

PRESS RELEASE

Aachen, August 26, 2022

Laboratory for Machine Tools and
Production Engineering (WZL) of
RWTH Aachen University

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Strategies for Sustainable Mobility

Research Project for Strengthening the Automotive Industry

The automotive industry and its suppliers are under intense pressure to innovate worldwide. To support companies in the ABC region (Aachen, Bonn, Cologne) in the coming change processes, a consortium of scientists and interest groups has launched the TrendAuto2030plus project. Over the next three years, a transformation network for an electric, sustainable and digital automotive industry is to be created.

"The automotive industry generates annual sales of around 34 billion euros in North Rhine-Westphalia and is particularly concentrated in the Rhineland. Against this background, it is particularly important to bring together the vehicle and supplier industries and to activate the extensive existing innovation potential in the companies. This is the purpose of our project," says project leader Prof. Dr. Christoph Haag from the Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering at TH Köln. Other partners include RWTH Aachen University, the Rhein-Wupper e.V. company, the Employers' Association of the Metal and Electrical Industry in Cologne and the IG Metall trade union in Cologne-Leverkusen.

Analysis, Strategy Development and Qualification Measures

The project begins with an analysis of the industry. The participating companies are benchmarked with regard to important future topics in order to determine their own level of maturity and to identify the need for further development. In addition, there is a technology radar as well as trend and scenario analyses. "Once we know exactly where the industry in NRW stands, we take a look at transformation processes worldwide and identify the strategic success factors," says Haag. On this basis, a transformation strategy 2030plus is then to be drafted and concrete innovation projects initiated at the companies.

At the same time, the partners are working with the relevant players in the industry to investigate what skills employees will need in the future and how production systems of the future will have to be structured. "In the automotive production of the 2030s, many of the tried-and-tested skills will still be in demand, but new qualifications will also be needed. That's why we are developing comprehensive training and development measures that can be offered by the partners even after the project ends," says Haag. To ensure that everyone affected by the transformation process benefits from the findings and that they can be applied beyond the region, broad-based participation and outreach formats are planned.

"The transformation of individual mobility is still in its infancy. We still lack logical solutions that are also accepted by consumers. TrendAuto2030plus will make valuable contributions to this," says Prof. Dr. Günther Schuh, Chair of Production Engineering at the Laboratory for Machine Tools and Production Engineering (WZL) of RWTH Aachen University.

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About TrendAuto2030plus

The TrendAuto2030plus project is run jointly by the Institute of General Mechanical Engineering, the Institute of Automotive Engineering and the Academy for Scientific Continuing Education of the TH Köln, the Laboratory for Machine Tools and Production Engineering (WZL) of RWTH Aachen University, the Unternehmerr-schaft Rhein-Wupper e.V., the Employers' Association of the Metal and Electrical Industry Cologne e.V. and the IG Metall Cologne-Leverkusen. The German Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Protection is funding the project with around 6.6 million euros until mid-2025.

Laboratory for Machine Tools and Production Engineering (WZL)

The Laboratory for Machine Tools and Production Engineering (WZL) of RWTH Aachen University enhances the innovative strength and competitiveness of the industry with trend-setting basic research, applied re-search and the associated consulting and implementation projects in the field of production technology. In the research fields of manufacturing technology, machine tools, production engineering, gear technology as well as production metrology and quality management, practical solutions for rationalizing production are devel-oped with industrial partners from a broad range of branches.