



## NFP 59: Green Biotechnology in the Public Sphere

**Goals of Project** The project focuses on stakeholders, the mass media and the public sphere. Its main goals are to identify and analyze particularities and differences between these main actors of society and formulate recommendations for the governmental offices, industry, scientists in the field, and media:

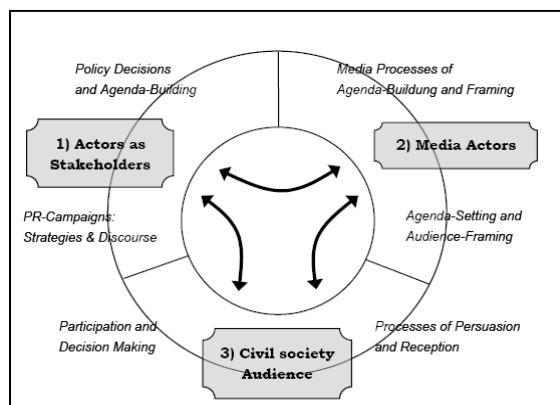
- How can the public discourse be made more transparent and how can it be improved?
- How can the actors better correspond to the logic of modern mass media?

**Research Questions** Which actors and stakeholders are involved? How do they influence the issue attention cycle and the frames of the mass media and the public sphere?

How do journalists and mass media set the agenda? What framing processes are crucial? What are the dominant frames in media coverage?

How is the Swiss population judging green biotechnology – as citizens as well as consumers? On what arguments does the public base its acceptance or its rejection? What impact have the media on the public?

**Design, Methods of Project** The project has an integral design with three interrelated modules and aims a comparative and longitudinal perspective.



Based on a framing approach, the project will focus in each of the three modules on the central arguments, the corresponding framing mechanism and on the underlying social networks.

**Module 1: Stakeholders** Main questions: Who are the powerful actors? Which arguments are dominant in the public discourse? Which actors use the media? What resources do they have

at their disposal? Which strategies do they choose? Design: Network analysis, discourse analysis. Methods: problem centered interviews, document analysis and analysis of websites.

**Module 2: Media and Journalists** Main questions: Which factors and processes do affect and control the media coverage? What strategies and information sources do journalists use? Which main media frames do follow? Design: analysis of media production and media content. Methods: problem centered interviews with key journalists, content analysis of relevant media (print and TV programs).

**Module 3: Pluralistic Public** Main questions: How does the Swiss population judge the different applications of green biotechnology? What impact has the media coverage on the information processing strategies? What are the main arguments for rejection or acceptance? Design and methods: standardized survey based on telephone interviews; qualitative interviews with typical cases selected on the basis of the quantitative survey.

**Relevance** The synthesis of the three modules provides a deeper understanding of the dynamics on the different levels. Thus, the project explores process of meaning construction and meaning transfer from one instance to the next, i.e. from the stakeholders to the media to the public(s). Social and economic relevance: The project generates recommendations for governmental offices, industry, scientists and journalists in the field.

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