



Institute Profile in brief

Our Vision

The Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI) is an independent scientific institution, asserting leadership in Europe to advance social innovation and foster an open and solidly united society.

The mission

The ZSI deploys socio-scientific research, education, advisory and networking services to reduce the gap between social needs and potentials of the knowledge based information society. By connecting its scientific basis with practical applications the ZSI provides an interface across scientific disciplines and sectors (trans-disciplinarity).

Work in transdisciplinary projects is geared towards policies concerning research, technological and social development, innovation processes, and to particular socio-economic objectives:

- Support a socially, ecologically and economically sustainable development of the Information Society
- Facilitate social, cultural and economic integration in Europe
- Participate in the preparation and implementation of the European Research Area (ERA)
- Develop infrastructures, effectiveness and internationalisation of the social sciences

Areas of activity

Social innovation denotes new ways to meet social challenges. It comprises improvements compared to non-existent or previous solutions. Social innovations occur either due to new (at least: changed) rules, or because of a modified composition of participants (and their roles respectively), or more effective participation and integration. Sectors concerned include public administration, political bodies, legislation, private enterprises, social partners, and civil society.

Services provided and the multi-functionality of the ZSI, indicated by key-words:

- Research – basic and applied research; research policies; evaluation; analysis of research and innovation systems, research funding; advancement of science in society
- Education – academic and vocational teaching and training in topical fields such as technology enhanced learning; cross-cultural, self-directed, and social networking; RTD- and project management
- Policy Advice – evaluation of research projects and programmes, monitoring socio-technical systems, advisory services on innovation, poverty, ageing, labour market integration, and other social issues
- Network co-ordination – formation and maintenance of interfaces between diverse knowledge bases; governance improving collaboration processes in the labour market and international research networks.

The organisation

ZSI is a not-for-profit research institute, established 1990 as a private association under Austrian law. Work is organised and financed project by project, resulting from participation in competitive Calls for Proposals and Calls for Tender published by public authorities on national, European and international levels. Since the beginning, the ZSI is a strong and well received partner in steadily expanding international networks. Scientific expertise of the 50+ employees encompass labour market, governance and partnerships, migration research, technology enhanced learning and other IT applications, European Research and Technology Development (RTD), science-technology-society studies, and impact analysis.

The board of the ZSI, responsible for management and strategic development consists of five members:

- Scientific Manager: Josef Hochgerner, hochgerner@zsi.at
- Business Manager: Klaus Schuch, schuch@zsi.at
- Head of the Department "Research Policies and Development": Elke Dall, dall@zsi.at
- Head of the Department "Technology and Knowledge": Barbara Kieslinger, kieslinger@zsi.at
- Head of the Department "Work and Equal Opportunities": Anette Scoppetta, scoppetta@zsi.at