

# Contact

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# The ITA in brief

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## Mission

**The Institute of Technology Assessment (ITA) is an interdisciplinary research institute that analyses technological change in terms of its underlying societal conditions, the options available for shaping it, and the impacts that may result from it.**

Scientific TA applies a broad array of methods stemming from a multitude of fields. An essential element of technology assessment methodology is the inclusion of various bodies of knowledge, values and interests via participatory procedures. Internal project teams, often in collaboration with external partners, carry out interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scientific analyses.

The aim of applied and scientifically-oriented technology assessment is to generate knowledge relevant for decision-making and to identify the intended and unintended consequences of development options. This knowledge is targeted at supporting politics and administration, on the one hand, and at the general public on the other hand. Our academic work seeks to achieve a better understanding of the societal relevance of technology and to further develop the methodological basis of technology assessment.

## Working Mode

As an interdisciplinary institute the ITA is part of the OeAW. The institute is advised by a Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). About two thirds of the ITA's work is financed by the Federal Ministry of Science and Research (BMWF) through the budget of the Austrian Academy of Science; currently one third stems from third-party funds (EU, funds, further ministries etc.).

## Team

At present, we comprise a team of 22 with a broad range of expertise. Half of the scientific team was originally trained in the natural and engineering sciences, the other half in the social sciences and humanities. The disciplinary backgrounds range from philosophy, sociology, political science and law, to economy, informatics, process engineering, biology and human ecology, biology and human ecology.

# Focus

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## Information Society

### E-Governance

E-government, service innovation, virtual administration, e-participation, e-democracy, open government, governance in multilevel systems

### Privacy

Technology and fundamental rights, data protection, security investments, surveillance, geo-data, smart meters, cloud computing

### Networked Environments

Ubiquitous computing, cyberscience, web 2.0, software design, social media, search technologies

## Controversial Technologies

Bioethics, technoscience, knowledge and value conflicts, new modes of governance, synthetic biology, systems biology, convergent technologies, nanotechnology, green biotechnology

## Technology and Sustainability

Sustainable innovation processes, climate technologies, passive house, engineering education, smart cities, smart grids, strategic environmental assessment, energy futures

## Methods

Refinement of TA-relevant methods, in particular participatory procedures and foresight

# Current Projects

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The ITA's scientific work is based on its medium-term research program and organized in projects. Besides thematic working groups, collaborations are often established between the various fields of activity. Depending on requirements, the internal research teams can be temporarily supplemented by external experts. Each project has an internal project advisory board and some also have an external board. Project seminars in which the whole academic ITA team participates take place regularly for the purpose of quality control.

- Modelling of User Behaviour in Low- and Plus-Energy Buildings (2013)
- European Perspectives on impacts and potentials of Cloud Computing and Social Network Sites (2013)
- Decision Support on Security Investment (2013)
- Citizens in Austria, Germany and Spain participate in local climate protection measures to lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (2013)
- Search technology at the intersection of global capitalism and local socio-political cultures (2015)
- Review of the state of Strategic Environmental Assessment in Austria and on an international level (2013)
- Increasing resilience in surveillance societies (2015)
- Integrative Analysis of the State of Knowledge Regarding Health and Environmental Risks of Nanotechnology (2013)
- Parliaments and Civil Society in TA (2015)
- Surveillance, privacy and security (2015)
- The integration of fundamental European values into information and communication technologies for ageing (2014)
- Austrian TA Conference  
Since 2001, the ITA organizes an annual international TA conference. The TA13 „Security as Technique” takes place on 3 June 2013 in Vienna.