



DKTK

German Cancer  
Consortium

# Science-Meets-Industry Day 2026

## Advancing Translational Research in Academia

**Stefan M. Pfister**

Hopp Children's Cancer Center Heidelberg (KiTZ)

German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ)

Heidelberg University Hospital

Co-founder Heidelberg Epignostix and ITCC-P4

Spokesperson of the DKTK

**dkfz.**

German Cancer Consortium

# Continuing the Dialogue

## SCIENCE MEETS INDUSTRY DAY

BDC MEETING SPACE, HEIDELBERG | OCTOBER 19-20, 2026

### October 19th (Monday): Pre-Event Program

- 14:00 - 16:00 Guided DKFZ Site Visit for Industry Partners  
HIT: Heidelberg Ion Beam Therapy Center (hosted by Amir Abdollahi)  
KITZ Drug Screening Unit (hosted by Heike Peterziel)  
KITZ, the new building (hosted by Stefan Pfister)
- 18:30 - 21:00 Networking Dinner (Hotel Marriott, Vangerowstraße 16, Heidelberg)

### October 20th (Tuesday)

 Wi-Fi Access | Network: BDC Guest | Password: 20044-60841

- 09:00 - 10:00 Registration & Coffee
- 10:00 - 10:05 Welcome (Melanie Börries)
- 10:05 - 11:00 **Setting the Scene** (Chair: Melanie Börries)  
Advancing Translational Research in Academia (Stefan Pfister)  
Enabling Translational Innovation in Industry (Han Steutel)  
From Academic Discovery to Early Clinical Translation: ToMA4TA - A DKTK-NCT Use Case (Antonia Busse, NCT)

- 11:00 - 11:30 **Industry Perspectives: What Are We Looking For?** (Chair: Matthias Meergans)  
■ From Science to Scale: Are we turning Germany's scientific excellence into innovation at scale?  
Niko André, AstraZeneca  
■ Overcoming the translational gap as research partners  
Ralf Angermund, Johnson & Johnson
- 11:30 - 12:20 **Research Pitches: Selected Translational Projects** (Chair: Silke Uhrig-Schmidt)  
■ **CONSOLIDATE** (Celia Dobersalske and Björn Scheffler, DKTK Essen/Düsseldorf)  
Cranial Bone Lymphoids as an autologous cellular medicinal product for glioblastoma therapy  
■ **DrugSeq Solutions** (Emma Phillips, DKFZ Heidelberg)  
Single-cell technology linking quantification of intracellular drug uptake to cellular identity and response  
■ **ResistMut** (Sven Diederichs, DKTK Freiburg)  
High Throughput Functional Genomics for Drug Resistance - Knowing, who may respond, before the Clinical Trial
- 12:20 - 12:40 **Concepts of partnering for translation: Clinician Scientist Program 2.0** (M. Schulte-Sasse & M. Meergans)
- 12:40 - 13:40 Networking Lunch
- 13:40 - 14:30 **Fish Bowl: Translational Challenges** (Moderator: Tim Flink)  
● Barriers in academia-industry collaboration  
● Preclinical -> clinical transition  
● IP / regulatory challenges
- 14:30 - 15:15 **Fish Bowl Outcomes & Plenary Discussion** (Moderator: Tim Flink)
- 15:15 - 15:30 **Wrap-Up & Closing Remarks**



Han Steutel



Matthias Meergans

# Continuing the Dialogue

- Participants total: **100** (2025: 80)
- Industry participants: **30** (2025: 20)
- Participating companies: **18** (2025: 14)

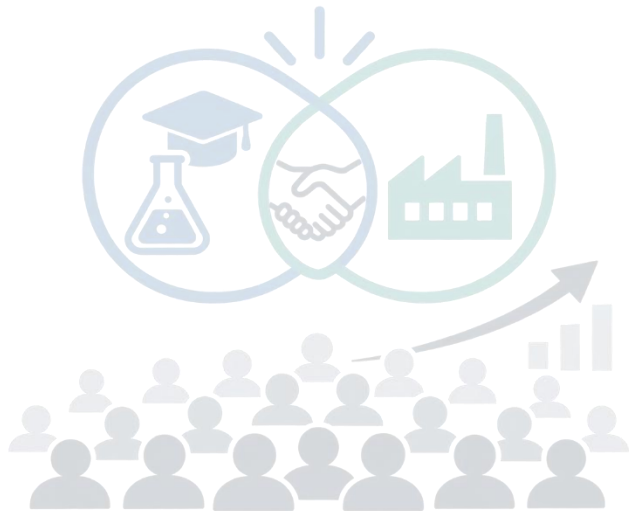
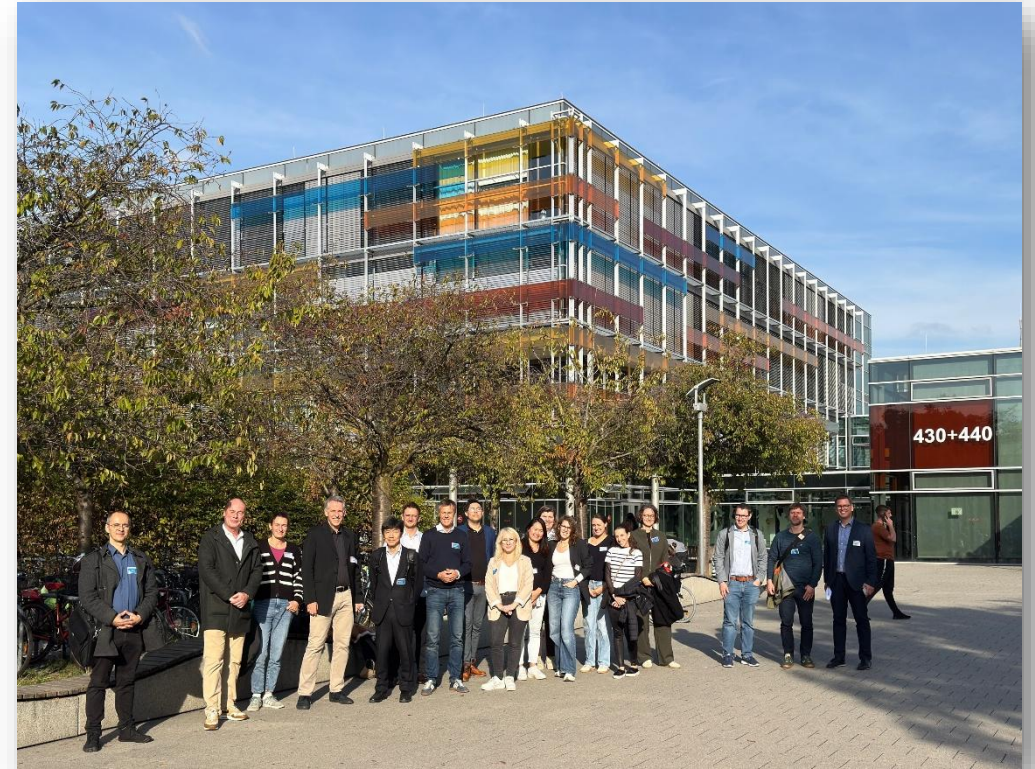


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Site visit during Science-meets-Industry Day 2026



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# National Translational Networks in Germany

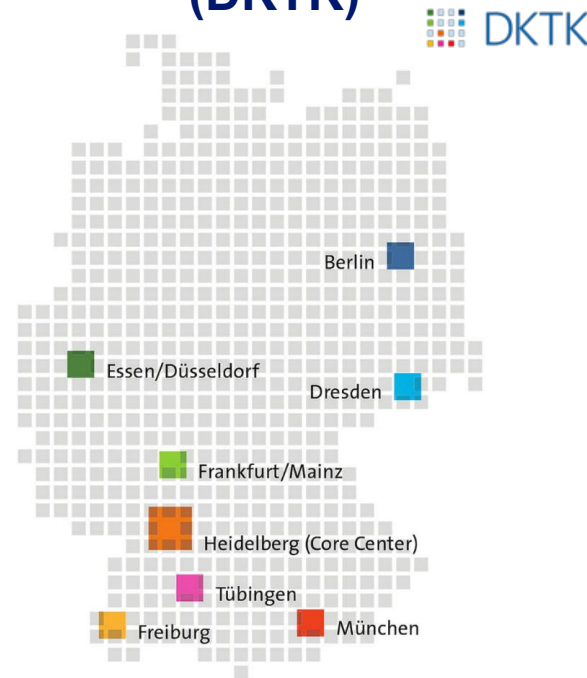
## Subfoundations of DKFZ

### Comprehensive Cancer Center (CCC)



Multidisciplinary clinical care

### German Cancer Consortium (DKTK)



Trial-enabling & translational research

### National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT)



Clinical research, IITs

# The German Cancer Consortium (DKTK)



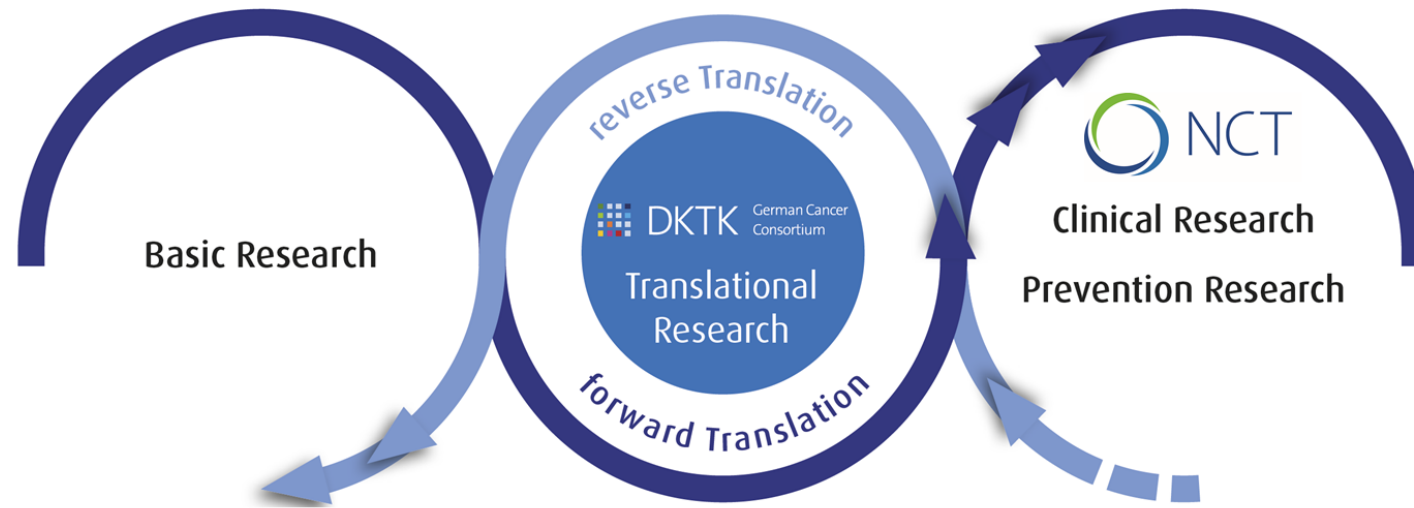
## DKTK – one of the German Centers for Health Research (DZG)

- German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE, 2009)
- German Center for Diabetes Research (DZD, 2009)
- German Center for Cardiovascular Research (DZHK, 2011)
- German Center for Lung Research (DZL, 2011)
- German Center for Infection Research (DZIF, 2012)
- German Cancer Consortium (DKTK, 2012)
- German Center for Mental Health (DZPG, 2023)
- German Center for Child and Youth Health (DZKJ, 2024)

[www.deutschezentren.de](http://www.deutschezentren.de)

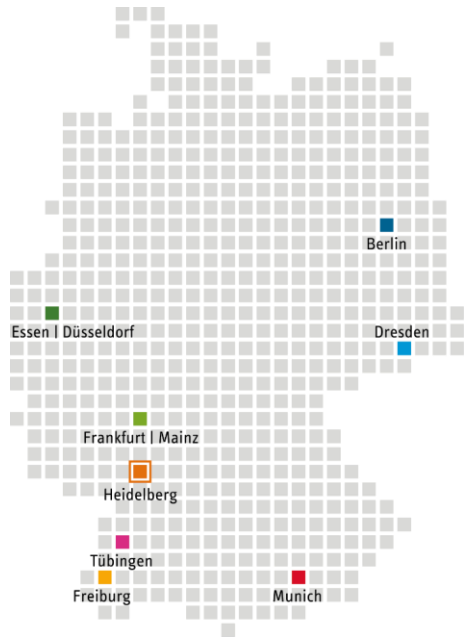


# Mission of DKTK



The primary mission of DKTK is to contribute significantly to filling the translational gap between basic and clinical cancer research

# DKTK Unique Features



Joint translational  
mandate  
(DKFZ–UMCs)



Long-term funding –  
basis for translational  
programs



Translational hubs at  
8 partner sites



Central research  
infrastructures



Professorships and  
junior research groups



Competitive joint  
funding program



Training the next  
generation of clinician  
scientists



Patient involvement

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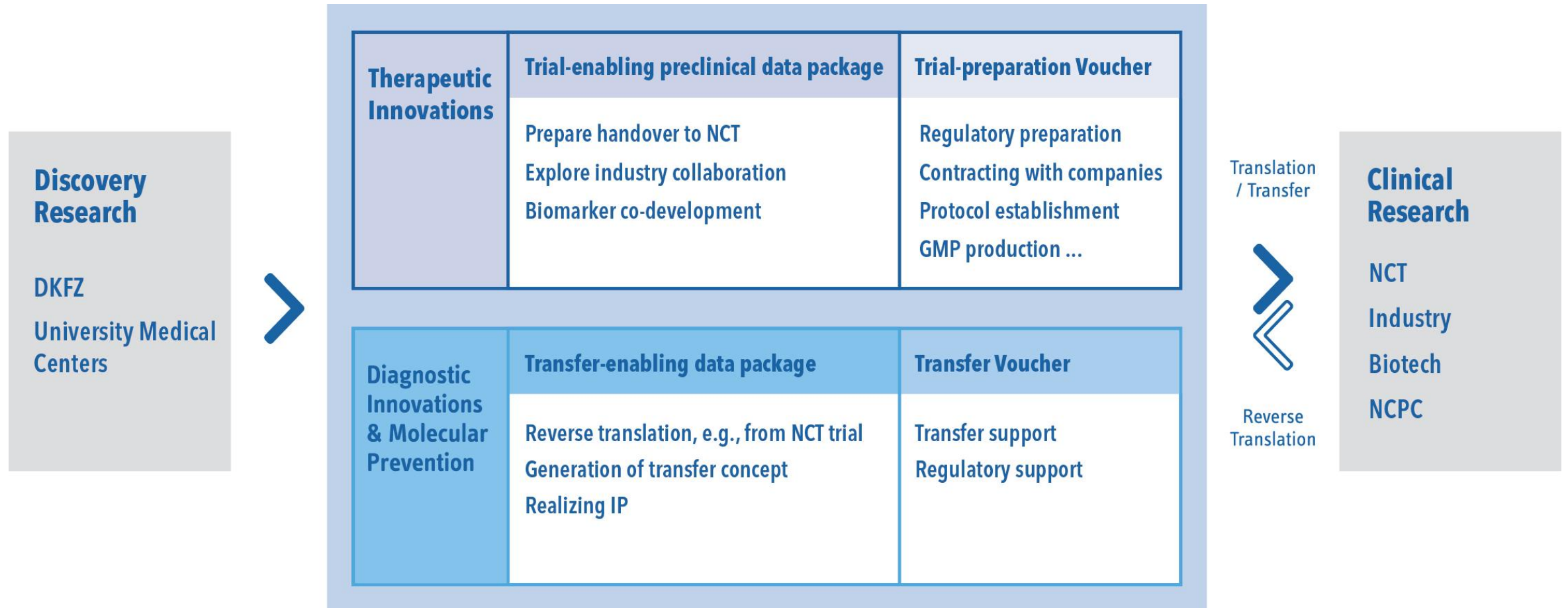


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# DKTK Joint Funding Program – the Core of our Translation Strategy

~30% of our budget



# DKTK Working Groups



- Currently 21 expert working groups
- Versatile, bottom-up organization
- Forum for exchange
- Involvement of other networks (NCT, CCC)
- Preparation of joint applications



# Patient Involvement – Roles

- **Patient advisors:** project specific feedback to PPIE measures, arranging contacts to patient partners
- **Patient partners:** early and active involvement in projects
- **Patients as reviewers:** evaluation of research proposals for funding
- **Capacity building:** patient-led training for patients and for scientists (DKFZ | DKTK Patient Academy)



# DKTK – A Bridge and Accelerator for Transfer



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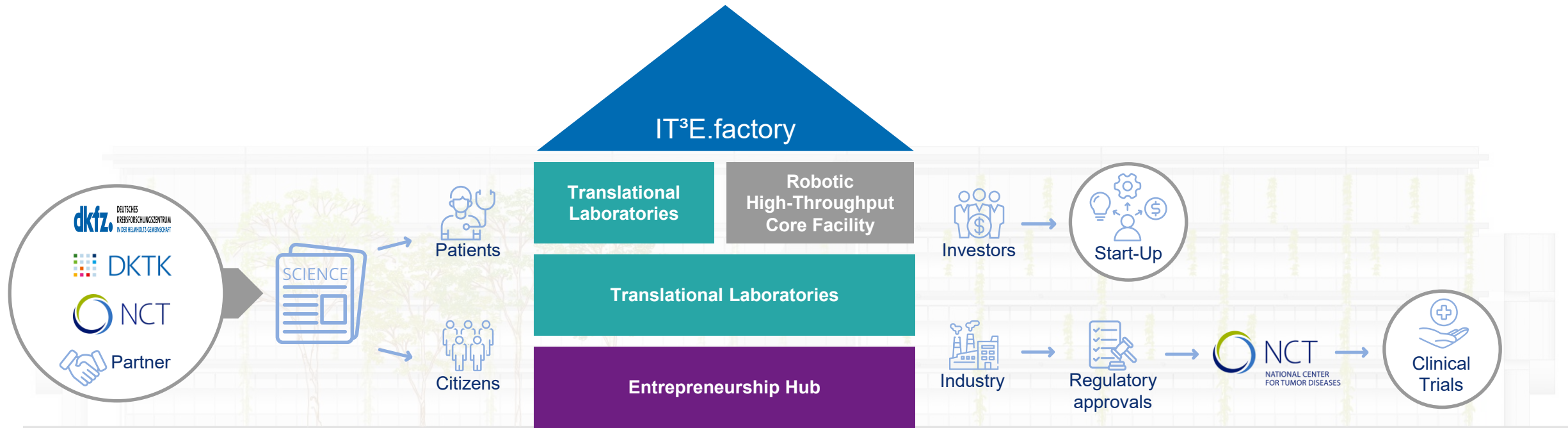
## Examples for DKTK transfer activities:

- **TWYCE GmbH:** Bispecific antibody products
- **ViferaXS:** Peptide-derived T-cell activators
- **CARTemis Therapeutics GmbH** Next-generation CAR-T cell therapies
- **BicycleTx Ltd** Development of radiopharmaceutical therapeutics
- **Heidelberg Epignostix GmbH:** AI-based molecular tumor classification

# Intellectual Property Protection and Spin-off Creation – IT3E.factory

**IT<sup>3</sup>E.factory** — Innovation | Translation | Transfer | Trial Enabling.factory

**HELMHOLTZ**  
Roadmap Initiative



# From Shared Priorities to Joint Funding Initiatives

- Identify shared research priorities and unmet medical needs that benefit from precompetitive academia-industry collaboration.
- Explore joint funding initiatives inspired by the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) to accelerate translational research and innovation.



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- Develop a **joint White Paper** outlining strategic research opportunities, common objectives, and potential collaborative funding models.

# Joint Development of Early-Career Scientists

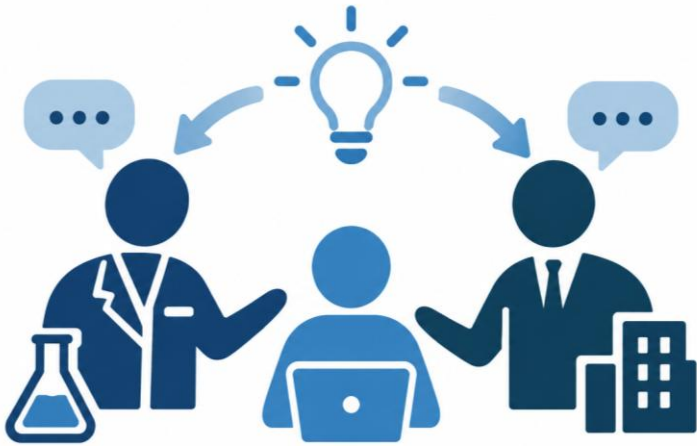


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- **Co-Mentoring Schemes:** Establish joint academia-industry mentoring for Medical Scientists and Clinician Scientists.
- **Research Placements:** Enable short-term placements in pharmaceutical R&D to gain hands-on experience in industrial research and drug development.
- **Collaborative Research Projects:** Engage early-career scientists in joint academia-industry research projects addressing shared scientific challenges.

➤ **Presentation:** *Concepts of partnering for translation – Clinician Scientist Program 2.0*  
(M. Schulte-Sasse & M. Meergans)

# Early-Stage Development Collaboration in Rare Diseases

- Identify promising therapeutic targets and development opportunities in rare diseases.
- Goal: Combine expertise in disease biology, target identification, and preclinical drug development through joint proof-of-concept projects to accelerate the translation of academic discoveries into novel therapies.



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# Questions? Ideas?



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