

Project title: WissProKMU – Future of Work: Design and Net-
working

Partner: Institute for Work Science (IAW) of RWTH Aachen
University
Institute of Sociology (STO) of RWTH Aachen Uni-
versity

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Mission Statement

As part of the research priority "Future of Work: mid-sized companies - Innovative and Social", the scientific project "WissProKMU - Future of Work: Design and Networking" addresses the overarching goal of advancing technological and social innovations in SMEs (Small and Mid-size Enterprise). The focus here is on innovative work processes and on new cooperation between the social partners. A prerequisite for this is direct usability of the results of this research priority and thus the development of a socially relevant effect. In this field of action, WissProKMU will bring the results of the collaborative projects into an overarching context against the background of the nine fields of action of the "Future of Work" programme and assume a "facilitating role" between the collaborative projects and the project and funding agency.

For this purpose, the scientific questions relevant to the funding programme are to be compared with the collaborative projects, brought together, further research needs/connection possibilities as well as possibilities for dissemination and exploitation are to be determined.

The central objectives of the project described here are an integrative exploitation of results and analysis of potential for science and industry, a network analysis with a corresponding catalogue of recommendations, the preparation of the research landscape and the elaboration of proposals for the

concrete continuation of a research funding strategy in this field. The collaborative projects supported under this funding priority with the SMEs and research institutions represented are intended to cover the breadth of the German economy.

Approach

Digitalisation offers opportunities and at the same time poses challenges for small and medium-sized enterprises. In order to seize opportunities and master challenges, innovations are needed that not only relate to products, but also to (value-added) processes in which people continue to play a leading role. Because innovation attempts are particularly promising if they are undertaken in a network of partners with different perspectives and competencies, the focus of the project is on establishing and networking such networks.

Four work packages were developed for this purpose:

WP 1: Network research

Innovation research shows that innovations are primarily produced by networks in which different knowledge and perspectives are brought together. The work package deals with how and under what conditions successful networks emerge.

WP 2: Monitoring

The aim of monitoring is to record and systematise the innovation objectives of the individual collaborative projects without exercising a control function. Future needs for research and action will also be derived from the results of the monitoring.

WP 3: Transfer

The individual results of the respective collaborative projects must be bundled in order to make them available for a broader social discourse. To this end, opportunities for exchange are created in the form of regular coordination meetings and conferences and supplemented by joint public relations work.

WP 4: Transfer personnel management/HRM (subarea project management)

The transfer of personnel management / HRM runs parallel to the accompanying study and monitoring. The aim is to promote the transfer between science and those responsible for personnel management/HRM in small and medium-sized enterprises. The transfer is always an element of the project meetings in order to structure and orient the professional exchange of the project partners.

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