

Transfer Strategy of the University of Bayreuth

Last updated: December



Foreword



Dear Readers,

Climate change, the energy crisis and other major challenges pose enormous tasks for our society and economy, also in the Upper Franconia region. As a university, we can and want to make a significant contribution to successfully mastering the associated change, securing the prosperity of all of us and maintaining the competitiveness of the region. But how do we ensure that the necessary solutions are quickly developed and successfully implemented?

I think the answer is this: **only together with our partners from science, business and society!** We therefore see ourselves as a driving force in this innovation ecosystem and recognize the great importance of science for the upcoming transformation processes in society and the economy. Despite limited resources, we are working innovatively to increase our capacity and expand our activities. The fact that we are already on a successful path here is shown by our top placements in relevant rankings, such as our **Top 10 position as a start-up university** and our major projects, such as the "Innovative University". However, we also see these success stories as an incentive to continue developing and to position ourselves even more precisely. To achieve this, we will need more **strategic collaborations** with our partners in the innovation ecosystem and structures that reliably and efficiently map joint transfer activities. We are therefore striving for a common innovation culture and architecture to increase the number of successful projects and create a **sustainable basis for collaboration**. The present transfer strategy of the University of Bayreuth takes up these concerns and formulates concrete goals and measures for the coming years.

There is a reason our mission is to be **creative, courageous, innovative and liveable**. We want to express this in our teaching, research, and transfer activities. This transfer strategy is intended to be a guidepost for the transformation of the University of Bayreuth and to build sustainable bridges from our campus to the region in order to provide even more space for encounters, cooperation and innovation. I invite you to work together with us and our partners on innovative concepts and solutions and thus actively shape the future of the region!

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stefan Leible".

Professor Dr. Stefan Leible
President of the University of Bayreuth

Preamble to the transfer strategy

Innovative solutions for the major challenges of our time, such as climate change, energy transition, demographic change, digitization and the resulting transformation processes, can only be developed together with partners from society and business. It is already foreseeable that universities will have an ever greater responsibility in the **transfer of ideas, knowledge and technology**. This also calls for an **intelligent and innovation-promoting transfer architecture** which should help to develop solutions promptly and implement them successfully. Our innovation ecosystem serves as the basis for this architecture, in which all actors take on a profiled task for the transfer process. In 2017, the University of Bayreuth therefore already formulated its role as a **regional catalyst and driver of innovation** in both its transfer strategy as well as the "Structural and Development Plan 2025". It seeks to actively shape the future and, with the help of co-creative processes, take responsibility for the challenges of our time and, in particular, of the Upper Franconia region. The transfer strategy launched by the University Governing Board, the University Council and the Senate is therefore the starting point for the further specification of the continuous further development of the University of Bayreuth and is to be understood as an instrument for a cultural change towards an even stronger commitment to transfer.

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(last updated: December 2022)



Contents

■ Foreword	2
■ Preamble to the transfer strategy	3
■ 1. Introduction	6
■ 2. Our understanding of transfer	7
■ 3. Innovation ecosystem as a basis for transfer	8
■ 4. Transfer activities and channels	10
■ 5. Current transfer challenges	11
■ 6. Goals of transfer	12
■ 7. Measures already planned	13
■ 8. Monitoring and evaluation	14
■ 9. Transparency and code of conduct	15

1. Introduction

The transfer of ideas, knowledge and technology (IWTT) has become much more important in recent decades than it previously was. The reasons for this include the major challenges of our time (e.g. climate change, the energy transition, demographic change, mobility, digitalization) and the resulting transformation processes in the economy and society.

Economically, the Upper Franconia region is characterized by small and medium-sized, often family-run, companies (SMEs), which are not infrequently world market leaders (hidden champions) in their industry. The most important sectors of the economy include mechanical engineering, the rubber and plastics processing industry, the metal producing industry, and the glass and textile industry. Upper Franconia is a region that is particularly challenged to adapt its competencies and products and to identify new business areas due to the high density of automotive suppliers.

As a rural, peripherally located region, Upper Franconia is also facing special challenges due to intensified demographic developments (i.e., aging of society, migration of young, qualified people to urban centres). In order to secure the region's performance capacity in the long term, attractive living and working conditions as well as lifestyles must be ensured for young and older people. This also includes, for example, providing attractive mobility services. In addition, sustainability issues (including measures in the area of climate protection) need to be increasingly communicated to society, awareness of the transformation needs to be raised, and concrete measures need to be implemented jointly.

These challenges cannot be solved by business and society alone. Strategic partners such as universities are needed. The University of Bayreuth (UBT) has been involved in IWTT in the region for years. Thus, in 2013 the University Governing Board, the Senate and the University Council at the University of Bayreuth and in its following "structure and development plans" (current status: StEP 2025+¹) decisively expressed an image that the University wants to contribute to coping with the economic and social challenges in the region of Upper Franconia through adapted offers and formats.

The present transfer strategy describes the understanding, the embedding in the (regional) innovation ecosystem as well as concrete goals and measures to raise the aforementioned potentials (delta). It serves as a strategic guideline for the employees of the University of Bayreuth. It was first adopted in 2017 and will be updated at least every five years, based on a potential and SWOT analysis.

¹ See: <https://www.uni-bayreuth.de/struktur-entwicklungsplan>

2. Our understanding of transfer

Third Mission at the University of Bayreuth is understood as a mutual and continual exchange of knowledge between the University and stakeholders: from society, business, culture, and politics to achieve social, ecological and economic innovations.

The University of Bayreuth is an important regional partner, and it also strives for international scientific excellence. As a medium-sized university outside a metropolitan area, the University of Bayreuth pursues a clear profiling strategy in order to be perceived as an attractive partner – regionally, nationally and internationally – in the areas of research and teaching. The expansion and effective implementation of transfer strengthen this role of the University of Bayreuth and raise its profile at the intersection of science, society, culture, business and politics². This will enable the University of Bayreuth to further expand its Third Mission and its role as the region's innovation pole and driver.

The University of Bayreuth assumes a broad and interdisciplinary understanding of innovation, which is also reflected in transfer. Thus, the transfer strategy already starts in the area of the first and second missions of the University by striving for the concrete utilization of research findings and a close integration of cooperation partners from practice in teaching.

² Transfer as a statutory service task for universities in the State of Bavaria (Article 2 para 5 of the Higher Education Act)

3. Innovation ecosystem as a basis for transfer

The strength of the University of Bayreuth lies in its interdisciplinary orientation and concentration on specific focus areas that are reflected, among other things, in its programmes of study, some of which are unique in Germany (such as law with an additional qualification in economics; Health Economics; Sport, Business & Law; Philosophy & Economics; Sports Technology or Computer Game Studies). By providing necessary structures, The University of Bayreuth offers a first-class testing ground for innovations and their transfer to business and society. This is reflected in its top placements in rankings such as *Gründungsradar 2020*³). For example, the successful spin-off work and the close integration of the University of Bayreuth into the regional start-up and innovation ecosystem contributes to innovative capacity in the various economic and societal areas, to image enhancement as well as to the attractiveness of the University for scientists, companies and students in the national and international context. The University of Bayreuth's Gateway Offices are also an important building block⁴. SMEs in the region in particular depend on the retention of highly trained specialists and continuous IWTT to secure their innovative capacity.

In order to be able to meet the increased demands and the understanding of transfer, the Office of Entrepreneurship & Innovation was established at the University of Bayreuth in 2014, and in 2015 the position of Vice President for Information Technology & Entrepreneurship was created⁵. In 2020 the interdisciplinary and cross-faculty Institute of Entrepreneurship & Innovation (IEI) was founded. In addition, four more professorships were created in the area of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship. IEI combines the fields of research, teaching and transfer and serves as a central contact point for all partners in the (regional) innovation ecosystem (see figure). Completion of the new IEI building is scheduled for August 2025⁶. An innovation hub and meeting place for students, university employees and external partners from business and society will be created on an area of around 1,600m². The central goals are the implementation of excellent, internationally visible basic and applied research, the development of start-up and innovation capabilities, and the implementation of innovative ideas and business models in the Upper Franconia region. In the immediate vicinity of the IEI, the *Regional Innovation & Start-up Centre (RIZ)*⁷ will be built under the auspices of the city of Bayreuth.

3 see press Press Release No. 031/2021, 12 March 2021:
www.presse.uni-bayreuth.de/de/pressemitteilungen/2021/031-spitzenplatz-gruendungsradar-2020/index.html

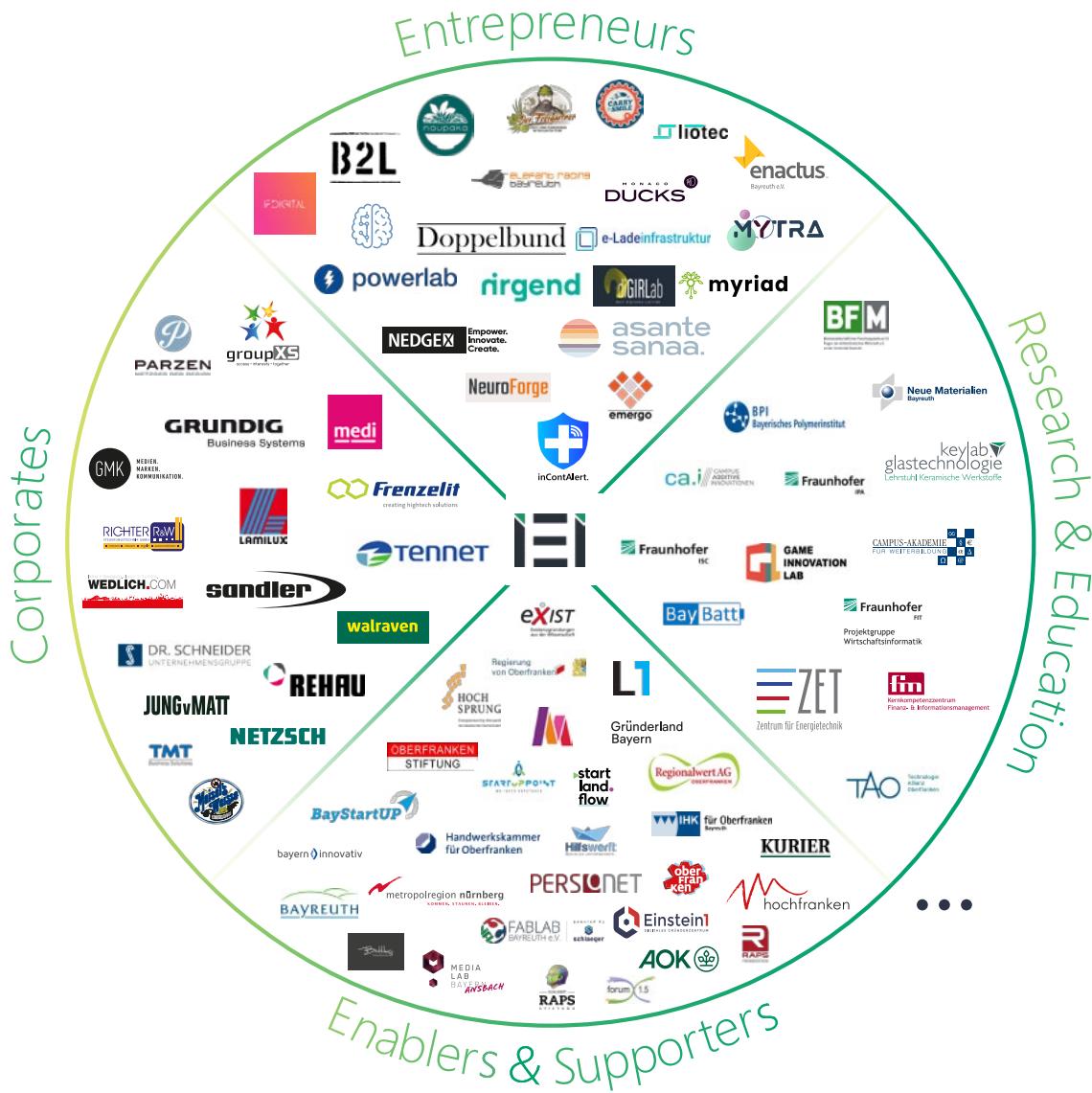
4 The University of Bayreuth's Gateway Offices in Australia, China and France serve primarily as information and contact points to promote exchange with Bayreuth students and faculty. They contribute to the strengthening of cooperation in research and teaching and support the establishment and maintenance of contacts to institutions in science and industry as well as to the regional partner network of the University of Bayreuth in these specific regions.

5 In September 2021, the position was re-profiled and changed to "Digitalization, Innovation & Sustainability".

6 Until then, IEI's user groups were housed at the interim location on the former Zapf site.

7 Until the RIZ is completed, company founders can rent rooms at the StartUp Point provided by the City of Bayreuth.

3. Innovation ecosystem as a basis for transfer



The regional innovation ecosystem from the University of Bayreuth's perspective with IEI as the hub with selected examples

These strategic and structural measures represent important milestones that were set for stronger networking and cooperation with civil society along with political and economic stakeholders. In this way, the University of Bayreuth was able to build up an efficient knowledge and transfer network together with its partners. Stakeholders come from the areas of research/ education, start-ups, entrepreneurs/ corporates and supporters/ enablers. The partners in the regional innovation ecosystem are already well-networked and organize concrete collaborations to jointly drive innovation.

4. Transfer activities and channels

Science-based interaction with business, civil society (including associations, advocacy groups, educational institutions, and cultural workers), foundations, politics and administration, scientists from other national and international institutions, etc. make up an important part of the University of Bayreuth's activities. This exchange is based on its core competencies and focus areas (e.g. Polymer & Colloid Science, Advanced Materials, Molecular Biosciences and Energy Research & Energy Technology) in research and teaching, and is intended to strengthen these as well as to take up impulses from society and industry. Already during the conception of new transfer activities, the possible exploitation is considered. Experimental formats (e.g. *Radical Innovation Sprint* and *Social Entrepreneurship Camp*) are created that bring together practice partners, students and university staff and, through the use of innovation methods and creativity techniques, particularly promote the emergence and implementation of ideas and innovations.

The University of Bayreuth sees its role in the (regional) innovation ecosystem in particular in the following areas:

- interdisciplinary, excellent and internationally visible research and its exploitation
- innovative, interdisciplinary study programmes and teaching formats that promote entrepreneurial thinking and action across faculties in addition to study-specific content (e.g. (social) entrepreneurship / intrapreneurship)
- academic continuing education programmes (including Agile Collaboration 4.0, Digital Future Factory, Innovation Manager / Intrapreneurship Manager)
- support and consulting for start-ups as well as established companies and organizations (e.g. workshops, consulting and lectures)
- organization of exchange formats between science and practice (e.g. on economic and social challenges, new research results or concrete challenges of professional practice)
- participation in / membership of the University of Bayreuth in regional networks (e.g. Technology Alliance Upper Franconia (TAO) and associations, e.g. *Oberfranken Offensiv* e.V.)

The University of Bayreuth uses modern, target group-oriented means of communication (such as social media and classic press relations, white papers, internet presence, print media) as well as the University's own formats such as "*Spektrum*" and "*UBT aktuell*" to inform interested parties from society and business about the latest developments. In doing so, the University of Bayreuth is also pursuing the goal of making its contribution to sustainably securing and increasing the quality of science communication. Media partnerships are used to extend the reach of communications activities.

5. Current transfer challenges

Despite the previous range of structures and activities, the current transfer architecture has further potential for optimization:

Transfer activities are often not synchronized

Transfer activities are largely based on the individual contacts of individual research areas and are not yet sufficiently networked among each other. One of the greatest challenges is therefore to interlink both university and non-university transfer partners even more closely. Profiled alliances and the use of the respective competencies and networks are necessary in order to be able to provide companies and organizations with the support they need.

Transfer structures are insufficiently organized for efficient innovation processes

Transfer structures of the University of Bayreuth and the other transfer partners must be better adapted to each other in order to improve the innovation processes and their utilization. Transfer must be organized structurally and in terms of content in such a way that the transfer institutions, social actors and the innovation units of the companies (e.g. innovation labs) can benefit from it in the long term.

6. Goals of transfer

The University of Bayreuth aims to make outstanding knowledge, innovative ideas and technologies effective for society and the economy. In line with this overarching goal and the already established innovation ecosystem, there are five goals for expanding the University of Bayreuth's idea, knowledge and technology transfer.

Goal 1: Harnessing evidence-based knowledge, innovative ideas and technologies

The University of Bayreuth is collaboratively developing a mutual transfer of ideas, knowledge and technology with partners from business, society, culture and politics. This transfer includes the development and implementation of projects that address social and economic challenges on a regional, national and international level in a solution-oriented manner. The University of Bayreuth fosters interactive communication to promote interest in science, enrich dialogues to solve societal challenges, and enable evidence-based decision-making in business, society, culture, and policy.

Goal 2: Expanding the transfer culture

In cooperation with its partners, the University of Bayreuth is actively contributing to the development of a transfer culture in the region of Upper Franconia. For this purpose, students and employees of the University are urged to contribute their competencies, research findings and ideas to the innovation ecosystem. The understanding of transfer is to be further developed through targeted approaches to relevant actors, qualification and incentive measures (including cross-faculty teaching formats, events and consultations in the field of entrepreneurship, seminars for new employees and professors), with the aim of establishing a sustainable transfer culture in all areas of the University of Bayreuth.

Goal 3: Expanding transfer structures and activities

The University of Bayreuth is expanding its high-profile transfer activities and intensifying interaction and cooperation by involving additional partners and motivating existing partners. The focus is on the further expansion of existing competence and application laboratories at the University of Bayreuth as well as synchronization and interlocking with the actors in the innovation ecosystem. In addition, further laboratories are to be established (for example in the areas of additive manufacturing and advanced materials). Here, IEI assumes the function of a central interface to the innovation ecosystem.

Goal 4: Ensuring visibility of transfer competencies

The University of Bayreuth is gaining regional, national and international recognition and visibility as a competent transfer partner. In doing so, the University of Bayreuth is increasing its use of various media formats, especially new social media, to effectively shape social dialogues regionally and nationally.

Goal 5: Expanding monitoring and evaluation measures of the transfer

The University of Bayreuth is ensuring evidence-based and sustainable documentation and evaluation of transfer activities.

7. Measures already planned

The University of Bayreuth plans to implement various measures over the next few years to achieve the above-mentioned goals. This involves both infrastructural measures and concrete transfer activities. In order to be able to realize and sustainably secure the measures, corresponding funding inquiries have been and are being made, private third-party funding has been raised, and the University's own budgetary resources are also being used⁸.

a) Expansion of transfer formats in teaching, continuing education and consulting

The University of Bayreuth supports the transfer of knowledge through excellent research, practice-oriented teaching and training, and consulting. For example, teaching, training and consulting services in the field of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship for various target groups are being further completed and made available to an ever larger circle. In addition to the new **master's programme in Digitalization & Entrepreneurship** and **Entrepreneurship & Innovation**, additional formats are also being created in the extracurricular area (e.g. the *Entrepreneurial Skills Program*).

b) Expansion and dovetailing of innovation support in the regional ecosystem

The University of Bayreuth is striving for closer integration with regional providers (enablers and supporters) in the area of start-up and innovation support and is developing a vision of Upper Franconia as a place of innovation together with its partners. To this end, an Upper Franconia Innovation Network has already been established, which will develop and implement joint strategic and operational measures over the next few years. The exchange between society, business and politics is to be promoted and actively involved in further development (regional think tanks or innovation workshops to further raise the profile of the service offerings).

c) Further development of cross-divisional transfer structures

The University of Bayreuth is expanding existing application centres (labs) into open-innovation hubs that are interconnected and can respond quickly to innovation needs. This is done in close cooperation with the partners in the innovation ecosystem. Additional staff members in the Transfer department will initiate and support more cooperative ventures and, if possible, turn them into strategic partnerships. Here, IEI assumes the role of central contact point, process control and moderator.

d) Expansion of national & international networks

The University of Bayreuth is successively expanding its international contacts and partnerships in the context of the IWTT in order to maintain a lively exchange in global networks and to make the competencies from these available to the regional community. The University of Bayreuth also aims to increase the quota of EU third-party funding applications and participation in calls for proposals outside the EU in the area of transfer. In addition to further increasing third-party funding, this also serves to expand international research and transfer cooperation and to broaden the University of Bayreuth's international research horizon.

⁸ As a rule, the financing of the measures is subject to budgetary constraints. Measures that lead to an increase in costs must be coordinated in advance with Accounting (Unit II).

8. Monitoring and evaluation

The University of Bayreuth permanently documents its transfer activities and evaluates them with regard to the set goals. Transfer services and cooperative relationships are systematically recorded and presented. The goals in this context are the further professionalization of transfer structures and activities. Performance is evaluated not only on the basis of quantitative data, but also on the basis of qualitative information provided by way of expert reviews.

Through the expansion of monitoring and the introduction of uniform evaluation measures of the collected key figures and conducted qualitative audits, the success and long-term effectiveness of transfer measures and strategies will be reviewed in an evidence-based manner. Based on the data collected, the transfer strategy or goals are adjusted.



9. Transparency and code of conduct

The University of Bayreuth acts as an autonomous institution on the basis of the constitutionally protected freedom of research. At the same time, as a state-funded institution, the University of Bayreuth is subject to the transparency requirement formulated in the Basic Law. Transparency regulations are therefore needed that strike a balance between the opportunity to form social opinions on the one hand and freedom of research and the protection of universities and cooperation partners on the other. In its recommendations on transparency in cooperation between universities and companies, the Donors' Association for the Promotion of Sciences and Humanities in Germany (*Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft*) refers to recommendations in this field⁹, which the University of Bayreuth provides its employees as guidelines for their activities in this area.



⁹ <https://www.stifterverband.org/transparenz-empfehlungen>



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