The Innovation, Society and Public Policy research group (Prof. Sebastian Pfotenhauer) at the Department of Science, Technology and Society (STS), Technical University of Munich (TUM), is inviting applications for doctoral and postdoctoral researcher positions as part of the **DFG Cluster of Excellence TransforM**:

Doctoral Researcher (TV-L E13, 75%, 3.5 years, fixed-term)
(Senior) Postdoctoral Researcher (TV-L E13/E14, 100%, 3 years, fixed-term)

About the positions

We are inviting applications for doctoral and (senior) postdoctoral positions for several potential projects within the DFG Cluster of Excellence TransforM. The positions are thematically open, and the exact project constellation and role will depend on the fit with other ongoing Cluster projects and activities. Areas of potential thematic interest include (but are not limited to):

- Experimental forms of governance of transformative technologies (e.g. living labs, sandboxes etc.)
- Cross-national / global governance of emerging technologies
- Responsible Innovation in very-upstream settings (e.g. fusion, space, or quantum research)
- (Ir)responsible innovation in entrepreneurial/corporate settings (e.g. related to scaling, DEI, co-creative innovation practices)
- (Queer-)feminist, postcolonial, and ableist perspectives on transformative technologies
- Real-time responsiveness to shock events related to transformative technologies – in combination with the TransforM Nexus infrastructures (https://transform-cluster.de/about-transform/)
- Practices of anticipation, scouting, and mapping in relation to transformative technologies (e.g. observatories, anticipatory governance) – in combination with the TransforM Nexus infrastructures (https://transform-cluster.de/about-transform/)

Your tasks

- Conduct social science research in science and technology studies (STS) on the above topics in the highly collaborative, multi-disciplinary setting of the TransforM Cluster
- Work towards joint publications in recognized international journals, including co-authored papers with other TransforM members and members of the ISPP research group;
- Actively engage in the academic community, including the TransforM Cluster, the ISPP research group, the STS Department, and TUM more broadly;
- Support TransforM and ISPP related work at an administrative level, including the organization of meetings, project maintenance, project events, workshops, conferences etc.;
- (Co-)Teach courses or help develop new courses on TransforM-related topics;
- (Co-)Supervise PhD students (postdoc) and Master's students (both postdoc and doctoral researcher)
- Consider writing/contributing to synergistic grant applications to raise external funding (postdoc);

Your profile

- **Doctoral position:** Completed or nearly completed Master's degree in Science and Technology Studies (STS), Policy Studies, Innovation Studies, Sociology, Political Science, History of Science, Geography, Anthropology, Management, or other relevant fields
- **Postdoc position:** Completed/submitted dissertation in Science and Technology Studies (STS), Policy Studies, Innovation Studies, Sociology, Political Science, History of Science, Geography, Anthropology,

Management, or other relevant fields, presuming that you can demonstrate an equivalent level of qualification and subject-specific expertise;

- **Postdoc position:** A distinct research profile in STS or related fields (e.g. demonstrated through publications or previous teaching), ideally related to the TransforM Cluster and the broader ISPP profile;
- Broad knowledge of the topics, theories and methods of STS;
- Knowledge of co-productionist and comparative approaches in STS are an advantage;
- Experiences in (co-)supervising student theses are an advantage;
- Excellent command of the English language;
- German language skills are an advantage (but not necessary);
- International experience is an advantage;
- Strong motivation to work in a highly dynamics collaborative, team-oriented environment.

Application process

Application Deadline: Jan 23, 2026
Interviews: All interviews will be conducted within two weeks after the deadline.
Envisaged starting date: As soon as possible, negotiable

Please send your **complete application as a single PDF document** by Jan 23, 2026 to Ms. Karolina Knittel (karolina.knittel@tum.de) with the **subject line "Application ISPP TransforM"**. Your application should include the following parts (in this order):

- A cover letter that describes your research profile, research interests, and motivation (max. 2 pages)
- Your CV, including a list of publications and presentations (if applicable);
- 1-2 writing samples (e.g. a chapter of your PhD thesis, MA thesis, a publication, or a manuscript);
- The names and contact details of one reference (PhD Position) and up to three references (Postdoc);
- Relevant transcripts and certificates (e.g. a copy of your Master's or doctoral degree).

TransforM and ISPP are committed to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace. We strongly encourage applications from individuals from underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds, including—but not limited to—people of different ethnicities, nationalities, gender identities, sexual orientations, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The position is suitable for people with severe disabilities, and we are committed to providing reasonable accommodations throughout the recruitment process and employment. Applicants with severe disabilities will be given preference in hiring when their suitability, qualifications, and professional performance are essentially equal. The Technical University of Munich aims to increase the proportion of women; applications from women are therefore expressly encouraged.

Contact

Prof. Dr. Sebastian Pfotenhauer (TransforM Speaker)
TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology
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Note on data protection: As part of your application, you provide personal data to be processed at Technical University of Munich (TUM). Please note our data protection information in accordance with Art. 13 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on the collection and processing of personal data in the context of

your application. By submitting your application, you confirm that you have taken note of TUM's data protection information.

About us

About TransforM

TransforM – the Munich Center for Transformative Technologies and Societal Change – is a new social science research cluster funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) as part of the Excellence Strategy. TransforM tackles the dual challenge of advancing fundamental social science for highly technologized societies and rethinking technology development through a social science lens. As an interdisciplinary social science cluster with a principal focus on technology, our goal is to augment current theories and methods to comprehensively understand and help shape transformative technology to better serve diverse societal needs. Better knowledge about why, when, and how technologies become socially transformative will enhance our ability to assess and inform transformation pathways 'all the way through' – from the early stages of their emergence to their wider socio-economic impact.

TransforM is deeply embedded in Munich's vibrant innovation ecosystem. Anchored by two of Germany's leading research universities – Technical University of Munich (TUM) and Ludwig Maximilians University (LMU) – as well as an exceptional concentration of non-university research institutions concerned with technology and innovation (including the Max Planck Institute for Innovation and Competition, the Deutsches Museum, the ifo Institute for Economic Research, the ZEW Leibniz Centre for European Economic Research, and UnternehmerTUM, among others), the cluster brings together an unrivaled depth and diversity of social science expertise focused specifically on technology.

www.transform-cluster.de

About the STS department

The **STS Department** at the TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology is dedicated to a critical understanding the larger social, political, ethical and legal dimensions of science and technology. We are committed to enabling a more responsible and sustainable engagement with science and innovation through social science research, teaching and public dialogue – often in collaboration with partners from technical fields. The TUM STS community strives to provide new intellectual and practical resources for dealing with the challenges of highly technologized societies, and to train future leaders with a unique sensibility for the critical interface between science, technology and society. The STS Department was founded in 2021 and expands the institutional groundwork laid by Munich Center for Technology in Society (MCTS) since 2012 to put society at the heart of the TUM mission. As one of Europe's largest hubs for STS, we are a lively intellectual community of 70+ researchers from numerous disciplines and fields of specialization. As a department, we deliver 2 Master's programs and design STS content for the School's PhD program. We offer regular public lectures and symposia, weekly discussion groups, and visiting researcher programs. We maintain close collaborative ties to other parts of TUM as well as to leading STS centers in Germany and around the world.

https://www.sts.sot.tum.de/sts/sts-department/startseite/

About the Innovation, Society and Public Policy (ISPP) research group

The **ISPP research group** (Prof. Sebastian Pfotenhauer) investigates the relationship between innovation, justice, and the common good, the governance of emerging technologies, and responsible and co-creative innovation practices in today's profoundly unequal innovation-driven societies. Committed to a co-productionist approach that treats technoscientific and societal changes as essentially interrelated and co-evolving, our research examines innovation at the level of policies, instruments, cultural practices, expertise imaginaries, and material configurations of emerging technologies, foregrounding the normative aspects of innovation expertise. ISPP brings together interdisciplinary perspectives from science and technology studies (STS), political science, sociology, public policy, geography, history, anthropology, and management to study cultural, political, and economic dynamics that shape, and are being shaped by, innovation. Among the questions that drive research in our group are: What is 'good' innovation? How do understandings, practices and expectations of innovation differ across technological domains, regions, and cultures? How can we govern science, technology innovation responsibly, sustainably, deliberatively, and inclusively?

The ISPP groups has led a number of national and international flagship research initiatives, including the DFG Cluster of Excellence TransforM (www.transform-cluster.der/), the BMBF Future Cluster MCube ("Munich Cluster for the Future of Mobility in Metropolitan Regions", www.mcube-cluster.de/), and the EU Horizon2020 Project SCALINGS ("Scaling Up Co-creation: Avenues and Limits for Integrating Society in Science and Innovation", www.scalings.eu/).

Some recent publications by the group pertinent to the current job openings include:

- Cuevas-Garcia, C., Pepponi, F., Pfotenhauer, S.M., 2024. Maintaining innovation: How to make sewer robots and innovation policy work in Barcelona. Soc Stud Sci 54, 352–376. https://doi.org/10.1177/03063127231207082

- Engels, F., Wentland, A., Pfotenhauer, S.M., 2019. Testing future societies? Developing a framework for test beds and living labs as instruments of innovation governance. Research Policy 48, 103826. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2019.103826

- Frahm, N., Doezema, T., Pfotenhauer, S.M., 2022. Fixing Technology with Society: The Coproduction of Democratic Deficits and Responsible Innovation at the OECD and the European Commission. Science, Technology, & Human Values 47, 174–216. https://doi.org/10.1177/0162243921999100

- Knopf, S., Frahm, N., Pfotenhauer, S.M., 2023. How Neurotech Start-Ups Envision Ethical Futures: Demarcation, Deferral, Delegation. Sci Eng Ethics 29, 4. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-022-00421-1

- Pfotenhauer, S.M., 2023. From "More Innovation" to "Better Innovation"? Engaging Science, Technology, and Society 9, 97–106. https://doi.org/10.17351/ests2023.1365

- Pfotenhauer, S.M., Frahm, N., Winickoff et al, 2021. Mobilizing the private sector for responsible innovation in neurotechnology. Nat Biotechnol 39, 661–664. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41587-021-00947-y

- Pfotenhauer, S.M., Jasanoff, S., 2017. Panacea or diagnosis? Imaginaries of innovation and the 'MIT model' in three political cultures. Soc Stud Sci 47, 783–810. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312717706110

- Pfotenhauer, S.M., Juhl, J., Aarden, E., 2019. Challenging the "deficit model" of innovation: Framing policy issues under the innovation imperative. Research Policy 48, 895–904. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2018.10.015

- Pfotenhauer, S.M., Laurent, B., Papageorgiou, K., Stilgoe, J., 2022. The politics of scaling. Soc Stud Sci 52, 3–34. https://doi.org/10.1177/03063127211048945

- Pfotenhauer, S.M., Wentland, A., Ruge, L., 2023. Understanding regional innovation cultures: Narratives, directionality, and conservative innovation in Bavaria. Research Policy 52, 104704. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2022.104704

- Schneider, M., Pfotenhauer, S.M., 2025. "Go to another state:" Rustbelts, microchip futures, and innovation's others in Upstate New York. Science, Technology & Human Values. https://doi.org/forthcoming

- Tsui, S., Pfotenhauer, S., Bombaerts, G., 2025. Constructing the "Cocreative Citizen": Innovation Subjects, Statehood and the Common Good in Hybrid Public–Private Settings. Science, Technology, & Human Values. https://doi.org/10.1177/01622439251394488

https://www.sts.sot.tum.de/en/sts/people/professors/prof-dr-sebastian-pfotenhauer/