

4th Energy & Society Conference: Energy Transitions in a divided World

03-05 September 2018, Exeter, UK

Workshop

**Real-world laboratories as a tool for a participatory energy transition:
advances, methods and international cases**

Call for Abstracts

The goal of the workshop is to advance international research efforts surrounding real-world laboratories (real-world labs) by systematizing and comparing results, approaches and reflections from different case studies.

The global energy transition is in need of innovative bottom-up approaches to involve citizens and change agents, researchers and policy actors alike in order to foster cooperative transition designs; real-world labs offer a new approach to do so. Recent developments in transition research pinpoint to various concepts of cooperative transformation designs, like real-world labs, transdisciplinary projects, and other collaborative research efforts. All of which claim to support the idea of the sustainability transition as a democratic citizens' project.

However, as this “transformative research” (Schneidewind 2015; WBGU 2011) emerges, new challenges arise: how to design co-creation and co-design efforts within a research project, how does the nature of the relationship between researchers and practitioners change, how “normative” should and can science be, and how to maintain methodological integrity, to name just a few. Moreover, the topics these real-world labs tackle are often local in nature, but global in meaning, with the former often leading to a very local focus of the project team, where a global perspective is needed when it comes to disseminating lessons learned.

This workshop provides a place for bringing together international perspectives on transformative research in the form of real-world labs. Participants will discuss case studies and to compare approaches and results, they will be encouraged to identify challenges and advantages, key actors and necessary resources that constitute a real-world lab approach in their respective fields.

The speakers are invited to present and compare case studies, using a uniform analysis scheme. This structural scheme follows the strategic management template “Business Model Canvas”. This guiding tool may increase comparability of diverse

case studies of real-world labs. The comparative analysis will be collaboratively developed with the workshop coordinators and discussed with the speakers in advance.

We invite scholars working in the field of collaborative transition projects with various empirical subjects (including, but not limited to, transport, energy transition, higher education, water management, urban planning). Presentations may focus on methodological challenges, empirical findings, innovative transdisciplinary approaches and/ or epistemological reflections.

Abstracts of max. **500 words** should be submitted by **May 11th 2018** to

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The workshop concept stems from the inter- and transdisciplinary ENavi-Project (“Navigational system for the energy transition”, funded by BMBF – Ministry for Education and Research, Germany). This project is the largest research consortium for energy research in the social sciences in Germany. It explicitly aims at involving stakeholders, change agents and citizens in the research activities.

This call for abstracts aims at including additional innovative and novel projects and networks into the workshop set-up, facilitating conceptual exchange and networking opportunities for this new research area.

References:

- Schneidewind, U. (2015). *Transformative Wissenschaft – Motor für gute Wissenschaft und lebendige Demokratie*. GAIA, 24 (2), (S. 88-91). doi: 10.14512/gaia.24.2.5.
- WBGU – German Advisory Council on Global Change (2011). *World in transition. A social contract for sustainability. Flagship report 2011*. Berlin: WBGU. <http://www.wbgu.de/en/flagship-reports/fr-2011-a-social-contract/>.