Since the beginning of the academic study of logistics there has been permanent development of the underlying concepts. Whereas the focus of logistics research was formerly on intra-company, function-oriented, physical transformational processes (so called TUL-Logistik), more recent concepts focus on cross-functional and cross-company value networks that aim at the fulfillment of customer’s requirements. The concept of Supply Chain Management (SCM) emerged from this perception.

Various studies suggest that the implementation of SCM-principles has enabled the realization of potentials of rationalization in whole value networks and in the involved companies. This leads to the required subject to investigate: In what way and to which extent can companies of the construction industry benefit from the SCM-concept? However, the evaluation of existing results of SCM-research does not answer the question. This is due to the fact that previous research activities in the research field of Supply Chain Management have predominantly focused on industries that are characterized by mass production and anonymous markets. The special characteristics of the construction industry did not attract interest within the available SCM-research activities.

The focus of this research is on the formulation of design parameters for a SCM-approach in the context of the construction industry. Therefore the basic principles of the SCM-concept are analysed with reference to the relevant research results of economic theories (e.g. organizational theories, institutional economics, network theories etc.) and logistics research. The objective is to analyse basic principles of cause and effect in cross-company interaction and to apply these principles to the specific characteristics of companies and value networks in the context of the construction industry.

The deduction of existing potentials of rationalization shall provide a basis for further empirical research in the field of Construction Supply Chain Management.