

Master thesis

Phase-Out Strategies – How Do Firms Implement Phase-Out Strategies in Hard-to-Abate Sectors

Over the past decade, energy production has drastically transformed the overall energy mix, with renewable sources now accounting for up to two-thirds of Germany's supply. An increasing number of sectors and industries are switching to renewable energy sources in order to reduce their emissions. The extent to which firms adopt renewable energies depends largely on their reliance on fossil fuels and how closely these fuels are tied to their core business model. The higher a firm's dependence on fossil fuels, and the more central these fuels are to its operations, the more difficult it becomes to transition to renewable energies and reduce emissions. However, these "hard-to-abate sectors" are particularly crucial in the fight against climate change, as they are responsible for a significant share of global emissions. With the European goal of achieving net zero by 2050, it is essential for these sectors to align their strategies accordingly. Yet little is known about how firms in these industries are strategically addressing this challenge and planning to phase out fossil fuels.

To gain deeper insights into this topic, the Management Research Group is offering a Master's thesis project that examines how firms in hard-to-abate sectors integrate fossil fuel phase-outs into their business strategies.

Possible tasks in the thesis would be

1. Reviewing existing literature on divestitures and phase-out strategies
2. Qualitative analysis of newspaper articles, firm documents, and reports
3. Analyzing emerging short- and long-term strategies on phasing out fossil fuels
4. Derive recommendations for policy and management on how firms can phase out fossil fuels aligned with net zero by 2050

The student will write the thesis in close collaboration with the supervisor. Through his or her work, the student will have the opportunity to generate insights that contribute to an important social debate. We are looking for highly motivated students who are characterized by excellent business management skills and a keen interest in issues relating to strong sustainability. Excellent communication and project management skills, as well as experience in qualitative data analysis, are desirable

Start date: April 2026 (flexible)

Duration: 5 months

Please send your brief application (short letter of motivation, CV, current certificate of grades, and last degree certificate in one file) by email to Dr. Swantje Freund (swantje.freund@uni-oldenburg.de). We are also happy to answer any questions you may have. We look forward to receiving your application!