



Press Release

First director of new AI Research School appointed

Veronika Eyring starts work in September as University of Tübingen's Professor of AI for Climate and Physical Systems, based at connAlx in Heilbronn and the Tübingen AI Center

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The University of Tübingen has appointed the first of three founding directors of the new Research School for Applied AI Baden-Württemberg (connAlx). Professor Veronika Eyring will start work at connAlx on 1 September and at the same time will take up her appointment as the University of Tübingen's new Professor of AI for Climate and Physical Systems at the Tübingen AI Center. A state of Baden-Württemberg initiative, connAlx was launched in January 2026 with support from the Dieter Schwarz Foundation and is jointly run by the Universities of Tübingen and Stuttgart and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). connAlx combines cutting-edge research with training for exceptional doctoral candidates and young researchers seeking careers in research, industry, and startups. The focus is on applied artificial intelligence technologies such as chip design, robotics, and physical systems, as well as cybersecurity and sustainable AI.

Veronika Eyring currently heads the Earth System Model Evaluation and Analysis Division at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics at the German Aerospace Center. She is also Professor of Climate Modeling at the University of Bremen. She is internationally renowned for her work on improving climate models using artificial intelligence, as well as for her role as coordinating lead author of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report. She has received numerous awards for her research, including the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize from the German Research Foundation in 2021, the AGU Ambassador Award in 2024, and the Blaise Pascal Medal from the European Academy of Sciences in 2026.

Modeling complex physical systems

The new professorship will focus on developing AI methods for modeling and predicting the behavior of complex physical systems – particularly the climate. The long-term goal is to develop “digital twins” – computational models of real-world systems which can answer “what-if” questions using

physically consistent simulations. This will enable a better understanding of key issues in the Earth system and help predict developments ranging from extreme events and carbon sequestration to wildfires and will provide data needed for better management of water resources. These methods, once developed, can be applied to other physical systems.

Baden-Württemberg's Minister of Science, Research and the Arts, Petra Olschowski, welcomed Veronika Eyring's appointment to connAlx. "The connAlx Research School offers top researchers an exceptional scientific experimental space that is unique in Germany. New approaches and formats for interdisciplinary collaboration are emerging between AI, systems research, and engineering. This in turn will lead to groundbreaking ideas and radical innovations in applied AI."

Boost for international profile

University of Tübingen president, Professor Karla Pollmann, underscored the scientific and social value of the appointment, saying: "Professor Eyring's work brings together scientific depth, technological innovation, and a shared commitment to a future worth living. She reinforces important fields of research at the University of Tübingen while also raising the profile of both the University and the connAlx Research School."

The University's Vice-President for Research, Innovation, and Transfer, Professor Katja Schenke-Layland, said Eyring would have a central role in establishing interdisciplinary collaborations between connAlx, the Machine Learning and TERRA excellence clusters, and the Tübingen AI Center. "Furthermore, as a connAlx founding director, Ms. Eyring will play a key role in making data-centered and AI-centered methods ready for application, particularly in the fields of climate and environmental systems research."

Eyring herself said she was looking forward to building and developing connAlx along with partner universities KIT, the University of Stuttgart, and the University of Tübingen, with sponsors at the Dieter Schwarz Foundation, and with other institutions in the city of Heilbronn, where connAlx is located. "This is a very attractive academic opportunity for me, combining as it does AI for climate and complex physical systems – my research field – with connAlx's clear mission of innovation and transfer, and which is particularly anchored in connAlx's key focus areas of AI for Robotics and Physical Systems and Safe & Sustainable AI." Eyring added that the Tübingen AI Center offers world-class international research into the key technologies of AI, with which we can closely align our work and build various important collaborations.

Executive Director of the Dieter Schwarz Foundation, Professor Gunther Friedl, emphasized the importance of this development for Heilbronn's innovation ecosystem: "The appointment of Professor Veronika Eyring is a milestone for applied AI research in Baden-Württemberg and sends a strong signal regarding the training of the next generation of young researchers in Heilbronn. We are extremely pleased that we were able to recruit a world-leading scientist as the founding director of connAlx. Here, we are creating a unique environment where cutting-edge research is directly translated into innovative solutions for global challenges," he said.



Professor Veronika Eyring (center) receives her letter of appointment from President Karla Pollmann (right). Eyring simultaneously becomes the first of three founding directors of the connAlx Research School for Applied AI Baden-Württemberg, located in Heilbronn. On the left: Professor Katja Schenke-Layland, Vice-President for Research, Innovation, and Transfer
Photo: Michael Pfeiffer / University of Tübingen

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