

# **Analysing Innovation Networks for Sustainable Energy Technologies: Perspectives from Innovation Systems Approaches and Social Network Analysis**

Organized by the

- IFZ - Inter-University Research Centre for Technology, Work and Culture
- in co-operation with
- FAS.research

Graz, Austria; 26-27 November 2008

## **Background**

Within the last years a number of conceptual approaches and methodological tools have been developed in the social sciences that help to explain the dynamics of sectoral, technological or regional innovation systems, making specific reference to network concepts.

Within the Science and Technology studies literature, frequent reference is made to Carlsson and Stankiewicz defining a technological system as 'networks of agents interacting in a specific economic/industrial area under a particular institutional infrastructure'. This network view has been taken up by various strands of work, analysing innovation systems in terms of emerging socio-technical constellations (Markard, Truffer) or functional components (Bergek, Jacobsson, Hekkert). Among other things, the functionality or disfunctionality of the underlying innovation network has been pointed out as an issue deserving closer attention. However, the networks typically are not mapped out and analysed in any detail.

A different range of concepts and tools for the study of innovation systems comes from the area of Social Network Analysis. Whereas qualitative analysis provides the comprehensive characterisation of an innovation field, Social Network Analysis concentrates on the detailed representation and analysis of its network structures. One important aspect is the pattern and the content of the supply chain networks which exist in an innovation field. Apart from producing descriptive maps of actors, various indicators can be developed and applied that help to assess the performance of a particular network structure.

## **Focus and Aims**

The workshop 'Analysing Innovation Networks for Sustainable Energy Technologies' will bring together researchers involved in the analysis of innovation networks both from the perspective of innovation systems and from social network analysis. A particular emphasis will be on innovation networks in the area of sustainable energy technologies. In particular, the workshop will

- Reflect on the respective contributions that can be made to the understanding of innovation processes and innovation networks based on various approaches and methodologies.
- Ask in what way the approaches can be fruitfully combined.
- Ask how the analyses of innovation processes can form a basis for policy recommendations and strategy development.

### **Format**

The 1½-day Workshop will take place in Graz, Austria, from 26-27 November 2008. It is funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

The Workshop is related to the research project 'Innovation Network Renewable Energy Technologies: Strengths, Weaknesses and Potentials in the Province of Styria' (Inno-Net RET-Styria) carried out jointly by the IFZ and FAS.research.

It will include a limited number of formal presentations as well as ample time for discussion.

The workshop ends on Thursday, November 27, around lunchtime.

Participation in the workshop is free of charge.

For registration and further information please contact

Anna Schreuer: [schreuer@ifz.tugraz.at](mailto:schreuer@ifz.tugraz.at)