# Press Release

**New key location for batteries and hydrogen opens**

## Fraunhofer ZESS strengthens technology transfer and sustainable energy storage research in Germany

**At a ceremony on October 5, 2026, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft officially opened the new building of the Fraunhofer Center for Energy Storage and Systems ZESS in Braunschweig. The German federal government and the State of Lower Saxony have invested approximately 49.85 million euros in the research facility. Covering around 3,300 square meters – including approximately 1,750 square meters of laboratory space and a 450-square-meter drying room – it provides researchers with state-of-the-art infrastructure for the development of next-generation solid-state batteries and innovative hydrogen technologies.**

In his welcome address to the around 100 guests from the worlds of politics, business, and science, Prof. Constantin Häfner, Executive Board Member for Research and Transfer at the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, emphasized the strategic importance of the new center within the Fraunhofer research landscape: "High-performance battery and hydrogen technologies are crucial to the energy and mobility transition – and to the competitiveness of our industry. With the Fraunhofer ZESS, we are turning inventions into industrial innovations, thereby strengthening value creation and technological sovereignty in Germany and Europe."

Federal Minister of Research Dorothee Bär praised the center as a key building block for Germany's innovative capacity: "The development of high-performance battery and hydrogen technologies will play a decisive role in determining how competitive and self-reliant Germany and Europe will be in the coming decades. With the Fraunhofer ZESS, we are making a targeted investment in a research infrastructure that combines cutting-edge research with industrial implementation. This strengthens Germany's international position in key technology fields, fully in line with our High-Tech Agenda for Germany."

Lower Saxony's Minister of Science and Culture, Falko Mohrs, also emphasized the strategic importance of the new center: "In Lower Saxony, we are making a targeted commitment to future technologies that secure value creation, innovation, and skilled jobs. The investment in the Fraunhofer ZESS is an excellent example of this. The new location complements Lower Saxony's battery and hydrogen ecosystem and creates ideal conditions for translating research results into industrial applications more quickly. As a result, we are establishing excellent conditions for science, technology transfer, and economic development."

Prof. Anja Hesse, Head of the Department of Culture and Science for the City of Braunschweig, emphasized: "The Fraunhofer ZESS exemplifies the innovative strength of the Braunschweig region, which ranks among Europe's leading research regions. The new research facility provides a significant boost to Braunschweig as a hub for science and innovation and transmits a strong signal regarding our region's future viability."

Prof. Angela Ittel, President of the Technische Universität Braunschweig, added: "With the Fraunhofer ZESS, our internationally renowned battery research gains a strong partner on the path to industrial application. Together with our Battery LabFactory and the Center for Circular Production of Next Batteries and Fuel Cells (CPC), we will advance resource-efficient technologies that will benefit us here in the region – and far beyond."

Prof. Christoph Herrmann, Institute Director of the Fraunhofer IST and spokesperson for the Fraunhofer ZESS, also emphasized the close collaboration with the TU Braunschweig, within the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, and with industry partners: "At the Fraunhofer ZESS, we consider the entire process chain – from new materials, through production technologies, and on to sustainability and the circular economy. By pooling complementary expertise, we create ideal conditions for the targeted further development of key technologies – such as solid-state batteries and hydrogen technologies – for industrial scaling and application."

During a panel discussion, experts discussed the future prospects of battery and hydrogen technologies. They emphasized that scientific excellence across the entire value chain, speed in development and technology transfer, and consideration of economic and environmental conditions are key factors for success.

The combination of technological innovation and sustainability is one of the guiding principles at the Fraunhofer ZESS. This applies not only to the research work, facilities, and equipment, but also to the building itself. Guests were able to experience this for themselves during the subsequent tour. The research building was constructed as a hybrid timber structure with minimal use of concrete. Photovoltaic systems on the roof and façade, green roofs, an energy-efficient building design, and flexible research spaces combine state-of-the-art research conditions with a holistic approach to sustainability. The open hall structure also allows for long-term adaptation to future research requirements, making the building a forward-looking and resource-efficient research facility.




**Fig. 1 Fig. 1 Prof. Dr.-Ing. Christoph Herrmann, Institute Director of the Fraunhofer IST and spokesperson for Fraunhofer ZESS, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Arno Kwade, Spokesperson for the Battery LabFactory Braunschweig, Prof. Dr. Angela Ittel, President of the Technische Universität Braunschweig, Dr.-Ing. Jutta Janßen, Site Management of the Fraunhofer ZESS, Prof. Dr. Thomas Weißgärber, Institute Director of the Fraunhofer IFAM Dresden, Falko Mohrs, Lower Saxony's Minister of Science and Culture, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Sabrina Zellmer, Deputy Director of the Fraunhofer IST, Prof. Dr. Constantin Häfner, Executive Board Member for Research and Transfer at the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Michael Stelter, Deputy Director of the Fraunhofer IKTS, Prof. Dr. Anja Hesse, Head of the Department of Culture and Science for the City of Braunschweig, Dr. Julian Schwenzel, Head of the Department Electrical Energy Storage at Fraunhofer IFAM, Dr.-Ing. Felix Heubner, Deputy Institute Director of Fraunhofer IFAM Dresden (from left to right). © Fraunhofer IST**

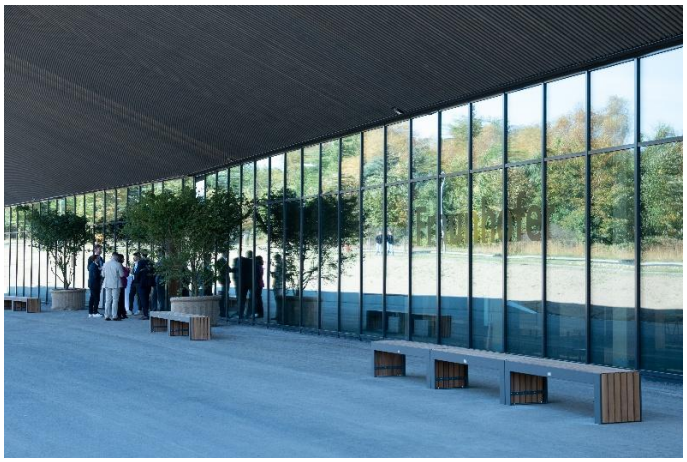

**Fig. 2 Opening of the Fraunhofer Center for Energy Storage and Systems ZESS in Braunschweig. © Fraunhofer IST**




**Abb. 3 Panel Session – Insights from Fraunhofer ZESS: Institute Director of the Fraunhofer IST and spokesperson for Fraunhofer ZESS, Prof. Dr. Constantin Häfner, Executive Board Member for Research and Transfer at the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Prof. Dr. Ing. Arno Kwade, Spokesperson for the Battery LabFactory Braunschweig, Prof. Dr. Thomas Weißgärber, Institute Director of the Fraunhofer IFAM Dresden, Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Michael Stelter, Deputy Director of the Fraunhofer IKTS, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Sabrina Zellmer Deputy Director of the Fraunhofer IST, Head of the Department Electrical Energy Storage at Fraunhofer IFAM (from left to right).**
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At the Fraunhofer ZESS in Braunschweig, the Fraunhofer Institute for Surface Engineering and Thin Films IST, the Fraunhofer Institute for Manufacturing Technology and Advanced Materials IFAM, and the Fraunhofer Institute for Ceramic Technologies and Systems IKTS are pooling their expertise to develop sustainable, safe battery and hydrogen technologies. The Fraunhofer ZESS is a center of the Fraunhofer Society, one of the world's leading organizations for applied research.

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