

## **Environmental Standards as Ethical/Epistemic Mediators in Consulting Engineering Companies?**

Solli, Jøran - Norwegian University of Science and Technology ([joran.solli@ntnu.no](mailto:joran.solli@ntnu.no))

In the standard view, the main instruments of environmental policy are financial and judicial. The provision of information and the support of relevant R&D are also considered important. Nevertheless, experts tend to be viewed as passively responding to the demand of their services, by rationally supplying the services that are demanded through public regulation or the market. Further, companies that provide environmentally relevant advice may be seen as intermediaries or boundary organisations (Guston 2001) between R&D and decision-making, mediating new knowledge to relevant constituencies. In theory, environmental policy instruments should shape the advice of the consultants but above all make potential clients demand information and guidance about environmental issues. In practice, the situation is more complicated. A substantial body of research shows that the processes of transfer of knowledge in the environmental area are far less effective than expected (see, e.g., Cash et al. 2003, Kerkhoff & Lebel 2006, McNie 2007).

Following the knowledge practices of four consulting engineering companies we will be able to analyse how new standards are met, handled or appropriated in their daily work. How may the experts' appropriation of new environmental standards be described? Are these standards ethical/epistemic mediators in consulting engineering practices? And what consequences does the appropriation of standards have for how their services to the clients are shaped?