

## Energy Efficiency & Climate Protection Networks as vehicles for exchange between Industry, Academia, and Policymakers

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Energy Efficiency Networks emerged in Germany as a tool for mutual exchange between industrial firms in the early 2000's, following in the footsteps of earlier networks in Switzerland. Initially focused on easing the implementation of measures to improve energy efficiency via sharing experiences with individual technologies and measures between companies, the network model has since expanded to also include topics related to climate protection and sustainability. Approximately 370 such networks have been organized under guidance of the Initiative for Energy Efficiency and Climate Protection Networks, with approximately 90 of these currently active or in the process of being organized. This submission will briefly present the history of German networks and outline the methodology of the network model. The main focus of the submission draws upon both secondary literature and the direct experience of the authors' work with such networks to examine their ability to enable communication and exchange between three groups with major roles to play in climate protection: Industry, academia, and policymakers.

Easing the implementation of measures via the sharing of experience between industrial actors has remained the primary goal of networks despite the expanded topical focus. Using this goal as a starting point, an overview of the current topics of most concern to network participants is presented. The strengths and weaknesses of the network model for inter-industry cooperation are discussed, with a particular focus on the presented current topics. After addressing the traditional inter-industry character of networks, examples of networks being used as vectors for communication with other actors outside of industry are then examined. Considering industry as the actor tasked with the implementation of (sector-specific) climate protection measures, a focus is placed here upon connections to actors with a steering role (policymakers) and a consultative role (academia). Opportunities for further expansion of the scope of network communication and cooperation with such actors, while still maintaining the core identity and supporting the original goal of networks, are discussed. The strengths and weaknesses of the network model in regards to these expansions of scope are considered and suggestions for continued development of the network model are given.