



Press Release

BMBF funds new junior research group "BIOPOLISTA" at Humboldt-Universität to study the implementation of bioeconomy policies

Berlin, March 16, 2023 - The junior research group "BIOPOLISTA" has started its work at the Thaer Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin on March 1, 2023. The acronym stands for Bioeconomy Policy Implementation in Bioeconomy States. The group is led by Dr. Maria Proestou and Dr. Nicolai Schulz and is dedicated to researching the implementation of national bioeconomy strategies around the globe. The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is funding the project with 3.1 million euros over the next five years.

The bioeconomy is seen in many places as a promising option for economically, ecologically and socially sustainable development. A bio-based economy is expected to help solve systemic climate, biodiversity, economic and health crises and replace fossil fuels with renewable raw materials, biomaterials, bioenergy and biofuels in closed material cycles. The promotion of the bioeconomy is therefore an essential element of a large number of current national and international strategies and initiatives to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

However, it has become clear in recent years that the implementation of bioeconomy policies often does not go as planned and that there has been little research on this to date. "We have a significant knowledge gap when it comes to understanding whether and how bioeconomy policies are implemented and what factors play a role," said Dr. Maria Proestou. "That's why we want to look at the political, social and economic conditions that influence the implementation of bioeconomy policies in the junior research group BIOPOLISTA."

In addition to the two group leaders, the junior research group consists of four doctoral students and two student assistants. It will work closely with national and international partners. BIOPOLISTA will also conduct intensive field research in six countries. These are Germany, France, Colombia, Malaysia, South Africa and the USA. "We want to compare the implementation of bioeconomy policies in different countries and contexts in order to identify similarities and differences and provide recommendations for successful implementation of bioeconomy policies," says co-leader Dr. Nicolai Schulz.

The group is based at the Thaer Institute's Department of Agricultural and Food Policy and focuses on analyzing shortcomings in policy implementation related to the bioeconomy. "By understanding what the barriers are to bioeconomy policy implementation, we can make recommendations for policy design and strategic planning to improve implementation," explains Dr. Proestou.

"We are very proud to have been able to establish BIOPOLISTA, a new and innovative junior research group at the Thaer Institute dedicated to such an important research topic," says Prof. Dr. Peter Feindt, Head of the Agricultural and Food Policy Group and member of the German Bioeconomy Council. "Research on the implementation of bioeconomy policies is of great importance to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and build a green economy. BIOPOLISTA's work is breaking new ground in this area, as research to date has focused mainly on policies and discourses, but not on their implementation."

The junior research group will present its research findings in international journals and at conferences, and also disseminate them to policymakers and other relevant stakeholders. "We are highly motivated to use BIOPOLISTA to help shape a sustainable and viable bioeconomy," says Dr. Schulz. "We hope that our research will help to make the implementation of bioeconomy policies more effective and that the opportunities of the bioeconomy can be fully exploited."