Press release

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Germany's top research institutions and venture capital investors unite behind spin-off framework

Venture capital firms, research organizations, technology transfer offices (TTOs), and ecosystem partners today announced the launch of the German Spin-off Framework (GSOF), a unique, jointly developed framework designed to make research-based spin-offs faster, fairer, and more predictable across Germany.

The German Spin-off Framework is a voluntary commitment by research institutions, technology transfer offices, and investors to common standards and best practices for research-based spin-offs. It is the result of a broad collaborative process, which was coordinated by Dr. Thorsten Lambertus, managing director of DEEP - Institute for Deep Tech Innovation at ESMT Berlin. Developed in collaboration with investors, universities, research institutions, and technology transfer experts, the GSOF establishes practical "landing zones" for intellectual property licensing, equity participation, and spin-off negotiations. The framework aims to reduce friction, increase transparency, and help founders, investors, and research organizations focus on building globally competitive deep tech companies.

Reflecting broad support across Germany's innovation ecosystem, 44 organizations spanning venture capital, research, technology transfer, law, media, and the broader deep tech ecosystem have developed and endorsed the framework to date: APEX Ventures, Ascenion, Atlantic, Basic Ventures, Bayerische Patentallianz GmbH, BayBG Venture Capital, Bayern Kapital, Bio Deutschland e. V., BioM, BioRN, Business Angels Deutschland (BAND), Charité & BIH, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, D11Z, DEEP - Institute for Deep Tech Innovation at ESMT Berlin, DESY, DKFZ, First Momentum, Forbion, Fraunhofer, HZDR, Joachim Herz Stiftung, Karlsruher Institut für Technologie, LMU University Hospital, Marvelous Ventures, Matterwave Ventures, Max Planck Innovation GmbH, Noerr, Occident Ventures, Positron, Potsdam Science Park, RWTH Aachen, seed+speed Ventures, Sofinnova, SouthwestX, TU Dresden, TU München, Triathlon (Universität des Saarlandes), U2V, University of Stuttgart, Venture Capital Magazin, Vireo Ventures, Visionaries Tomorrow, and WIPIT.

The framework brings together the interests of founders, research institutions, and investors behind a shared ambition: transforming world-class research into globally competitive companies. It establishes market-oriented reference points for intellectual property licensing, equity participation, and technology transfer negotiations, while prioritizing founder incentives, investability, and long-term value creation over short-term revenue maximization. By increasing transparency, reducing uncertainty, and accelerating negotiations, the framework aims to strengthen Germany's ability to commercialize breakthrough technologies and build globally relevant deep tech champions.

"Germany has world-class research and a strong venture capital ecosystem. Yet research-based spin-offs still lose too much time in complex and often unpredictable technology transfer negotiations or launch with terms that can make future financing rounds more difficult," said Thorsten Lambertus. "The German Spin-off Framework provides founders, research institutions, and investors with a shared set of guidelines based on practical experience. The fact that more than 40 organizations have already endorsed the framework shows that the ecosystem is ready to evolve together in order to build more globally successful deep tech companies."

The GSOF is intended as a living framework that will evolve alongside market developments and international best practices, supporting Germany's ambition to translate world-class research into globally competitive companies.

Download the framework.

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