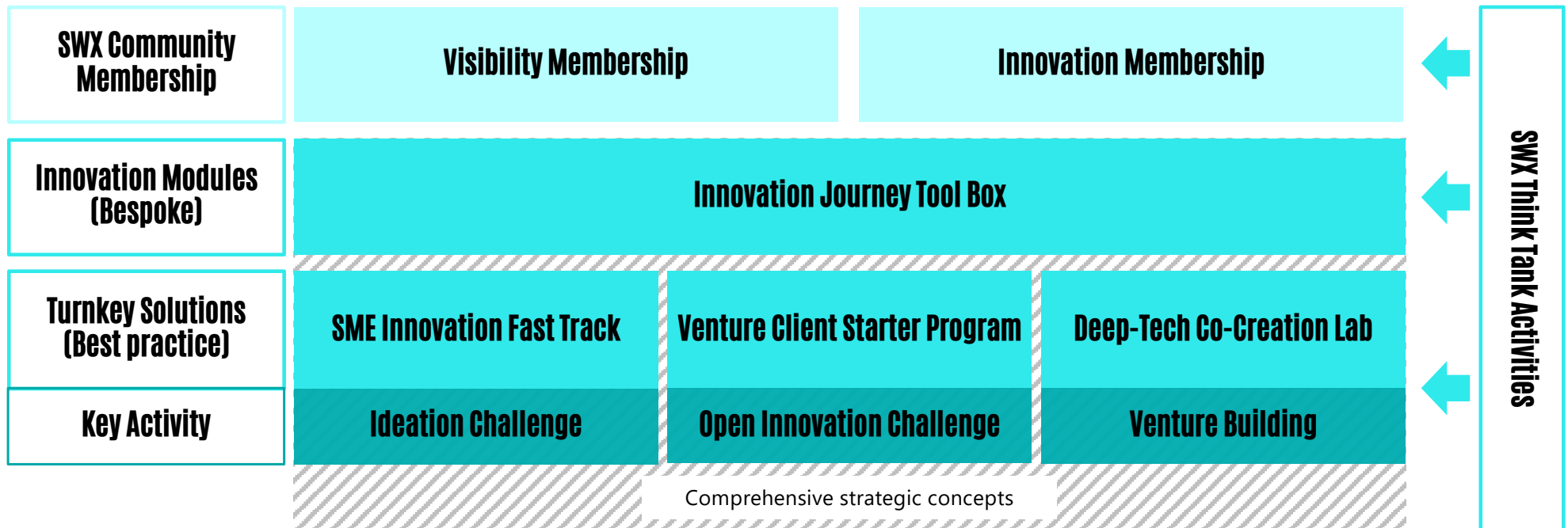
Startup Journey: Our Offering to Startup Teams

We support founders in different formats in a fully integrated ecosystem.



Innovation Journey: Our Offering to Corporates

From a quick start to lasting innovation success: Customized support and proven methods for your entire journey.



FLAGSHIP PROGRAM STARTUP LEADERS



Our flagship program "Startup Leaders" connects "Startup Factories" with "FrenchTech" to shape a European innovation space.

Excellence Program

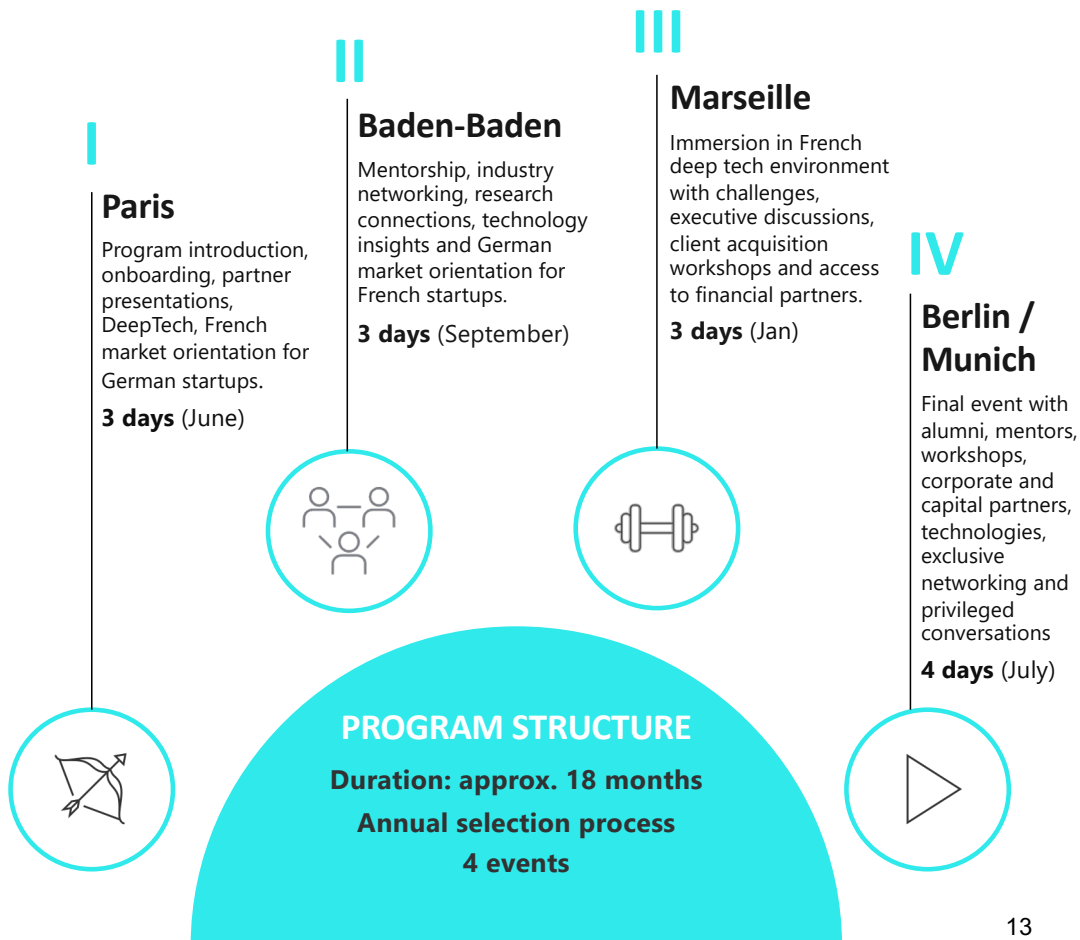
- **18 months** with high quality program (starts every year)
- 4 locations allowing **market access in Europe's strongest economies**
- 20 **most ambitious** Series A+ scale-up **founders** – **selected** in a highly competitive process

Value-oriented community

- **Lifelong CLASS OF 20XX companionship** between startup founders
- Program driven by **European and democratic values**
- **Annual Alumni summits** for founders and mentors

High-Level network and mentors

- Leading **European CEOs, Owners, U-Founders*, VCs and politicians**
- Guidance/Input in program workshops and **long-term mentoring**
- Fostering of **mutual entrepreneurial benefits** in startup-corporate collaboration



SUPPORTED BY EXTRAORDINARY INDIVIDUALS



EXAMPLE: Selected Mentors of the German-French Excellence program "Startup-Leaders"



Knut Stannowski
CEO
Collège des Ingénieurs (G)



Robert Gentz
Co-Founder
Zalando



Daniel Hager
Entrepreneur / Owner
Hager Group



Anke Rehlinger
Minister President
Saarland



Niklas Raberg
Partner
Capnamic



Thomas Bruch
Entrepreneur / Owner
Globus Group



Birgit Bohle
Executive Board Member
Deutsche Telekom



Bruno Fichfeux
SVP Future Programs
Airbus



Axel Schmidt
Former Head of Automotive
Accenture



Jean-Charles Pomerol
Président
Agoranov



Frank Heislitz
Management Board / CTO
Freudenberg Group



Peter Domma
Vorstand Digitalisierung/IT
Villeroy & Boch



Dominik Richter
Co-Founder
Hello Fresh



Farsin Yadegardjam
Partner
COI Partners



Thomas Birr
Head Strategy &
Innovation
E.ON SE



Michael Bolle
Chairman Supervisory Board
Carl Zeiss AG



Nadine Schön
Member German
Bundestag
Deputy Chair CDU/CSU



Bernd Eulitz
CEO
Messer SE & Co. KGaA



Christine Graeff
Former Executive Board
Member
Credit Suisse/UBS



Michael Willome
CEO
Synthomer



Christopher Oster
Co-Founder
Clark



Lucian Wagner
General Partner
EuroUS Ventures



Frank Stietz
Member of the Board/COO
Heraeus Group



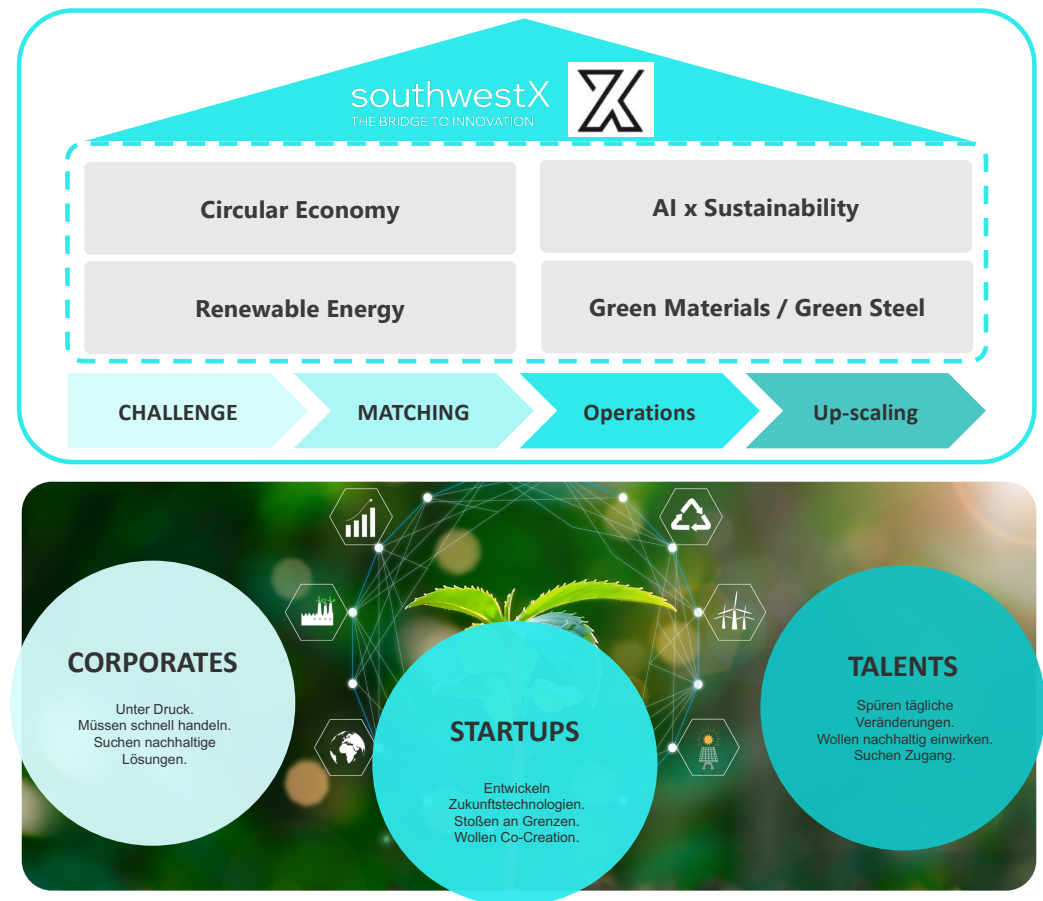
Uta Kemmerich-Keil
Supervisory Board
Beiersdorf, Schott, Roehling

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMM GTI

Green Transformation Innovation fosters sustainability and future readiness in Germany.

The perfect platform ...

- ✓ ... with charisma: conferences with **thematic chapters**, workshops and a **strong brand**
- ✓ ... for **networking with partners** at regional, national and European level
- ✓ ... for **visibility through media presence** and positioning as a **flagship of transformation**
- ✓ ... with **access** to a long-term **talent pool & innovation structures**
- ✓ ... with **access to community, knowledge, network** and early positioning even without a concrete project



OUR TEAM

A team for founders, tech enthusiasts and transformers.



Geschäftsleitung



Ralf Zastrau
Managing Director



Matthias Schmitz
Managing Director



Michael Welz
Director (Prokurist)



Laura Clodo
Management Executive Assistant



Startup Journey

Startup Programs



André Pitie
Head of Startups



Raphael De Thoury
Deep Tech Ventures
Manager



Dr. Elke Lieb
Head of Life Science
Senior Venture Manager



Shelby Peranich
Working Student



Fabian Klein
Senior Venture Manager

International Programs



Jana Burnikel
Manager International Programs

Community Enterprises

Michael Welz

Innovation Journey

Innovation Community

Head of Community: NN (Interim: Jan Arnold)



Nathalie Rau
IC & Community Manager

Innovation Programs



Sebastian Leber
Head of Innovation



Dr. Ulrich Roeske
Director Green Transformation



Nika Hein
Innovation Adviser



Torsten Katthöfer
Head of AI



Kartik Sahu
Working Student

Human Capital Management

NNN

Operations

Marketing & Communication



Jan Arnold
Head of Marketing | de:hub



Viktoriia Karakatsii
Working Student



Carlotta Pudelek
Marketing Manager

NN (de:hub Manager) **

NN (CRM Manager) **

Finance/Controlling (outsourced)



Myriam Burgard
Accounting



Michael Jung
Head of Operations



Susanne Kiehl
Controlling



Simone Bleidt
Controlling

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Whether coworking, labs or maker spaces - our locations offer you everything you need to get started

A network of innovation locations:

From Saarbrücken via Vallendar to Paris



Innovation Center in SB: Central contact point, coworking, FabLab, maker space, flex offices & event areas

Co-Working Center RLP on WHU campus: open space, meeting rooms and direct access to WHU community enterprises



Fair IP regulations enable founders to exploit their ideas and technologies independently



AI-supported tools such as ideastream support founders in the rapid, data-based validation of business models



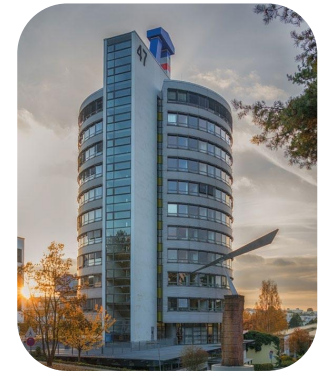
Access to high-tech laboratories at universities and partner locations (e.g. bio, AI, materials)

250

Startups will use our space every year



UNIVERSITÄT
DES
SAARLANDES



TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT
KAISERSLAUTERN



WHU
Otto Beisheim School of Management



HOCHSCHULE TRIER
Umwelt-Campus Birkenfeld



COLLEGE
DES
INGÉNIEURS

WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

Target values and KPIs

FACTORY SUSTAINABILITY (2030/2035)

	2030	2035
Total funding until (m€)	30,0	67,3
Annual Private Funding (m€)	3,9	10,8
Public Funding quota	37 %	14 %
Employees	42	64
EBITDA (m€)	0,29	1,8
NPS	70	75

STARTUP JOURNEY (ANNUALLY.)

Student-Base (without FRA/LUX)	80.000
Talents initially engaged	8.000
Founder Talents in programs	1.500
Founder teams supported	400
Startups founded	150
Scale-ups supported (annual after 2030)	30
Unicorns enabled (annual after 2035)	1

INNOVATION JOURNEY (2030/2035)

	2030	2035
Corporate partnerships established:	60	80
Annual innovation projects with Corporate partners:	30	120
Flagship Programs established:	4	6
Talents transferred to Corporate partners:	700	1.400

SOCIETAL IMPACT BY 2035

> 1.500

Startups
created

> 2.5b

Startup Funding
generated

> 750

Successful Startups
still active

> 20,000

Future-proof jobs
created

> € 4.5b

Exit Valuation
realized

> 200

Scaleup-Community Members
(German-French)

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

We are growing - with networks, partners and projects from SouthwestX and beyond!

Wir sind offen für neue Partnerschaften !





southwestX
THE BRIDGE TO INNOVATION



Contact

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