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Heidelberg and Mainz agree on joint innovation partnership - Strengthening the Neckar-Rhine-Main biotech region

The cities of Heidelberg and Mainz want to work closely together in the future: Their aim is to further develop the Neckar-Rhine-Main region as an international innovation and biotech region. To this end, Heidelberg Mayor Eckart Würzner and Mainz Mayor Nino Haase signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at Heidelberg City Hall on Friday, April 24, 2026. Those responsible for the central innovation and development structures of both cities also took part in the signing: Marc Massoth, Head of the Office for Economic Development and Science and Managing Director of the Heidelberg Technology Park, Felix Wälder, Managing Director of biomindz Entwicklungsgesellschaft Mainz, Julia Schaft, Managing Director of BioRN, and Dirk Schmitt, Managing Director of the Life Science Center Mainz with the BioVation RLP networking platform.

Heidelbergs Oberbürgermeister Eckart Würzner sagte: „Mit unserer Partnerschaft setzen wir ein klares Signal: Nur durch Zusammenarbeit können deutsche und europäische Innovationsräume im globalen Wettbewerb bestehen. Denn die internationale Konkurrenz in den Bereichen Life Sciences, Biotechnologie und DeepTech wächst rasant. Regionen wie Boston, Cambridge oder Singapur zeigen, wie wichtig starke, vernetzte Innovationsökosysteme für wissenschaftlichen Fortschritt, wirtschaftliche Dynamik und die Ansiedlung zukunftsweisender Unternehmen sind. Daher ist unsere Kooperation bewusst offen für weitere Partner, die sich dem Ziel einer starken, überregionalen Innovationsregion anschließen möchten."

Lord Mayor Nino Haase, State Capital of Mainz, emphasized: "Mainz and Heidelberg are exemplary for the strength of our entire region. With this partnership, we are bringing key players closer together and creating new momentum for innovation, start-ups and growth. We want to leverage the existing potential in a targeted manner, increase our international appeal and work together to turn excellent research into concrete applications and economic success even faster. I am therefore all the more pleased that we will soon be able to welcome Heidelberg to Mainz - because true collaboration begins with actively living it from the very beginning."

Shared strengths for a strong innovation region

Heidelberg and Mainz see themselves as key players in a biotech and innovation region that stretches from Mainz in the north via Darmstadt and Kaiserslautern to the Rhine-Neckar metropolitan region with Heidelberg, Mannheim and Ludwigshafen, and on to Karlsruhe and Heilbronn. This cohesive innovation area is one of the most dynamic technology and science locations in Germany and offers great potential for start-up growth in biotechnology, health, artificial intelligence and deep tech.

The partnership aims to network this ecosystem more closely, pool strengths and create framework conditions that can compete with regions such as Munich or Berlin.

Heidelberg and Mainz have excellent scientific institutions, internationally renowned clinics, a lively start-up scene and fast-growing biotech companies. Building on this, the collaboration is based on the following pillars:

- **Complementary strengths:** Heidelberg is a leading international location for basic research, translation and data-driven medicine. Mainz has made a name for itself worldwide as a strong research location with its biotechnology and vaccine innovations and has strong industrial value chains.
- **Dynamic start-up ecosystems:** Both cities actively promote start-ups and spin-offs from science and clinics and have growing venture and innovation networks.
- **High international visibility:** The region is already a globally recognized life science hotspot - this needs to be made even more visible.
- **Shared responsibility for the future:** The cities want to create framework conditions that accelerate innovation, attract talent and ensure sustainable economic strength for the location.

From vision to concrete implementation: the key points of the agreement

With the MoU, Heidelberg and Mainz have committed themselves to close strategic and operational cooperation. This includes in particular

- **Joint programs and projects** of the two technology parks
- **Testbeds, sandbox formats and start-up services**, that give companies and founders access to both locations
- **Supra-regional infrastructure and land development**, to support growth and relocations
- **Exchange formats** between companies, research and clinics
- **Joint location marketing and internationalization**, to make the region globally visible

More information:
The central operational partners of joint activities between the cities of Heidelberg and Mainz are their municipal innovation and development partners; in addition, the two regional life science clusters are particularly involved in the partnership as important innovation players:

Heidelberg Technology Park
The Heidelberg Technology Park is one of the leading life science locations in Germany and has been connecting research, clinics and companies in a closely networked innovation environment since 1984. More than 100 companies and research groups are working on future technologies such as oncology, AI-supported medicine, diagnostics and biotechnology on several campuses at a total of eight locations. The technology park supports spin-offs with laboratory space, infrastructure, consulting services and international networks and makes a significant contribution to the region's high innovative strength and visibility.

bioRN Life Science Cluster
The bioRN Life Science Cluster networks around 185 members from science, industry, clinics and the start-up scene and is one of the most powerful biomedical innovation networks in Europe. With its close links to top research institutions such as the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ), the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) and Heidelberg University, bioRN promotes the translation of scientific findings into applications and supports spin-offs through mentoring, investor contacts and international programs. The cluster strengthens the region's competitiveness and positions it as a globally visible life science hotspot.

biomindz - Mainz site development company
biomindz Standortentwicklungsgesellschaft is strategically developing Mainz as a biotechnology location and creating space, infrastructure and growth conditions for research, development and production. It is a key driver of the emerging "RNA hub Mainz", which has established itself internationally through scientific and industrial success. biomindz supports companies along the entire value chain, promotes cooperation and strengthens Mainz's position as a dynamic biotech location with global appeal.

Life Science Center Mainz (LZM)
The Life Science Center Mainz (LZM) is an established interface between science and industry and supports spin-offs and science-based innovations by providing advice, networks and access to infrastructure. It supports start-ups from the early idea stage through to company development and connects research institutions, companies and investors. With its programs to promote talent and innovation, the LZM strengthens the performance of the regional ecosystem and complements the activities of other innovation players in Mainz.

BioVation RLP
BioVation RLP strengthens the Rhineland-Palatinate innovation ecosystem as a central platform for biotechnology and life sciences and connects research, companies, clinics and public stakeholders in a dynamic environment. With its focus on exchange, cooperation and knowledge transfer, BioVation RLP brings together institutions and organizations from the bio- and life sciences, medicine and artificial intelligence and supports them in the development of new technologies and applications. Through network formats, location marketing and the bundling of regional expertise, BioVation RLP makes a significant contribution to the visibility, attractiveness and further development of the life sciences location.

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Further information

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