

Kick-Off for Zollhof Digital Startup Center in Nuremberg

Innovative ideas, entrepreneurial spirit and a promising network: all this can be found at the ZOLLHOF Tech Incubator in the German city of Nuremberg. At the listed old customs house building near the central railway station, Zollhof Betreiber GmbH is creating space for an ‘incubator’ to promote digital business ideas. Construction work began on April 1, 2019. Drees & Sommer is supervising the project, with its project management services ensuring controlled construction progress.

Flexible office space, meeting rooms and an event area spread over four floors with a total of 2,800 square meters: the ZOLLHOF Tech Incubator offers digital startups sufficient room and creative workspace. The historic Zollhof building in Nuremberg will be completely renovated for this purpose.

High-Quality Network Drives Business Founders

The special feature of the ZOLLHOF Tech Incubator is not only the creative space that startups can rent cheaply. ‘We offer founders considerable added value primarily through our excellent network of corporate partners, research institutes, investors and mentors,’ explained Benjamin Bauer, ZOLLHOF CEO. Well-known companies from the region work not only with the startups, but also with talented students who assist the corporate partners in internal digitization projects, such as prototyping. Established companies benefit in this way from the entrepreneurial spirit of the ZOLLHOF team and from precisely the right products for their technological requirements, as they can apply the latest innovation methods and test business models thoroughly. The advantages for startups include business coaching, workshops, access to investors and business angels and, last but not least, the close dialog with other founders. ZOLLHOF startups operate in areas such as digital health, urban mobility, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence and Big Data. One of the startups, for example, is developing a system for intelligent parking lot management as a component in a Smart City concept.

Room for New Ideas in the Historic Building

The incubator was officially opened at the end of 2017. While the current 16 startups and the ZOLLHOF team have been accommodated in temporary offices on Kohlenhofstrasse, with firms already established successfully and viable investments made, construction work on the Zollhof is now in full swing.

'We are delighted to be part of a project that is driving a strong digital startup scene and, by doing so, strengthening the region's economy,' said Holger Seidel, Associate Partner at Drees & Sommer. Drees & Sommer has participated in the project since as early as 2017 with consulting services and project management, ensuring compliance with costs, deadlines and quality during the complete revitalization process.

Digital Transformation as a Top Priority for Urban and Rural Areas

The idea of entrepreneurship and innovative spirit is being promoted by the federal state of Bavaria as part of its *Bavaria Digital* strategy, with a startup center in each administrative district. It is also essential for the city of Nuremberg to promote local digital transformation potential in a useful way. This is why a digital transformation agenda has been set up for Nuremberg as a business hub. Other sponsors include the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Siemens, Schaeffler, Nürnberger Versicherung and HUK Coburg. Corporate partners are adidas, N-Ergie, VAG, adorsys, Sparkasse Nuremberg, NurembergMesse and Novartis.

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