

# Project Mercury @ Germany – Pilot Program

## TIMELINE

13 Mar 26	Virtual Orientation (introduction to online platforms)
20 Mar 25	Virtual Day 0 (introduction to the Jumpstart process)
23-25 Mar 26	Jumpstart (in-person workshop at the Bundeswehr Conference Center, Grünheide, Germany)
30 Mar 26- 12 Jun 26	Virtual, project-based work phase
17 Jun 26	Virtual final presentation and certification

Every Wednesday, starting from 01 Apr 26, there will be a three-hour coaching sessions with Project Mercury coaches for all participants. Additionally, team members will meet an additional two to three hours per week (virtually or in person) in order to advance the project. The weekly coaching sessions will be held in English. German-speaking coaches support the teams in all meetings and throughout the project work.

Project topics can be proposed by the sending staffs and authorities.

Certification is provided by the University of Michigan School of Engineering, USA.

## Background on Project Mercury

Launched in 2019 by the U.S. Air Force and the University of Michigan, Project Mercury is a program designed to promote an innovation culture, teach skills in areas such as innovation and change management, and strengthen the “Innovation Eco System” within defense and government agencies. The program lives the philosophy that every employee can be an innovator, no matter their rank or position. Project Mercury reflects the motto, “Good ideas have neither ranks nor job titles.”

After six years, Project Mercury in the USA has already trained hundreds of participants—mostly members of the U.S. Air Force—to become “Certified Professional Innovators,” and has introduced thousands of workshop participants to the core principles of the concept. Through this, a robust and interconnected innovation community has been established in the USA, in NATO, and in participating partner nations. So far, eight participants from Germany have completed the program. As of May 2025, three alumni have qualified as “Project Mercury Coaches.” All German alumni are active service members of the Bundeswehr.

In 2024, Project Mercury was adapted by the NATO Innovation Hub. NATO has been and continues to be a key partner in developing and shaping this innovation ecosystem within NATO and the European context. Members from NATO member states have now participated in four U.S. Project Mercury cohorts. Additionally, two NATO Project Mercury cohorts have already been certified, and two NATO Project Mercury Innovators Workshops have taken place.

The idea behind the program Project Mercury @ Germany is to open up this established and scientifically grounded concept to German soldiers, civil servants, and public service employees, and to test it as a pilot program across agencies. Based on these first experiences, a decision can then be made regarding further continuation, the development of a German program, or inclusion in the training catalogs of the federal ministries.

An online market analysis has shown that a comparable program is currently not available on the European market.

### **Cost Overview**

Course fee: €3,750 per participant

Accommodation costs: €117.00 per day for **Jumpstart\*** (3 – 4 nights)

### **Other Information**

Minimum participants: 20

Maximum participants: 40

Registration deadline: 01 Dec 25

Refund until: 31 Jan 26

\*The **Jumpstart** includes accommodation, meals, and event fees. Arrival is scheduled for Sunday, 22 Mar 26; departure is on Wednesday, 25 Mar 2026 in the evening or Thursday, 26 Mar 2026 in the morning.

Registration for Project Mercury @ Germany will be possible beginning September 2025 via the online platform of the Innovatrium Institute ([innovatrium.org](https://innovatrium.org)). Banking details will be provided upon assignment of a course spot. The payment deadline for the course fee is 01 Feb 26.

The costs can be covered via the authority's training budget.

For questions, please contact [project.mercury.deutschland@gmail.com](mailto:project.mercury.deutschland@gmail.com)