

Call for Papers

The 8th Research Area[X] ‘Knowledge, Networks and Regions’ Workshop

Workshop theme 2026

From Creative Destruction to Successful Transformation

11. June 2026, BildungsCampus Herford, Germany

in cooperation with the

Herforder Symposium 2026

12. June 2026, BildungsCampus Herford, Germany

Organizing team:

Muhamed Kudic* (TH OWL),
Lukasz Wisniewski* (TH OWL),
Andreas Pyka (University of Hohenheim),
Ben Vermeulen (University of Hohenheim)

Keynote speaker:

MICHAEL FRITSCH

“Long-term Dynamics of
Regional Self-employment”

UWE CANTNER

“Activating
Transformation”

Scientific committee:

Buchmann Tobias, Cantner Uwe, da Silva Wagner Indra, Dornbusch Friedrich, Ebersberger Bernd, Fritsch Michael, Graf Holger, Klement Benjamin, Kudic Muhamed, Mueller Matthias, Ponta Linda, Pusch Toralf, Pyka Andreas, Rothgang Michael, Schlaile Michael, Von Horn Roland, Wisniewski Lukasz, Wolf Patrick

About the RA[X] Workshop series

We look back on a long tradition of RA[X] workshops, all characterized by distinctive scientific contributions, inspiring keynotes, and attractive publication opportunities. Since 2015, the series has provided a platform for constructive, open, and interdisciplinary scientific exchange. Its aim is to contribute cutting-edge research at the intersection of knowledge, networks, and regions to the contemporary academic debate. To this end, we bring together researchers from various disciplines and paradigms to discuss recent advances on the role of networks in regional knowledge creation and utilization in a collegial and constructive atmosphere. Contributions from early-career researchers are particularly welcome.

* Local hosts

RA[X] Workshop theme 2026 – From Creative Destruction to Successful Transformation

The RA[X] 2026 workshop addresses the drivers of technology-induced processes of creative destruction and their heterogeneous economic and social consequences for households, firms, and policy makers. It is grounded in the Schumpeterian tradition of evolutionary economics, which conceptualizes economic development as an endogenous and path-dependent process driven by entrepreneurial activity, innovation, and structural change (Schumpeter, 1911, 1942; Nelson, et al., 2018).

The major societal megatrends of our time – most notably digitization, climate change, demographic change, geopolitical realignments, urbanization, and transformations in global trade – confront modern democratic societies with enormous challenges. The transformation of existing economic structures is not new and has always been an inherent characteristic of market-based economic systems. However, the intensity and depth with which digital technologies are currently reshaping socio-economic structures are unprecedented in this form. At the same time, we need to acknowledge that the consequences of these major megatrends induce highly specific and differentiated transformation processes at the regional level and are unevenly distributed across space. Evolutionary economic geography emphasizes that regional development trajectories are shaped by path dependence, related variety, and localized knowledge accumulation, which condition the capacity of regions to diversify and adapt to structural change (Boschma, 2017). As a result, creative destruction produces heterogeneous regional outcomes and may reinforce spatial inequalities if not accompanied by appropriate policy responses. Today, technological, ecological, and social transformations unfold simultaneously and interact in complex and often unpredictable ways. Technological advancements create opportunities for new business models but come at the cost of increasing uncertainty for firms, households, and policymakers.

Accordingly, at the very core of the RA[X] workshop 2026, we seek to gain novel insights on the following, closely interrelated issues related to processes of creative destruction. First, sustainability and economic transformation are deeply interlinked. Innovation is essential for decarbonization, resource efficiency, and new growth paths, yet efficiency gains can be offset by rebound effects, induced demand, and expanding consumption, making ecological outcomes ambiguous (Foray, 2019; Aghion, et al., 2016; Binswanger, 2001). Second, entrepreneurship drives technological renewal and economic adaptability. Entrepreneurial entry, firm growth, and intrapreneurship shape sectoral and regional innovation systems but face constraints from path dependencies and technological and institutional specificities or even lock-ins (Arthur, 1989; Fritsch, 2013; Pyka, et al., 2019). Third, finance and digitalization enable and transform entrepreneurship. Financial systems allocate resources to new firms and technologies, while fintechs and platform-based banking models foster innovation but can also create coordination problems, regulatory challenges, and systemic risks (vonHorn & Kudic 2025). The workshop aims at addressing digital transformation more broadly, explicitly considering both its positive and negative economic effects. While digital technologies promise productivity gains and new organizational forms, empirical evidence remains mixed. The persistence of the productivity paradox highlights the difficulty of translating technological potential into measurable productivity growth (Brynjolfsson, et al., 2021; Capello, et al., 2022). At the same time, digitalization profoundly reshapes labour markets by altering task structures, skill requirements, and employment relationships, with far-reaching implications for inequality and the future of work (Pusch, et al., 2024). Finally, innovation and entrepreneurship policy guides transformation. Adaptive, place-based, and mission-oriented policies support experimentation, entrepreneurial discovery, and technological search while destabilizing unsustainable paths, ensuring inclusive and regionally balanced outcomes (Foray, et al., 2012; Mazzucato, 2018).

The workshop explicitly adopts an interdisciplinary orientation. Contributions from innovation economics, socio-informatics, economic geography, organization science as well as computer science and engineering are highly welcome. This pluralistic approach aims to identify and analyze phenomena emerging at the intersections of technologies, organizations, institutions, and regions. The workshop consists of twelve complementary special sessions. Each session is organized and chaired by a team of experts in the respective field. Please indicate in your submission which special session your contribution is intended for.

- SS01: Circular economy and sustainable transformation (Organizer: Matthias Mueller; Michael Schlaile)
- SS02: Fintech-enabled Creative Destruction – traditional banking systems in flux (Organizer: Roland Von Horn, Muhamed Kudic)
- SS03: Coping with complexity in innovation and entrepreneurship (Organizer: Andreas Pyka, Linda Ponta)

- SS04: Digital transformation of SMEs – practical measures (Organizer: Anja Moldehn, Lukasz Wisniewski)
- SS05: Entrepreneurship & transformation (Organizer: Michael Fritsch)
- SS06: Digital transformation, industrial relations and labour (Organizer: Toralf Pusch, Muhamed Kudic)
- SS07: Data-driven instruments for the governance of regional transformation (Organisation: Friedrich Dornbusch, Benjamin Klement)
- SS08: Methodological advancements in Innovation and Entrepreneurship (Organizer: Indra da Silva Wagner, Bernd Ebersberger)
- SS09: Twin-transition: theory methods and practice (Organizer: Tobias Buchmann; Patrick Wolf)
- SS10: Innovation policy for successful transformation (Organizer: Uwe Cantner; Holger Graf; Michael Rothgang)

Overall, the workshop seeks to advance a deeper understanding of how economies can move from disruptive phases of creative destruction towards successful, regionally grounded, and sustainable transformation trajectories.

Organization

The 8th RA[X] “*Networks*” Workshop will focus on “*From Creative Destruction to Successful Transformation*”. It is a joint initiative of the EAEPE Research Area[X] “*Knowledge, Networks and Regions*” (Muhamed Kudic and Claudius Gräbner) and the Research Area[D] “*Innovation and Technological Change*” (Andreas Pyka and Ben Vermeulen). The workshop is organized in cooperation between the University of Hohenheim and OWL University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Germany.

The RA[X] workshop program on 11 June 2026 (“Science Day”) includes two designated keynote speakers – Uwe Cantner, FSU Jena & Michael Frisch, JSU Jena – and three presentation slots, with each slot accommodating up to four parallel sessions (details of the program will be available soon). Each parallel session has a total duration of 90 minutes. Within a session, individual papers are allocated 20 minutes for presentation, followed by 10 minutes for discussion, allowing sufficient time for questions and in-depth exchange. The RA[X] Workshop is organized in cooperation with the Herford Symposium 2026, which will take place on 12 June 2026 (“Policy Day”). Participants of the RA[X] Workshop are invited to attend the symposium. The symposium is transfer-oriented and offers valuable opportunities for networking with industry representatives, policymakers, and decision-makers from the region.

Both events — the RA[X] Workshop 2026 on 11 June (“Science Day”) and the Herford Symposium 2026 on 12 June (“Policy Day”) — will take place in the DDC building at the Bildungscampus Herford, which serves as the central venue for the entire conference.

Submission process, important dates, and further information

We invite conceptual as well as empirical contributions within the thematic scope described above. Indicate in your submission which special session your contribution is intended for. Please submit **extended abstracts (500-750 words, PDF or Word)** via mail to: muhamed.kudic@th-owl.de. We are currently consulting with several respected journals to prepare an accompanying special issue comprising selected workshop papers.

Important dates

Abstract submission
Deadline

20 April 2026

Notification of
acceptance start of
registration

27 April 2026

Registration deadline
and payment of
workshop fee

25 May 2026

One-day
workshop

11 June 2026

Submit your abstract via mail:

muhamed.kudic@th-owl.de

Local hosts and event location

We plan to organize an on-site event. Herford is a city in Germany, in North Rhine-Westphalia. Muhamed Kudic and Lukasz Wisniewski (OWL Technical University of Applied Sciences and Arts) serve as local hosts for the 8th RA[X] workshop at the BildungsCampus Herford. Below; please find the venue address for the 8th RA[X] Workshop:

RA[X] Workshop, 11 Juni 2026

BildungsCampus Herford,
Mary-Somerville-Boulevard 4,
32049 Herford

Conference fee

A fee will be charged for participation. Thanks to local sponsors we can realize a very low workshop fee. Senior researchers and post-docs are asked to contribute 180 €, PhD candidates pay 140 €. Dinner and catering during the workshop are included. Please transfer the fee after acceptance of your contribution (notification: 27 April 2026) to the following account (registration deadline: 25 May 2026):

UNICREDIT BANK, ERFURT

Recipient: EAEPE IBAN: DE84820200860017089862
BIC: HYVEDEMM498 Identifier: RAX Workshop 2026

Keynote Speaker

Prof. Dr. Uwe Cantner, Chair of Microeconomics, Friedrich Schiller University Jena

Uwe Cantner is a leading scholar in innovation economics and evolutionary economics. He is Director of the Schumpeter Center at Friedrich Schiller University Jena and Secretary General of the International Joseph A. Schumpeter Society. His work bridges theoretical excellence and policy-relevant research on innovation, firm dynamics, and structural change. His key achievements include chairing the German Expert Commission for Research and Innovation (EFI) 2019 – 2025, founding and leading the Schumpeter Center, serving as Editor of the Journal of Evolutionary Economics, and publishing over 100 articles in leading international journals. His research focuses on innovation economics, entrepreneurship, networks, productivity, and industrial and innovation policy.



Prof. Dr. Michael Fritsch (Emeritus), former Chair of Business Dynamics, Innovation and Economic Change, Friedrich Schiller University Jena

Michael Fritsch is an internationally recognized expert in entrepreneurship, innovation, and regional development. His empirical research has fundamentally shaped our understanding of how new firms and innovations drive regional economic development. His major achievements include more than 160 peer-reviewed journal articles and 18 books, including two widely used textbooks on Entrepreneurship: Theory, Empirics, and Policy and Market Failure and Economic Policy. Michael Fritsch served as associate editor of Regional Studies and is a longtime editor of Small Business Economics: An Entrepreneurship Journal. His research interests include entrepreneurship, regional development, innovation processes, and institutional influences on economic change.

