

Press Release
SMART GREEN ISLAND MAKEATHON 2026, 24.-28.02.2026

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Innovation Training Camp: AI, Robotics and Circular Economy to Try Out

The SMART GREEN ISLAND INNOVATIONSFESTIVAL brought together innovation development, scientific dialogue and talent promotion in a joint format with 834 participants – ranging from school workshops and the student MAKEATHON to the international scientific EUROCAST conference.

Garching, March 5th, 2026 – From February 24 to 28, 2026, the **SMART GREEN ISLAND INNOVATION FESTIVAL** organized by [ITQ GmbH](#) and the Spanish [Dr. Stetter ITQ S.L.U.](#) took place on Gran Canaria. During the MAKEATHON, 334 young talents, professors and company representatives worked in interdisciplinary teams on Industry Challenges in the fields of AI, Smart Automation and Circular Economy. At the same time, 150 researchers presented current scientific topics at the international [EUROCAST](#) conference, including fields such as Quantum Mechanics, Robotics and AI. In addition, more than 350 school students gained their first hands-on experience with Robotics, Programming and Electronics in practice-oriented technology workshops. At the technical museum [“Museo Elder”](#) in Las Palmas, a shared innovation space emerged where research, industrial application and talent development worked together directly. Students, professors and company representatives developed functional demonstrators and networked in a format that systematically combines innovation development, talent promotion and scientific exchange.

CirQmind in Practice: From Smart Recycling to Smart Automation

Under the central theme “CirQmind – Circular Economy through Circular Society”, 18 teams worked on real Industry Challenges. Together with [MVTec](#), they developed AI-based image processing for automated waste and object detection. With [Beckhoff](#), they created PLC-controlled sorting systems for precise material separation. In collaboration with [Lorenz](#), prototypes for smart circular transport boxes for water meters with tracking and condition monitoring were developed. For [MEILLER-Kipper](#), the teams designed an autonomously controlled model vehicle with hooklift function that can independently approach, pick up and position swap containers.

Innovation emerges through Experimentation

The MAKEATHON demonstrates that innovation capability does not arise in theory, but through practical application under real conditions. Students and trainees work on concrete industrial problems, systematically training creative thinking, technical implementation and responsible decision-making.

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At the same time, the format represents an alternative model for talent recruitment: companies experience talents not in job interviews, but within project work. Skills become visible immediately, and young professionals develop the ability early on to actively drive innovative solutions in their later professional careers.



The MAKEATHON took place against the impressive backdrop of the Museo Elder, a museum of nature and technology. (Source: ITQ GmbH)

The SMART GREEN ISLAND MAKEATHON was made possible through the financial, conceptual and material **support of 24 national and international Sponsors**.

Special thanks go to the following Sponsors:

Platinum Sponsor: [MVTec](#)

Gold Sponsors are technology companies: [Beckhoff](#), [MEILLER-Kipper](#), [Lorenz](#), as well as local institutions: the Canary Islands Government [Gobierno de Canarias](#), the Government of Gran Canaria [Cabildo de Gran Canaria](#), the [foundation Fundación Sergio Alonso](#), and [Museo Elder](#).

Silver Sponsors: [igus](#), [MathWorks](#), [Quanderland of the Fraunhofer Institute](#), [IES El Rincón](#), [Algorithmics](#), [Protect the Planet – Dorothea Sick-Thies](#).

Additional long-standing supporters of the MAKEATHON and Silver Sponsors include the [Karl-Peter-Obermaier School Passau](#) and the [Vocational Schools Wilhelmshaven](#), which support us with motivated trainees in designing and supervising the workshops as well as organizing the

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event and catering. For them, the MAKEATHON is a real training project in which event planning, logistics and teamwork are practiced under real conditions instead of in the classroom.

Inspiring Interest in Technology Already at School Age

Parallel to the MAKEATHON, 350 school students from the island took part in free Educational Technology Workshops. Robotics, Programming and electronics with a focus on Sustainability were at the center. The workshops were offered by German universities, the [Gerda Stetter Foundation](#) “[Technik macht Spaß!](#)” with the EU-funded Research Project “[EduDemoS](#)”, as well as the Canarian [Fundación Fundación Sergio Alonso](#). The universities view the MAKEATHON as a practice-oriented extension of their educational concepts: research, industrial challenges and project-based learning are combined, and technological competencies are systematically developed already at school age.

Science in Dialogue

At the same time as the MAKEATHON, the international [EUROCAST](#) conference took place at the museum with around 150 researchers from 20 universities. Several professors were not only active at the conference but also participated in the MAKEATHON together with their students. As a result, current research knowledge flowed directly into the team’s project work, and science and practical technology development interacted directly.

“The MAKEATHON shows what innovation and talent strategies can look like in practice: developing together instead of discussing separately,” said Dr. Rainer Stetter, CEO of ITQ GmbH.

Why Gran Canaria as the Festival Location?

With its diverse climate zones, Gran Canaria offers ideal conditions for a sustainable and autonomous energy supply from renewable sources. Through the SMART & GREEN Projects on the island, ITQ GmbH aims to advance Digital Transformation and promote international networking. This represents a decisive step toward counteracting the global shortage of skilled professionals.

About ITQ GmbH

ITQ GmbH, founded in 1998, is an independent engineering and consulting company focused on mechanical and plant engineering as well as automation technology. The company specializes in interdisciplinary problem-solving in the fields of software and systems engineering and in modern AI-supported development processes.

Topics such as cyber security, digital resilience, and consulting on current regulatory requirements (including the Cyber Resilience Act (CRA), NIS2, and others) are becoming increasingly important. One of ITQ’s greatest strengths is its long-standing, trusted relationships with clients – built on a consistent commitment to quality, reliability, transparency, and

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partnership-based collaboration. Core competencies include not only software engineering, but also project and crisis management, security and AI consulting, as well as coaching and training at all organizational levels.

A particular focus lies on the close integration of the disciplines of mechanics, electronics, software development, and IT security to design robust, resilient, and future-proof systems. For this reason, ITQ actively collaborates with national and international associations and professional working groups. To maintain international competitiveness and to create space for new impulses in areas such as artificial intelligence, cyber security, and digital engineering, ITQ has been actively involved for many years in the design and implementation of national and international research projects.

In collaboration with universities, the company develops forward-looking educational concepts, supports young academics through practice-oriented study projects, and offers lectures and seminars at universities worldwide. The foundation "Technik macht Spass!", established in 2011, further expands and sustains this commitment.

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Characters (without spaces): 7.027

More Information:

[ITQ GmbH](#)

[Dr. Stetter ITQ S.L.U](#)

[SMART GREEN ISLAND MAKEATHON](#)

[Gerda Stetter Foundation – Technik macht Spass!](#)

Photo Material:

[SMART GREEN ISLAND MAKEATHON – Impressions](#)

Video Material:

[SMART GREEN ISLAND MAKEATHON – Video](#)

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