

Enhancing the Transparency of Public Energy Research Funding in Germany

Simon Hirzel¹, Michael Dembach², Decher Sophie², Kathrin Knutzen³, Tim Hettesheimer¹,
Sonja Arnold-Keifer¹, Andrea Zielinski¹

¹Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI, Karlsruhe, Germany.

²Fraunhofer Institute for Communication, Information Processing, and Ergonomics FKIE, Wachtberg, Germany. ³TU Ilmenau, Ilmenau, Germany

Extended Abstract

[Download file](#)

Abstract Summary

Public funding of energy research is an important pillar in many countries to bring forward new solutions for the energy transition. In Germany alone, for example, the first federal energy research program was launched nearly half a century ago in 1977. In 2023, the public funding volume for projects in that area reached nearly 1.1 billion euros and supports more than 7,500 ongoing projects. This underlines the wealth of ongoing research activities but also hints at the increasing challenge to keep track of past and ongoing activities.

An energy research funding information system called 'EnArgus' was introduced in Germany to enhance the transparency of energy research activities. It is a web-based system which allows exploring and identifying past and ongoing publicly funded energy research activities. A key feature of the system is an ontology-assisted search engine derived from wiki-texts specifically developed for exploring the wide range of energy research activities.

This contribution gives an overview of the revised EnArgus system and its underlying data with a focus on a forthcoming update in 2026 and seeks to illustrate what a modern system for enhancing the transparency of public energy research may look like. The revision includes, among others, a substantial extension of the knowledge base which evolves towards 4,500 wiki texts on topics related to energy research, a complete modernization of the public interface and the introduction of AI elements into the platform strengthening the search engine with related solutions, and including a chat bot. The second aim is to demonstrate how the system can practically be used by an international audience to

explore energy research activities and what insights it can provide into ongoing research activities in Germany.

Presenting Author Biography

Sonja Arnold-Keifer is working as a researcher in the department Energy Technologies and Energy Systems at Fraunhofer ISI since June 2021. Her research and work focus is on the analysis and evaluation of energy efficiency measures, taking into account non-energy benefits and environmental costs, as well as the analysis and evaluation of energy consumption in the tertiary and industrial sectors. In the summer of 2025, she completed her doctorate at Technical University of Darmstadt with the title "A model-based methodology for the quantification of energy efficiency potentials beyond energetic considerations".