

**For immediate release**

## **Koehler Group Becomes Newest Partner of NXTGN Innovation Platform**

- **Consortium of startups and leaders in academia and industry from Baden-Württemberg**
- **The consortium's goal: ensuring the success of small and medium-sized enterprises**
- **NXTGN competing as »Startup Factory« in the German federal government's flagship competition**

**Oberkirch, Germany, 03/18/2025** – Partnerships with startups and a spirit of innovation are both important factors that are helping shape the future of the Koehler Group. Because of this, the premium specialty paper provider and planner and operator of renewable energy facilities has now joined NXTGN, an innovation and SME network. More specifically, the partners of this network work together on ensuring that the next generation of small and medium-sized enterprises in Baden-Württemberg will be successful and driven by innovation. In the spotlight of the partnership is the further development of the circular economy.

### **A strong consortium based in Baden-Württemberg**

In March, the Koehler Group became a new anchor partner of NXTGN. NXTGN pursues an easily defined goal: ensuring that the next generation of small and medium-sized enterprises is both successful and innovative. To achieve this, the consortium networks startups and leaders in academia and industry in a manner conducive to accomplishing this goal. Through the partnership, the Koehler Group is taking on a co-shaping role and contributing to the network in order to create suitable conditions for a vital start-up ecosystem together with the scientific community. Together with many other strong partners from the business world, this will proactively help foster the required innovation and SME network in Baden-Württemberg. Koehler Group COO Dr. Stefan Karrer confirmed the approach: "With our partnership, we're also part of an innovative and tight-knit next generation of companies and are making a contribution to a future-proof society." He then goes on to add that the membership makes the company a visibly innovative and exciting employer in the region that offers a promising future.

As part of the flagship competition, the German federal government is supporting so-called Startup Factories, which are expected to become central hubs for innovation in Germany in the future. NXTGN is in the middle of competing to become one of these startup factories and the flagship for "The Länd."

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*Figure: Representatives of the Koehler Group and NXTGN are delighted about the partnership*

*Source: Koehler Group*



### **2030 Sustainability Strategy**

*By becoming a member of the NXTGN innovation and SME network, the Koehler Group is helping achieve sustainable development goals in the area of “Successful, Future-Proof Products and Services”.*

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## About the Koehler Group

The Koehler Group was founded in 1807 and has been family-run from that moment to the present day. The group's core business activity lies in the development and production of high-quality specialty paper. This includes—among others—thermal paper, playing card board, beverage coasters, fine paper, carbon-less paper, recycled paper, decor paper, wood pulp board, sublimation paper, and also innovative specialty paper for the packaging industry. In Germany, the Koehler Group employs around 2,500 people across five production sites, with three additional sites in the USA. The group operates internationally, with an export share of around 70% in 2023, and brings in an annual turnover of around 1.1 billion euros.

As an energy-intensive company, Koehler invests in renewable energy projects such as wind energy, hydropower, photovoltaics, and biomass with its Koehler Renewable Energy business unit. The Koehler Group has set a goal of producing more energy from renewable sources by 2030 than is required for its paper production operations.

With its Koehler Innovative Solutions division, the Koehler Group is collaborating with start-ups to promote innovations in the core business segments “paper” and “renewable energy”.

Find more information at: <https://www.koehler.com>

## About NXTGN

NXTGN is the innovation platform from Baden-Württemberg. It connects startups and leaders in academia and industry.

The consortium is led by the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), the University of Stuttgart, Heidelberg University, Ulm University, the Stuttgart Media University (HdM), IPAI (Innovation Park Artificial Intelligence), and Campus Founders. And with NXTGN GmbH, this consortium is expanded both with anchor firms from private industry and Mätch VC anchor VC investors.

The services offered by NXTGN focus on the individual needs of the various corresponding stakeholder groups: NXTGN fosters talent in innovative spaces and helps make ideas for companies a reality while also helping startups reach healthy growth trends. Moreover, NXTGN not only supports companies with custom-tailored collaboration offerings within a context of sustainable transformation, but also provides a platform for win-win exchanges between entrepreneurship educators so that R&D and other science transfers can be facilitated with the foundation of new companies.

For more information, please visit: <https://join-nxtgn.com>

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