

RESHAPING INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES IN THE TRANSITION TOWARDS RENEWABLE ENERGY: LESSONS FROM BOTTOM-UP INITIATIVES

(RESHAPE)

The project RESHAPE explores examples of bottom-up initiatives in the field of photovoltaic which emerged in the recent years in Austria. The process of initiating and implementing a bottom-up initiative as well as the institutional setting will be analyzed using qualitative empirical research methods taking the experiences from Germany into account. Furthermore, individuals' motives – which are crucial when deciding whether to (not) participate in such an initiative – will be studied empirically.

Based on these empirical results, an agent-based model will be developed which provides different scenarios of the diffusion of and participation in those initiatives.

RESHAPE will provide a comprehensive understanding of how Austrian bottom-up initiatives in the field of photovoltaic function and how institutions and processes can be reshaped in order to systematically tap the full potential of bottom-up initiatives for the transition towards a carbon neutral and adaptive society.

The research process will be guided by following research questions:

1. Who are the most important public and/or private actors for bottom-up initiatives? How are they inter-connected? How do they interact and what are adequate organizational settings?
2. Which processes guide the emergence of bottom-up initiatives – from the first idea to their successful implementation? What are important frameworks, conditions and prerequisites for a bottom-up initiative?
3. What are important social, psychological, and economic determinants and motivations for the participation and non-participation in different types of bottom-up initiatives?
4. What are possible development scenarios for the diffusion and adoption of (selected) most promising bottom-up initiatives for renewable energy production?
5. What can be learned from past and ongoing bottom-up initiatives for reshaping institutions and processes in the transition towards renewable energy? Which policies/measures would allow bottom-up initiatives to increasingly contribute to the energy transition and simultaneously to coordinate and optimize their inclusion in the overall (renewable) energy strategy of Austria?

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