

Imec.istart Germany launches inaugural startup cohort to accelerate DeepTech innovation in Baden-Württemberg

Five high-potential technology startups were welcomed to begin the onboarding process for the Spring 2026 cohort, following the first-ever imec.istart Germany Open Call.

Heilbronn, Germany; 12.08.2026 – Imec.istart Germany has officially kicked off its first startup cohort, marking an important milestone in the establishment of one of Europe's leading DeepTech acceleration programs in Germany. The launch represents the operational start of [imec.istart Germany](#) and reinforces Baden-Württemberg's ambition to establish itself as one of Europe's leading regions for DeepTech entrepreneurship and innovation.

The startups participated in the official Kick-off Day on 8 July 2026 in Heilbronn, at Gravity, the startup & co-innovation hub of Campus Founders, a center for entrepreneurship and co-innovation, where they were introduced to the program, its coaching offering, funding framework and the global imec.istart ecosystem. The onboarding and contracting process will continue over the coming weeks.

About the Initiative

Bringing world-class DeepTech acceleration to Germany

The launch of imec.istart Germany complements [imec Germany's](#) activities under Baden-Württemberg's Advanced Chip Design Accelerator (ACDA) program, by helping translate technology innovation into scalable business opportunity.

While ACDA strengthens the region's semiconductor and DeepTech capabilities through research, design enablement, and ecosystem development, imec.istart supports the next generation of entrepreneurs in transforming breakthrough technologies into globally competitive companies.

Together, these initiatives contribute to a stronger innovation pipeline for Baden-Württemberg, from technology development to startup creation and later market adoption.

Funded by the [Ministry of Economic Affairs, Skilled Crafts and Tourism of Baden-Württemberg](#), imec.istart Germany **combines public funding with internationally proven startup acceleration** to help founders commercialize cutting-edge technologies, build globally competitive businesses and strengthen innovation in Baden-Württemberg.

More than funding: Local capital to execute + Global expertise to grow

At imec.istart Germany, startups receive much more than financial support.

The German program combines **two complementary instruments** structured to help startups scale faster:

- €50,000 to €100,000 in non-dilutive, non-repayable grant to provide startups immediate financial support for project financing. Eligible startups also benefit from office space support in Baden-Württemberg. This funding is made possible by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Economic Affairs, Skilled Crafts and Tourism and supports commercial activities that create a tangible connection to and impact within Baden-Württemberg.
- Global accelerator services, providing a 12 to 18 months tailored all-in program based on the startup's needs, including personalized coaching, expert mentoring, access to talent, investors, industry partners, international markets and the global imec.istart and imec ecosystem.

While each instrument can be entered independently, they are intentionally **designed to work together** to create a powerful platform for innovation-driven startups: funding to execute, expertise to grow, and a trusted long-term partner committed to success.

A strong start for Germany's DeepTech ecosystem

“We are proud to see the first imec.istart Germany cohort start its journey in Baden-Württemberg. The selected startups showcase the innovation potential that exists across Germany. Through imec's presence in Heilbronn and the launch of imec.istart Germany, we are building bridges between world-class research, entrepreneurship, and industry to support the next generation of DeepTech champions.”

Dr. Grit Sommer, Regional Managing Director imec Germany



Representatives of the selected startups participating in the inaugural imec.istart Germany Spring 2026 cohort during the launch event in Heilbronn. Photo credit: imec.istart Germany

Selected Startups

CORTEXIO – AI-powered rework and failure management solutions that build the "company brain" for manufacturing.

INCLUSYS – Digital solutions helping people with cognitive impairments such as autism, ADHD and dementia better manage daily life.

nanoAR – Advanced optical anti-reflective nanostructures based on proprietary nanoAR technology for industrial applications.

NeuralSat – Secure networking and distributed computing services for Low Earth Orbit satellite infrastructure.

Puray – Self-disinfecting catheter technology using visible light to prevent catheter-associated infections.

Key Highlights

The first cohort reflects the diversity of Germany's DeepTech ecosystem and represents a broad range of its sectors and technologies.

- 2 Manufacturing startups
- 2 HealthTech startups
- 1 Aerospace startup

“We are delighted to see the first imec.istart Germany cohort taking shape. The quality and ambition of the selected startups confirm the strong potential of Germany's DeepTech ecosystem. Through access to funding, coaching and international networks, we look forward to helping these founders transform breakthrough technologies into globally competitive companies while strengthening innovation in Baden-Württemberg and beyond.”

Yannick Wilden, Program Manager, imec.istart Germany

What's Next?

Building the next generation of DeepTech companies

DeepTech founders, ecosystem partners, investors and corporate innovation stakeholders are invited to follow the program and engage with the growing imec.istart Germany community.

Imec.istart Germany plans two Open Calls each year, giving ambitious technology startups **regular opportunities** to access one of Europe's most established DeepTech acceleration ecosystems.

Applications are organized through:

- [Spring Open Call – applications open on 1 February](#)
- [Autumn Open Call – applications open on 1 September](#)

A Word of Thanks

A heartfelt thank you to all startups who applied to our first open call and shared their innovative ideas with us. We also extend our gratitude to our ecosystem partners for promoting the program through their networks. Their willingness to share the opportunity through their channels has been instrumental in building a strong and diverse applicant pool.

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About

[Imec](#) is a world-leading research and innovation center in advanced semiconductor technologies. Leveraging its state-of-the-art R&D infrastructure and the expertise of over 6,500 employees, imec drives innovation in semiconductor and system scaling, artificial intelligence, silicon photonics, connectivity, and sensing.

Imec's advanced research powers breakthroughs across a wide range of industries, including computing, health, automotive, industry, consumer electronics, aerospace and security. Through IC-Link, imec delivers customized solutions, from concept to full-scale manufacturing, to meet the most advanced design and production needs. Through imec.ventures, imec creates, co-creates new ventures, and supports existing semiconductor DeepTech companies to scale-up.

Imec collaborates with global leaders across the semiconductor value chain, as well as with technology companies, start-ups, academia, and research institutions in Flanders and worldwide. Headquartered in Leuven, Belgium, imec has research facilities in Belgium, across Europe, the USA and the GCC region, and representation on three continents. In 2025, imec reported revenues of €1.2 billion.

[Imec.istart](#) accelerates tech startups across Europe, providing both deep expertise and capital from day one. As both accelerator and pre-seed investor, it combines funds, hands-on guidance and access to a strong network to help ambitious founders move faster and smarter.

[Imec.istart Germany](#) uniquely combines imec's world-leading technology expertise, imec.istart's entrepreneurial excellence and the innovation strength of Baden-Württemberg. Together, these strengths enable DeepTech founders to transform breakthrough technologies into globally competitive businesses, accelerate regional innovation and strengthen Europe's technological leadership.

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