

**Press release**

For business editors  
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**Commerzbank and Fraunhofer IML set up innovation lab for the future of international export and trade financing**

- **Commerzbank the first bank to set up an Enterprise Lab at Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML in Dortmund**
- **Close cross-sector collaboration on logistics, supply chain management, supply chain finance and digital innovations**
- **Cooperative research approach combining business, science and innovation**

Commerzbank is the first financial institution to set up an Enterprise Lab at Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML in Dortmund, in an extension of the partnership that has been in place since July 2017.

In the Trade Finance Innovation-Lab, new payment and finance solutions will be developed for the Trade Finance business based on innovative technologies such as Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT), Smart Contracts and the Internet of Things (IoT), and made ready for the market. At the same time, both institutions will play an active part in helping to establish a general framework and standards for the digitalisation of international supply chain management and the related financing tools.

Commerzbank, one of Europe's leading foreign trade banks, is the first bank to join the Enterprise Lab Center with its Trade Finance Innovation-Lab, which covers the field of financial services with a focus on trade finance business, i.e. processing and financing international trade transactions. From now on, user-oriented researchers at Fraunhofer IML from logistics, supply chain management and blockchain technology will work closely with trade finance specialists from Commerzbank and its research and development unit, main incubator.

The Enterprise Lab Center at Fraunhofer IML brings together science and business. It already hosts several subject-specific labs set up by well-known industrial companies in sensor technology, automotive, logistics, chemicals, pharma and telecommunications. These are places where company representatives and researchers work together to analyse current and future trends in logistics and supply chain management, and assess potential scenarios in order to develop innovations and forward-thinking business models.

“Since the collaboration with Fraunhofer IML began, potential practical applications for the trade finance business have been identified and prioritised in consultation with corporate clients of the Bank. Processes along physical supply chains can be linked much more closely to the financial supply chain using new technologies. In many parts of the supply chain, processes currently done manually are able to be automated and performed more efficiently. The Enterprise Lab Center provides exactly the right framework for us to step up our collaboration, which has been a success to date”, said Nikolaus Giesbert, Divisional Board Member Fixed Income, Currencies & Commodities and Trade Finance & Cash Management, Commerzbank AG. “From our Trade Finance Innovation-Lab, we will work on a cross-sector basis to make optimum use of the opportunities provided by digitalisation, both in physical and financial supply chains”, he added.

“We are pleased to have entered into a collaboration with Commerzbank, a financial institution with decades of experience in international export and trade financing. The core competencies of Commerzbank and Fraunhofer IML complement each other perfectly. So in future, our Enterprise Lab Center will also be covering the field of finance”, commented Prof. Dr. Michael Henke, Institute Director at Fraunhofer IML. “The solutions developed jointly in our Trade Finance Innovations-Lab will blaze a trail for digital banking along the global supply chains of the future”, he said.

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## About Commerzbank

Commerzbank is a leading international commercial bank with branches and offices in almost 50 countries. In the two business segments Private and Small Business Customers and Corporate Clients, the Bank offers a comprehensive portfolio of financial services which is precisely aligned to its clients' needs. Commerzbank finances approximately 30% of Germany's foreign trade and is the leading finance provider for corporate clients in Germany. Due to its in-depth sector know-how in the German economy, the Bank is a leading provider of capital market products. Its subsidiaries Comdirect in Germany and mBank in Poland are two of the world's most innovative online banks. With approximately 1,000 branches, Commerzbank has one of the densest branch networks among German private banks. In total, Commerzbank serves more than 18 million private and small business customers, as well as more than 60,000 corporate clients, multinationals, financial service providers, and institutional clients. The Bank, which was founded in 1870, is represented at all the world's major stock exchanges. In 2017, it generated gross revenues of €9.1 billion with approximately 49,300 employees.

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## About Fraunhofer IML

The Fraunhofer Institute for Material Flow and Logistics IML is said to be first address in the holistic logistics research and is working on all fields of internal and external logistics. At the Institute, founded in 1981, there are at the moment 290 employees as well as 250 post-graduates and students, supported by colleagues in workshops, laboratories and service areas. Made-to-measure arranged teams create cross-industry and customer-specific solutions in the area of materials handling, warehouse management, supply chain management, simulation supported business and system planning and also traffic systems, closed loop economy, resources logistics, building logistics and e-business. For interdisciplinary projects the Institute can draw on a total of 25.000 employees of 72 institutes within the entire Fraunhofer association. Beside the location in Dortmund, there are additional locations in Frankfurt/ Main, Prien at Chiemsee and Hamburg as well as international offices in Lisbon and Beijing.

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## Disclaimer

This release contains forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements are statements that are not historical facts. In this release, these statements concern inter alia the expected future business of Commerzbank, efficiency gains and expected synergies, expected growth prospects and other opportunities for an increase in value of Commerzbank as well as expected future financial results, restructuring costs and other financial developments and information. These forward-looking statements are based on the management's current plans, expectations, estimates and projections. They are subject to a number of assumptions and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause actual results and developments to differ materially from any future results and developments expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Such factors include the conditions in the financial markets in Germany, in Europe, in the USA and other regions from which Commerzbank derives a substantial portion of its revenues and in which Commerzbank holds a substantial portion of its assets, the development of asset prices and market volatility, especially due to the ongoing European debt crisis, potential defaults of borrowers or trading counterparties, the implementation of its strategic initiatives to improve its business model, the reliability of its risk management policies, procedures and methods, risks arising as a result of regulatory change and other risks. Forward-looking statements therefore speak only as of the date they are made. Commerzbank has no obligation to update or release any revisions to the forward-looking statements contained in this release to reflect events or circumstances after the date of this release.