Thermal degradation, crack and pores formation in doped structures of thermochemical materials.

Keywords: Energy storage, Molecular Dynamics, Gibbs Ensemble and Grand Canonical Monte Carlo

In order to improve the energy savings and promote renewable resources a reliable storage system is necessary. Among different approaches to store energy, thermochemical heat storage is a highly appealing. It is based on a reversible chemical processes, like sorption of water in hygroscopic salts. Salt-hydrates are one of the most relevant materials, because of their availability, costs, operating temperature, and energy density.

The concept of storing heat in a salt hydrate is based on the following three steps. (1) In a charging cycle (endothermic reaction) the salt hydrate adsorbs solar energy and disintegrates into a lower hydrate and water vapor. (2) The water and salt are stored separately. (3) In discharging (exothermic reaction) the dried salt hydrate is recombined with H_2O, and forms a higher hydrate again, which results in a release of heat. This allows one to store heat almost without losses over long periods of time in a compact and efficient way. However, challenges remain related to the materials stabilities and kinetics.

These properties are improved by considering doped and composite materials based on salts hydrates This projects aims to understand the link between the chemical reactions and the pore and crack formations in the doped and un-doped structures.

Multiscale simulation methods (Molecular Dynamics, Monte Carlo methods-Gibbs/GCMC) are going to be used to study these salts. The effect on water and heat transport through different structures is going to be investigated and guidelines for improving their performance for the heat storage application are going to be produced.