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Fraunhofer IPK celebrates 10 years of research cooperation with Brazil

Since 2012, Fraunhofer IPK has been assisting the Brazilian National Service for Industrial Training SENAI with establishing an application-oriented research network. Meanwhile, 26 »innovation institutes« form a viable bridge between Brazilian universities and industry in the country.

With a gross domestic product of almost USD 2 trillion, Brazil is the largest economy in South America and a major player on the global stage. The country has the resources and potential to play a leading role in the international scientific landscape. To do so, it needs a solid infrastructure for research and development. But until the early 2010s, there was still a massive gap here, especially in the industry-related sector. 10 years ago, Fraunhofer IPK set out to strengthen the Brazilian innovation system on behalf of the National Service for Industrial Training SENAI, an important stakeholder in the country's industrial landscape. They began to establish research institutes modeled on the German Fraunhofer Institutes. As application-oriented R&D service providers, the SENAI Innovation Institutes (Instituto SENAI de Inovação, ISI for short) are now successfully closing the gap between basic university research and industrial application in the country.

When the Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial SENAI reached out to Fraunhofer IPK in 2011, proven methods and references for strategic planning of innovation systems were the main arguments in favor of the Berlin institute. Fraunhofer IPK subsequently took over the planning and practical implementation of the planned R&D network. The focus was initially on preparing business plans for the institutes, which were set up from summer 2012. Starting in 2013, an initial framework contract supported the establishment of suitable management and support processes for the institutes. The aim was to maintain the institutes' agile startup character, while at the same time underpinning the steady growth and necessary differentiation of the organizational structures as well as the continuous professionalization of the entire network. Finally, in a third project phase, a comprehensive evaluation system was developed for the network.

Since 2020, a new framework agreement entitled »ESCalate SENAI – Excellence, Sustainability, Cooperation« has taken the cooperation between Fraunhofer and SENAI to a new level. In addition to the strategic positioning of the ISI in the Brazilian innovation system and the consolidation of their scientific excellence, this primarily involves advancing the internationalization of the ISI network. This includes, among

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other things, connecting the ISI with currently 15 other Fraunhofer Institutes with a similar topical orientation. In addition, numerous research and development projects have been initiated between SENAI, Fraunhofer and the Brazilian industry, which not least contribute to linking Germany and Brazil more closely with a technology and innovation agenda. In the future, the research focus will be primarily on global challenges and the energy transition toward a CO₂-neutral economy and sustainable value chains.

Further information:

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The ESCalate SENAI Steering Committee at the meeting in Brasilia on 28.11.2022.

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