

PRESS RELEASE

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ChangeLab!

WACKER and Karlsruhe Institute of Technology Establish an Innovation Platform for Sustainable Construction

Munich, July 15, 2020 – The Munich-based WACKER Group is supporting a project by the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) to build up an innovation platform for sustainable construction. The two partners today unveiled an agreement to this effect. The project being funded, known as “ChangeLab! WACKER / KIT Innovation Platform for Pioneering Sustainable Construction”, is aimed both at the institute’s students and at architects, engineers and construction experts seeking to learn about and discuss new ideas and conceptual approaches in the field of materials development and in construction methods for a circular economy. Public lectures, symposia and ideas competitions are planned. All activities on the platform will be posted publicly on the website <https://changelab.exchange/>, which goes live today. WACKER is also providing funding for a digital overhaul of the department’s materials library. The project is scheduled to last three years.

The goal of the innovation platform is to forge stronger ties between researchers and actors at the various stages of the construction-sector supply chain. Events such as the “grow.build.repeat.”

symposium, likely to be held in KIT's Department of Architecture on December 3-4, 2020, will encourage discussions on the biological material cycle within the construction industry and foster networking among that industry and among architecture and construction research. The focus will be on the innovative potential offered by renewable construction materials and their construction principles in this sector.

Munich-based chemical Group WACKER expects to gain major impetus from this collaboration with KIT. "Even in times of the coronavirus, sustainability remains a top priority for us", says Peter Summo, president of the WACKER POLYMERS business division. "We are deliberately laying down a marker for the development of sustainable technologies in the construction sector. This is a matter of strategic importance to us."

WACKER has long espoused sustainable product solutions. WACKER POLYMERS, a world-leading producer of binders based on vinyl acetate-ethylene copolymers, uses biobased acetic acid sourced from the timber industry to manufacture binders for interior wall paints. "We rely on discussions with experts at every stage of the value-creation chain to keep driving the adoption of these kinds of sustainable, innovative approaches", emphasizes Summo. "The ChangeLab! platform creates the environment for discussions of this kind among all participants."

The other project partner involved in the innovation platform is the Professorship of Sustainable Construction at the Institute for Building Design and Technology within the KIT's Department of Architecture.

An expert group there, led by Prof. Dirk E. Hebel, has been conducting research and practical work on sustainable materials resources and closed-loop construction principles since 2017. “Climate change and the question of how we want to deal with increasingly scarce resources in the future must become central issues in the everyday thinking, acting and building of our discipline”, says Hebel. In his view, it is therefore important to develop new materials and construction principles that will add to the range of possibilities available to architects and construction engineers and to keep pressing ahead with the closed-loop approach, e.g. through the use of biotic building materials. “The fact that we have gained WACKER’s support for our ChangeLab! platform is a huge boost for our work at the faculty and will prove highly inspirational for all those seeking to become involved in the future of construction”, he explains.

The innovation platform is open to students, representatives from the construction and engineering industries, experts, and material scientists. The plan is to expand it over the coming months into a forum for discussion and experimentation. The website for the ChangeLab! project (<https://changelab.exchange/>) officially launched today will serve as a central information hub, affording representatives from science and the construction industry an opportunity to discuss their ideas, questions and visions, and to report on their work, thereby presenting reference points for novel approaches. The website will also post information on training opportunities and other public events related to sustainable construction.

WACKER

WACKER (www.wacker.com) is a globally active chemical company headquartered in Munich, Germany. With a wide range of state-of-the-art specialty products, the Group is a leader in numerous fields and industries. For example, WACKER is a key partner to the construction industry. Its silicone-based construction chemicals and polymeric binders for the building and housing sectors generate €1.7 billion or roughly 35 percent of Group sales. With a workforce of 14,700 employees, WACKER posted sales of €4.93 billion in 2019. Founded in 1914, the company currently operates 24 production sites and sells over 3,200 products to more than 3,500 customers around the world.

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)

As “The Research University in the Helmholtz Association” based in Karlsruhe, Germany, KIT creates and communicates knowledge for the betterment of society and the environment. Its objective is to make significant contributions to the global challenges in the fields of energy, mobility, and information. To this end, about 9,300 employees cooperate in a broad range of disciplines spanning the natural sciences, engineering sciences, economics, and the humanities and social sciences. KIT prepares its 24,400 students for responsible tasks in society, industry, and science by offering research-based study programs. Innovation efforts at KIT build a bridge between important scientific findings and their application for the benefit of society, economic prosperity, and the preservation of our natural basis of life. KIT is one of the German universities of excellence.





The ChangeLab! innovation platform recently launched by Munich-based chemical Group WACKER and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) marks a new departure in the development of sustainable construction materials. (Photo: WACKER)

Note:

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<http://www.wacker.com/pressreleases>

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The Company in Brief:

WACKER is a globally active chemical company with some 14,700 employees and annual sales of around € 4.93 billion (2019). WACKER has a global network of 24 production sites, 23 technical competence centers and 51 sales offices.

WACKER SILICONES

Silicone fluids, emulsions, rubber grades and resins; silanes; pyrogenic silicas; thermoplastic silicone elastomers

WACKER POLYMERS

Polyvinyl acetates and vinyl acetate copolymers and terpolymers in the form of dispersible polymer powders, dispersions, solid resins and solutions

WACKER BIOSOLUTIONS

Biotech products such as cyclodextrins, cysteine and biologics, as well as fine chemicals and PVAc solid resins

WACKER POLYSILICON

Polysilicon for the semiconductor and photovoltaic industries