

Code instead of coal

Rheinisches Revier as a hub for digital technologies

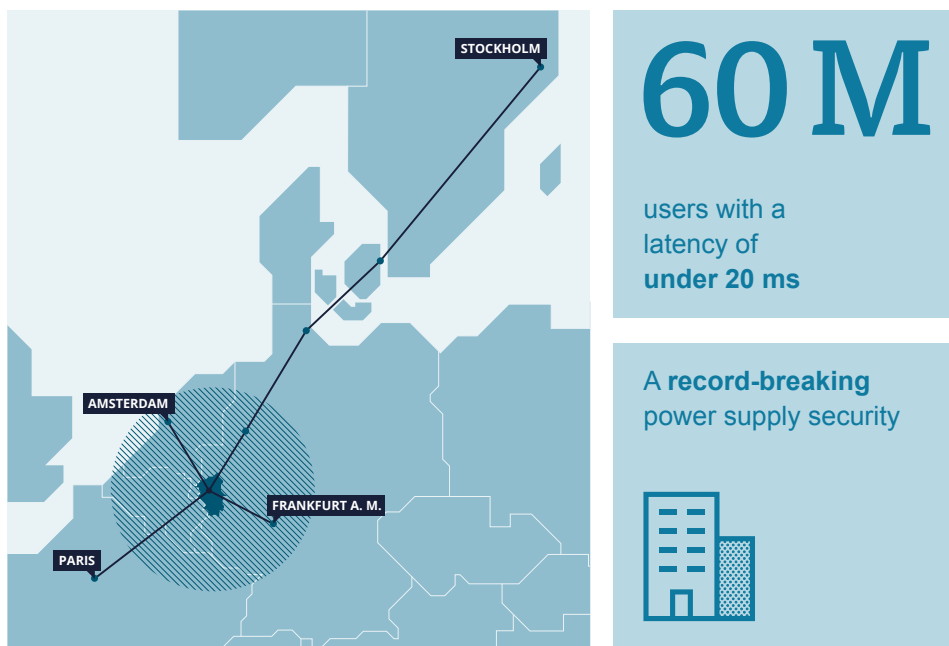
An unprecedented transformation is taking place in Rheinisches Revier: Europe's largest lignite mining region is being transformed into the continent's first climate-neutral industrial region. Digital technologies are set to play a key role in this – and international investors will also play their part. In fact, software, AI and cloud computing companies benefit from ideal conditions in Rheinisches Revier.

1. Be part of a data hub in the making

Germany's industrial center is also setting the tone in the digital economy. Tech companies in North Rhine-Westphalia generate around 20 percent of the digital technologies sector's national turnover – some 15 billion euros. Rheinisches Revier is on its way to consolidating and expanding NRW's leading position. The region is working to establish itself as a hub for artificial intelligence, cloud computing and software development. International companies that invest and settle here are expected to play a decisive role in this.

Among the many advantages for tech investors, a unique geostrategic location really stands out:

- ▼ Two important data routes intersect in Rheinisches Revier.
- ▼ In total, up to 60 million users can be reached in the metropolitan area around the district – in less than 20 milliseconds.



Microsoft is strengthening the special locational advantage for digital companies in Rheinisches Revier. The tech giant is building two hyperscale data centers with data hubs in the Rhine-Erft district. They form the focus of Microsoft's largest investment in Germany to date.

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2. Be part of a diverse ecosystem for digital technologies

Future-oriented projects

Microsoft's hyperscalers are laying the foundation for a whole new digital ecosystem. One in which tech players, start-ups, industrial companies and scientific institutions join forces to drive digital innovation. Not far from the two planned data centers, this synergetic environment will be realized in two digital parks. Each of these locations will create 2,500 jobs and implement pioneering business models. Yet these two parks in Bedburg and Frimmersdorf are by no means the only major projects. An overview:

Digitalpark Frimmersdorf	In an old lignite-fired power plant, an agile tech hub is being created, which will promote digital solutions for Industry 4.0 and the energy sector in particular. There's also a focus on e-commerce and the food industry.
Digitalpark Bergheim	The second digital park is being built near the Microsoft hyperscalers at the former RWE power plant in Nieder-außem. According to the "Digital Parks Master Plan", the focus is on the development of software and data models.
AI Village Hürth	A fully digitalized innovation campus for artificial intelligence is being set up in Hürth, just outside Cologne, and also features a real-world laboratory and accelerator programs. In the AI Village, large companies, start-ups and research institutions will develop AI and robotics technologies that will play crucial roles in a variety of sectors.
Blockchain Reallabor	Hürth is also home to the Blockchain Reallabor, which introduces companies to the advantages of decentralized data storage and provides consultation on blockchain solutions.
Neurotec II	This consortium led by Forschungszentrum Jülich, RWTH Aachen University and several high-tech companies aims to create a hub for the production of neuromorphic chips. These are intended to increase the energy efficiency of AI.

Innovative companies

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The Microsoft investment provides new drive for growth for Rheinisches Revier as a digital location. At the same time, tech companies have long felt at home in the west of North Rhine-Westphalia. A prime example is the British company Computacenter in Kerpen, which offers custom digital solutions for a variety of industries. The software and AI specialists at INFORM GmbH and Soptim, a software supplier for the energy industry, are also based in Aachen. Incoretex, on the other hand, produces AI-supported IOT technology for a wide range of consumer products. This is just a small selection of the digital companies based in the city right on the border of both Belgium and the Netherlands.

At the Brainergy Park in Jülich, QCG Computer, a subsidiary of Quanta Computer from Taiwan, is building an ultra-modern plant. They will produce precision equipment for the automotive industry that's intended for applications such as autonomous driving.

Practical cutting-edge research

Rheinisches Revier features one of the most application-oriented scientific landscapes in the whole of Germany. Investors therefore not only have access to highly trained specialists with entrepreneurial flair but can also find internationally renowned research partners. For example, the following:

Forschungs-zentrum Jülich	The FZJ is one of the largest interdisciplinary research institutions in Europe. As a leader in the field of digital technologies, it's home to the Institute for Advanced Simulation (IAS) with its Jülich Supercomputing Center (JSC) and the Peter Grünberg Institute. Forschungs-zentrum Jülich operates the most powerful supercomputers in the EU as well as the first European quantum computing infrastructure.
RWTH Aachen	The University of Excellence has its own AI center and an Institute for Transmission Technology, Machine Dynamics and Robotics. RWTH Aachen University also runs the European 4.0 Transformation Center, which features well-known members such as Fujitsu and Hewlett Packard Enterprise.
Fraunhofer FIT	Fraunhofer FIT is located just a stone's throw away from Rheinisches Revier in Sankt Augustin and has also a location in Aachen. It works closely with the private sector and implements technologies such as AI and data science in a variety application domains. These include digital energy, digital health, digital sustainability and digital business.

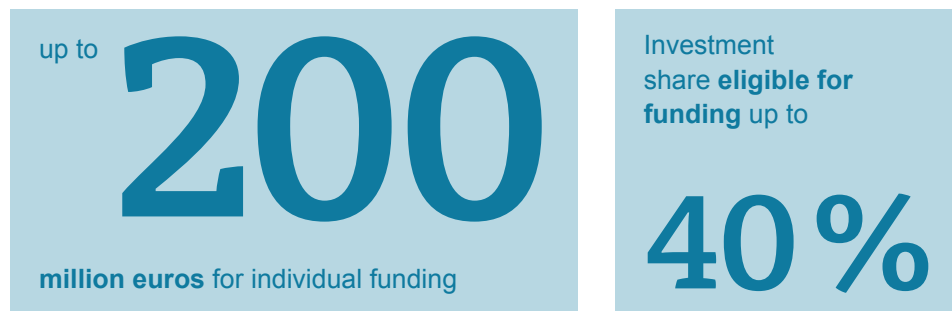
3. Be part of a well-funded transformation

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Digital technologies thrive on dynamism, innovative strength and robust infrastructure. Rheinisches Revier fulfills all these prerequisites for international investors. The state of North Rhine-Westphalia also provides these investors with support from its foreign trade promotion agency to help them make their move into western Germany: NRW.Global Business offers consultation on all issues relating to the choice of location, taxes and financing. The team also continues to support companies after they have settled in Rheinisches Revier. Furthermore, NRW.Global Business markets and profiles the numerous commercial sites.

In addition to this well-connected partner, an attractive funding program is available to investors. Produktives.NRW, which the EU finances via its Just Transition Fund, is also explicitly aimed at investors from the digital technologies sector who are willing to settle in Rheinisches Revier. Up to 200 million euros in individual funding are possible.

Produktives.NRW



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