

# Press Release

## Socio- and Techno-Economic Research Strengthens SMEs in Saxony and Regions Undergoing Structural Change

**Leipzig, 18.3.2022 – On Friday Saxony's Minister of State for Science, Culture and Tourism Sebastian Gemkow learned first-hand about the institute's current research priorities. In addition to insights into projects for the development of innovative business models with companies in Saxony, the focus of the conversation was on research activities on future development paths for regions affected by structural change.**

In order to support decision-makers organizing structural change in the coalfields of Saxony with scientifically sound bases for strategic decisions, the Leipzig Fraunhofer Center has been pooling its expertise in regional research, evolutionary economic geography and statistical data analysis in the research department "Regional Development and Innovation Policy" since 2021. In addition to insights into current structural transformation projects, the managing director of the institute, Prof. Dr. Thorsten Posselt, and the deputy institute director and head of the knowledge and technology transfer division, Dr. Steffen Preissler, presented, among other things, the novel approach of a statistical twin of Saxon structural transformation regions. In the future, this will allow the derivation and simulation of regional economic development paths for the regions. The Minister of Science was also able to get an idea of the Institute's diverse national and international project experience in regional transformation, which can be viewed online in a Scientific Library.

Minister of State Gemkow during his visit stated: ***"Fraunhofer IMW has a leading role in the Saxon research landscape. Socio- and techno-economically, the research focuses are strongly oriented around the challenges of medium-sized companies in Saxony as well as social and political requirements. They promote findings that directly benefit companies for their further development. Particularly against the backdrop of far-reaching structural change, the research expertise here at the site pays off."***

In conversation with the Saxon Research Minister, Institute Director Professor Posselt emphasized the growing role of the Fraunhofer IMW in the research landscape: ***"The close working relationship with the Saxon Ministry of Science and the very good contact with the entire Saxon state government stand for our position as a scientific partner of politics and underline our claim to provide a solid scientific foundation for decisions with our research. The constant exchange between companies, science and politics is the key to the continued successful development of our region."***

During his visit, Minister of State Gemkow also gained insight into two business-related research projects funded by the Free State of Saxony. In the project "Data Mining and Value Creation", new approaches for data-based value creation were developed and implemented in 18 pilot projects with more than 90 Saxon corporate partners. In a final conference on 27.4.2022 in Leipzig, insights into the latest developments in data-based value creation, the opportunities and risks for Saxon SMEs derived from this and best practice presentations will be provided. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Saxon Minister of

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Science also learned about progress in the research project "RESILIENT - Resilience through Innovation in Saxon Manufacturing". The researchers at Fraunhofer IMW are pursuing the goal of making Saxon companies more resilient to future crises and promoting the development of competitive advantages from innovations in the project set up to accompany the Corona crisis.

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**Scientific Library:** <https://www.imw.fraunhofer.de/en/research/regional-development-innovation/regional-transformation.html>

**Data Mining and Value Creation:** <https://www.data-mining-und-wertschoepfung.de/en.html>

*At Fraunhofer IMW, our team draws from more than fifteen years of experience in socioeconomic research at our Leipzig office. Fraunhofer economists develop scientifically sound solutions to challenges presented by globalization, ensuring the lasting success of our clients and partners from business and industry, research, and civil society. The institute has proven expertise in the areas of internationalization, innovation and technology management, technology economics, regional transformation, data and platform economy, digital value creation, strategy development and knowledge economy. Founded as the Center for Central and Eastern Europe MOEZ in 2006, the institute consolidated its expertise and range of services in internationalization and the knowledge economy under a new name in 2015, becoming the Fraunhofer Center for International Management and Knowledge Economy IMW. The Center for Economics of Materials complements the portfolio of the Leipzig Fraunhofer IMW as its branch office in Halle (Saale) with expertise in materials science and techno-economics. The transfer to the Fraunhofer IMW took place on January 1, 2020, giving the Fraunhofer IMW a presence in Saxony-Anhalt in addition to its location in the Free State of Saxony.*