



HEIDELBERG CENTER
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

The anatomy of shifting renewable energy: a global perspective

Prof. Dr. Itay Fishhendler (Hebrew University, Jerusalem)

Location: INF 360 (Botanischer Garten)

Date and Time: Wednesday, 13.09.2017 17.00 Uhr s.t.

Abstract

Renewable energy today faces a promising future with vast opportunities. Renewable energy is however still in its infancy, with fossil fuels expected to continue to dominate the global energy supply until at least 2030. As such, a global shift to renewables requires fundamental support structures and enabling devices. The setting of national renewable energy targets has emerged as a specific enabling device with great potential for overcoming the barriers to widespread implementation of renewables. Such targets have become a feature of the global energy landscape, with a vast majority of countries now having at least one type of long-term target as a norm. Renewable energy targets are set by governments with the purpose of expressing their commitment to achieving measurable future renewable energy deployment. When targets are originally set, it is expected that they will remain and stand the test of time. The reality of the nature is however that targets do not always survive their full anticipated life and make it to their future reference year goal. Shifting targets are detrimental to the process of an energy transition as they signal risk and uncertainty, obscuring the policy making process, and subsequently damaging investor confidence crucial to growing the market.

To date, the academic literature examining the significance of shifting renewable energy targets, how they shift, and why they shift, is limited. Instead, the literature appears to be anecdotal and often normative, stressing the importance of setting policy targets and how they function, but not investigating the phenomenon of why targets that are set tend to shift and how they shift. The study of shifting renewable energy targets is the first attempts to provide a global outlook that maps all renewable energy targets that did not change and those that did change in the last 20 years. The study also conceptualizes and measures how change occurs and the driving forces for it. Based on that the study provides a global outlook for the trajectory of all countries that their targets change.