

Let's Start with the Rest!

Frank Becker, Johannes Dietrich and Karin Zacharias-Langhans, Technische Universität Berlin, Germany and Inligna, Germany

Resource productivity and efficiency in production and consumption are moving up the global agenda. But are they adjusted to reach the goal of GHG reduction and global warming in fact? It might be the fact that – driven by several rebound effects – the global climate regime failed already in the beginning and that green growth is a stark utopia.

Our thesis is that sustainable innovation has to include in fact strategies of sufficiency, consistency and innovation. Given this thesis, the development of business models and “towards zero waste enterprise concepts” focused on resource recovery by reuse and further use of goods are core to sustainable innovation. The paper shows that a process of sustainable innovation should start with offcuts respectively used goods.

Transdisciplinary participatory projects have recently delivered profound results applicable to concepts of sustainable innovation, resilience and transition: The ZeroWIN project (www.zerowin.eu) developed a Resource Exchange Platform for exchange and trade of residual and used goods. This platform is now being implemented in a Berlin enterprise network and will come up the base of a European Business Network. The Wood in CreativeCycle – hikk project (<http://hikk.mixxt.de>) deals with the use of restwood of carpentryshops and has delivered the Lotta Rest business model. As shown not only in these both projects the further use and extended use of residual and used goods has a huge impact as well on reducing GHG emission and resource recovery as on societal socioeconomic development and cohesiveness. There are not only discrete results: these results can be conceptualized towards a valueconservation model for sustainable innovation! Furniture dealer and carpentry shop inligna, e.g. has developed its own “ZeroWaste” product line (<http://inligna.wordpress.com/masstische2/zerowastekeinabfall>) and the authors developed the value conservation concept (Becker 2008). The paper shows how these results can be incorporated in local transition initiatives on district level in Berlin and transferred to other cities / regions. The authors intend to share these results for the benefit of sustainable innovation towards resilient societal development. Rethinking sustainable design in a way that starts with the material – rest wood, used good etc. is the starting point not only of resource efficiency but furthermore of sustainable innovation incorporating an economy adjusted to sustainable development.

Based on the presented project results the authors are developing a transnational (Brazil – Canada – Germany – Morocco) project. The benefit is expected in generating knowledge relevant to action and developing sustainable innovation concerning product design and development, production and consumption patterns, creating businesses and developing societal resilience on local, regional and national level. These results can be of mutual benefit for the work of administration, government and politics on different levels. Policy briefing will be an essential of the project. Holistic approaches are necessary considering that globalisation and climate change are expected to generate synchrony developments as well in developing and emerging countries as industrialized countries. Shared research and mutual learning appear to have reciprocal benefit for all participating regions. The authors intend to initiate a dialogue and share experiences with stakeholders and decision makers on different levels.