



# NTA

Netzwerk  
Technikfolgenabschätzung  
8. Internationale Konferenz

07.-08. November 2018 | Südwerk Karlsruhe

## SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATIONS: RESEARCH OBJECT OR MISSION OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT?

### Call for Papers and Panels

for the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Technology Assessment Network NTA  
07–08 November 2018 at the Citizen Centre “Südwerk” in Karlsruhe  
organized by the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI

The term “transformation” has been used to refer to the comprehensive and far-reaching restructuring of social structures and behavioral patterns for some years now. On the one hand, this refers to socio-technical transformations that are essentially aimed at ecological, economic and social sustainability and are closely linked to mission-oriented research and innovation policies aimed at addressing the so-called “Grand Challenges”. The central fields of transformation of this provenance include, in particular, the restructuring of energy, transport, production and agricultural systems. On the other hand, however, conversion processes driven primarily by technology and market forces are also referred to as transformations, as prototypically discussed intensively using the digitization of the economy and society as an example. Both – problem-oriented and technology-driven – forms of socio-technical transformations are characterized by their pronounced cross-sectional character, cross-sector interdependencies, broad time horizons, high socio-economic and socio-cultural intervention depths, encompassing the individual as well as all levels of society, and their multi-dimensionality.

It is undisputed that this complexity is accompanied by uncertainty about effects, consequences and side-effects, and that transformation processes are therefore also a genuine subject of technology assessment (TA). Finally, it is in line with the traditional self-conception of TA to generate orientation knowledge about opportunities and risks, intended and unintended consequences and to reflect on

the social acceptability of socio-technical developments interwoven with societal transformation processes. In addition to a predominantly analytical-distanced examination of potential technology and transformation consequences aimed at advising political decision-makers, further questions and fields of activity for TA arise, however, particularly in the context of problem- and goal-oriented societal transformations. What role has the reference to far-reaching transformations played so far in TA? How can and should TA contribute to the active co-shaping of transformative governance, how and to what extent should TA adopt the normative objectives of the transformation missions and simultaneously exploit its critical potential for reflection?

The planned NTA8 conference will provide an opportunity to discuss these and other questions on the relationship between TA and societal transformations and to deepen them using good practice examples. In addition to determining the disciplinary position, it will also deal with possibilities and limits of TA-based contributions in the context of societal transformations. Possible questions and topics of the NTA8 are among others:

- How do TA actors position themselves in relation to the normative directions of mission-oriented transformations?
- How are normativity and direction generated in the context of social transformation strategies, who is (not)

involved, and which interests and power constellations shape these processes?

- How can and should TA practice in concert with neighboring approaches and disciplines such as foresight, transition research, socio-ecological research, environmental psychology, etc. be located in the context of transformation research and make productive contributions?
- By means of which approaches and methods can TA provide effective contributions to identify, understand and finally overcome barriers and blockages of transformation processes?
- What role does TA play or could it play in more technology-driven transformation processes, e.g. in digitization, the transformation of knowledge systems or the changing role of the public?
- What theoretical concepts of transformation processes are applied in TA practice, what are their strengths and limitations? Which concepts are negotiated in other discourses and communities and could also be useful for TA?
- When is a (problem-oriented or technology-driven) transformation process considered successful, when not? Which criteria of “successful transformation (practice)” can be identified? Which methods, including participatory processes, have so far proved effective in shaping of or governing the transformations in which contexts, and which have not?
- What examples from TA research practice can be used to illustrate the above-mentioned questions? We welcome case studies and contributions from projects on or from societal transformations. For TA projects that do not explicitly address transformation processes, it might also be interesting to ask from which implicit assumptions regarding transformation the initial questions, the analyses or the formulated recommendations may originate?

The NTA and Fraunhofer ISI would like to invite you to submit informative abstracts on these or related topics for presentations, posters and panels (innovative formats are welcome). In the case of a panel with specialist lectures, the proposal should outline the content of the presentations and, if necessary, name the lecturers, but can also integrate other presentations from the open call.

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Please submit your abstracts between about 500 to 800 words for individual contributions and up to 1,000 words for panels to [NTA8@isi.fraunhofer.de](mailto:NTA8@isi.fraunhofer.de) by 30 May 2018. After review, authors and panel organizers will be informed of the acceptance of their submitted proposals by 15 July 2018. In addition to the presentations and other panel formats, a moderated presentation of posters or an own poster panel is planned. Selected conference papers will be published later as papers in a volume of the series “Society – Technology – Environment” at Nomos/Edition Sigma.  
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Before the start of NTA8, on 06 November 2018, the annual network meeting of the NTA with current reports from the TA community will take place at Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI, Breslauer Strasse 48, 76139 Karlsruhe.

More information on:  
[www.nta8.de](http://www.nta8.de)