

German-Japanese research cooperation opens the door to new markets

July 18 2005

A new collaborative venture was sealed in Munich on Friday July 15 by researchers from the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft and Japanese colleagues from Tohoku University in Japan: Their joint objective is to develop [MEMS](#), micro-electromechanical systems for small and medium-sized enterprises in Japan.

Japan is investing in the future: In Sendai, a major city some 300 kilometers to the north of Tokyo, a technology park is being established for small and medium-sized enterprises specializing in the design, construction and application of micro-electromechanical systems, or MEMS. Located in the heart of a region traditionally dominated by agriculture, Sendai has more recently focused its sights on encouraging high-tech companies to settle in and around the city. The MEMS cluster is merely the latest in a series of development initiatives. Research teams from the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft now intend to collaborate with Japanese experts at the renowned Tohoku University in Sendai on the development of new technologies for practical applications.

"Micro-electromechanical systems, or MEMS, is an engineering discipline that involves the design of integrated components combining sensors, actuators and electronic circuits," explains Professor Thomas Geßner of the Fraunhofer Institute for Reliability and Microintegration IZM in Chemnitz, which will soon be working in close collaboration with researchers in Japan. "MEMS is an important emerging technology used to design miniaturized components that are cheap to produce and suitable for a multitude of applications." Such components are already

being employed in optoelectronics, biotechnology, genetics and the automobile industry.

To cater for the needs of smaller firms, Professor Geßner in Chemnitz and Professor Masayoshi Esashi at Tohoku University now intend to put their know-how at the disposition of the Enterprises based in the technology park. Professor Geßner has considerable experience in industrial applications of micro-electromechanical systems, and Professor Esashi is one of the world's leading experts in MEMS research. On Friday July 15, a memorandum of understanding between the two research groups and the city of Sendai was signed at the Fraunhofer headquarters in Munich. "We are very much looking forward to working with our Japanese colleagues," affirmed Dr. Alfred Gossner, Senior Vice President Finance and Controlling of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, during the official event. "This cooperation agreement is a welcome addition to our activities in Asia, and more especially Japan. As a globally thinking research organization, we place great value on setting up international ventures of this nature."

"The technology park in Sendai presents the IZM with a unique opportunity to forge contacts with small and medium-sized enterprises in Japan," declares Professor Geßner. "We are lucky to have found a strong Japanese partner in the person of Professor Esashi, with whom we hope to acquire and implement many new joint projects."

Source: Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft

Citation: German-Japanese research cooperation opens the door to new markets (2005, July 18) retrieved 28 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-07-german-japanese-cooperation-door.html>

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