



IMPROVING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION POLICIES TO ACCOMMODATE CONSUMER'S EVERYDAY LIFE NEEDS

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Consumer 11

19. July 2011, Bonn

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Outline of presentation



- ◻ Eupopp project
- ◻ Consumption and SC instruments
- ◻ Case 1: Public catering
- ◻ Case 2: Beverage deposit
- ◻ Conclusions



The Project

- European Policies to promote sustainable consumption patterns: Collaborative project under the EU's 7th Framework Programme – Theme 6 (Environment)
- Consortium of 7 partners from 5 different EU regions:

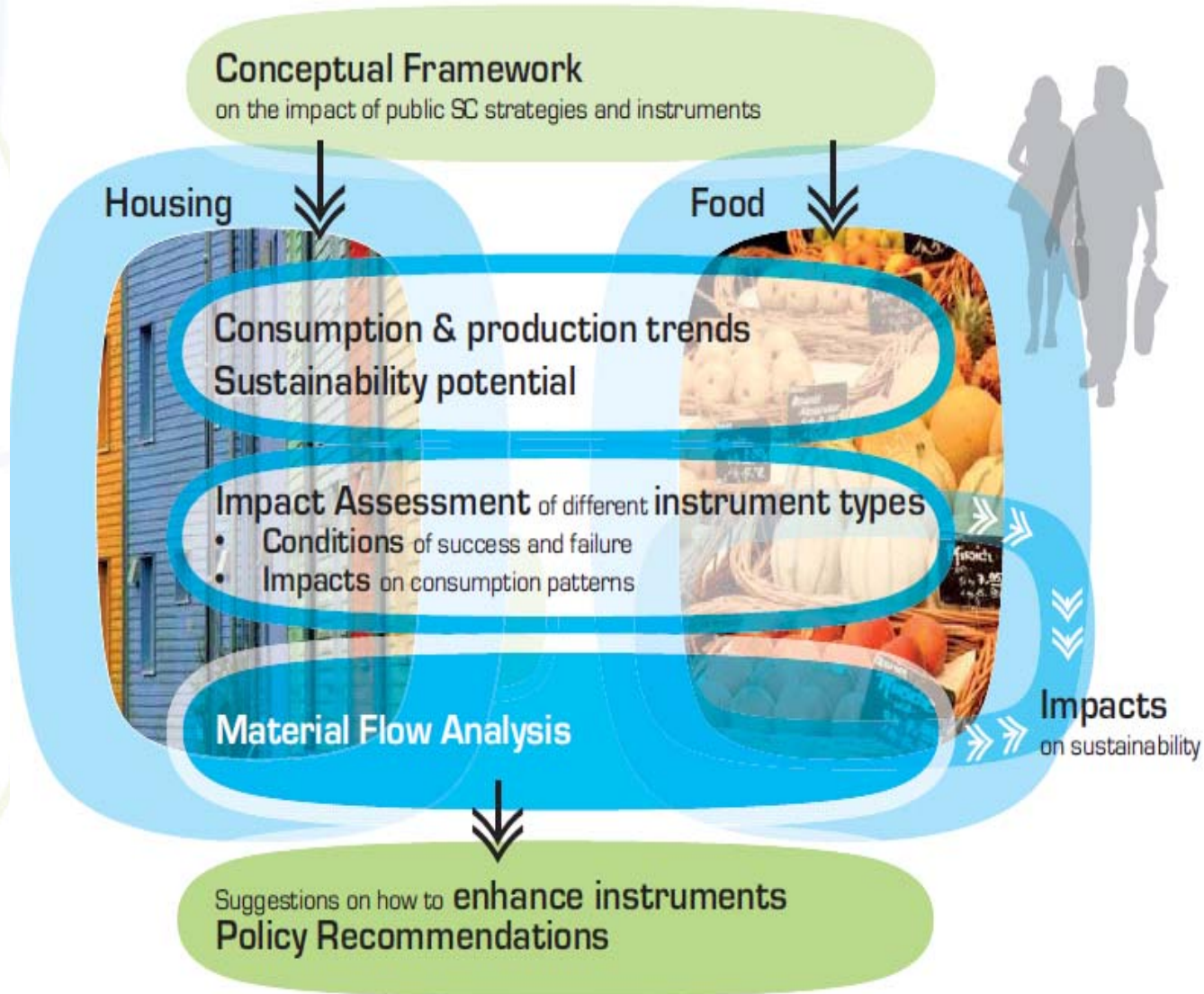
- Finland
- Germany
- Latvia
- Spain
- UK



- Project duration: August 2008 – July 2011



Eupopp project design

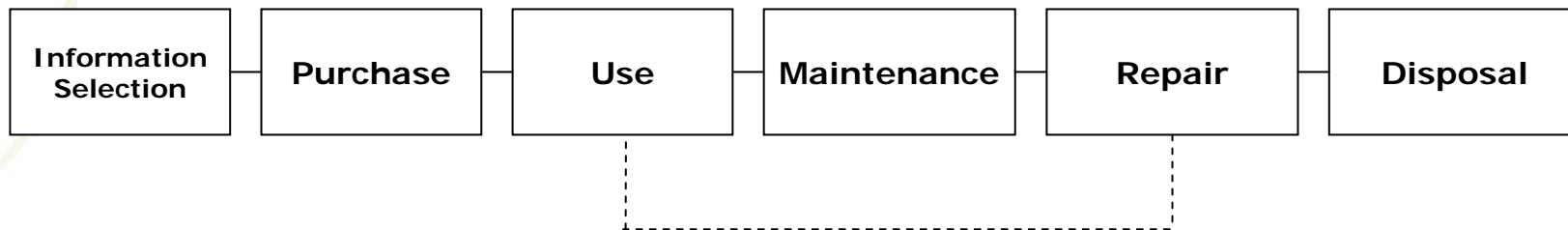


Consumption in everyday life



Consumption

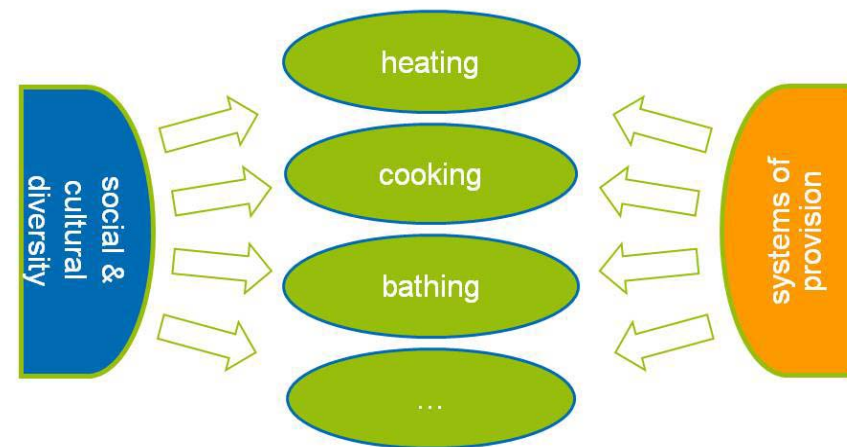
- as a set of complex and gendered social practices
- framed by collective routines, lifestyles and life stages
- embedded in a social context (household, family, community life)
- governed by the need to integrate different duties and consumption practices to maintain a coherent organization of everyday life



- Diversity of consumption needs and practices in everyday life!

Consumption in everyday life

- Consumer choices in everyday life are shaped by socio-technical systems of provision,
 - providing access to and availability of goods and services
 - defining opportunities and restrictions for individual and collective consumption practices
 - enabling and limiting options for sustainable consumption
- Two main types of influence factors:
 - Gender, social & cultural diversity
 - Material infrastructures of consumption



SC policy instruments



- A set of techniques to support and effect social change towards sustainable consumption.
- Targeting the demand-side, i.e. private or organizational consumption, and products.
- Designed to directly and purposively influence
 - what products and services people do buy or can buy
 - and how they use and dispose of the good or service towards more sustainability
- How can SC policy instruments be designed to accommodate consumer needs and practices appropriately?

Selected SC instruments: Food



	Finland	Germany	Latvia	Spain	UK
Instrument	Public catering requirements for sustainable meals (2009)	Mandatory deposit on one-way beverage packaging (2006)	"Quality product" label: national food quality scheme (2001/2008)	Selective collection of organic waste in Catalonia (1993)	Report and 'framework for dialogue' by WWF-UK and FEC on reducing livestock-related GHG emissions (2009)
Goals	To promote sustainable meals via public catering	To increase the share of beverages in reusable packaging	To promote the manufacturing and sale of quality products from agriculture and food processing	To increase selective organic waste collection and valuation	To increase discussion among stakeholders, and recommendations on reducing meat consumption

Method

- ❑ Cross-analysis of focus group results
- ❑ Exploring a consumer perspective on SC instruments
- ❑ Structured around the topics
 - ❑ knowledge on the respective SC instrument
 - ❑ interference with the consumption process
 - ❑ compatibility with everyday life
 - ❑ effects of the SC instrument.
- ❑ 6-10 participants per group
- ❑ Carried out in different EU countries (spring 2010)
- ❑ Part of an in-depth impact analysis of SC instruments

Public catering (FI)

- Food as key area of consumption with high sustainability impacts
- Reduced consumption of meat as a way to reduce the climate and environmental load
- Nutrition as delicate field of intervention
 - closely tied to issues of personal identity, household routines and skills, and the overall structure of everyday life
- Public catering – i.e., the provision of food services in public facilities such as schools as a way to influence food consumption patterns
- In 2010, the City of Helsinki introduced a mandatory “vegetarian day” per week at schools

Public catering (FI)



- Participants confirmed the exemplary and educational role of school and workplace lunches in changing people's diets
- "Vegetarian day" could expand peoples' ideas of available alternatives to meat

What I hope [...] is that people learn to eat vegetarian food. Meaning it isn't just lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers. But real vegetarian food, like roots and everything, so that people could understand that it is really a hot meal and includes protein. So it isn't like rabbit food but that vegetarian food is something else, not just green salad. (w, 34)

- Suggestion to offer additional advice (such as recipes)

Public catering (FI)



- Limitation of consumer choices by mandatory vegetarian lunch
- Doubts whether the needs of different age groups are met
 - *Could it be so that these boys, who consume an awful lot, then perhaps some of them, some of these 15-14-year old boys, actually need meat – also need to eat meat as well? (w, 37)*
 - risk that mandatory lunches are skipped or „complemented“
- Need to make vegetable-based food attractive and tasty
- Mandatory character might polarize debate
 - „ideological vegetarianism“ vs. moderate promotion of vegetable-based food
 - rules and regulations might make life simpler and easier

Public catering (FI)

- Sustainable public catering provides direct exposure to and experience of a changed practice
- Educating consumers on more environmentally sound foods in an effortless and effective way
- Focussing not only on the “meal provider” in the household, but also targeting “meal consumers”, e.g., children
- Despite little differentiation, the instrument fits into the requirements of consumption habits in everyday life
- Need for a well-targeted and -designed promotion
- Most importantly, the sustainable alternative needs to be attractive, and consumers’ thoughts and needs have to be considered in design

Beverage deposit (D)

- Beverage deposit (0.25€) on environmentally detrimental one-way containers between 0.1l and 3l introduced in 2008
- Encouraging consumers to return beverage packaging to retailers
- Retailers are obliged to participate in a nation-wide deposit system to ensure appropriate recycling of beverage packaging
- Requiring infrastructure capable of coordinating the deposit clearing and the disposal logistics on a national scale.
- When the deposit was introduced such an infrastructure was not operational...

Beverage deposit (D)



- Participants are not familiar with current legal regulations
- Requirements for deposit on one-way bottles are not transparent

Meanwhile, I find it is much too confused - at the time being, when the regulation came up, on which bottles is deposit and on which not, I was really interested [...]. It was told that there is simple rule: All carbonated beverages have to have a deposit – and meanwhile it is very mixed up. [...] You don't grasp it anymore. (m, 35)

- Little awareness on what type of bottle is used
 - Many are not sure, whether they use reusable or (one-way) deposable bottles

Beverage deposit (D)



- Environmental impacts (and benefits) of different types of materials are not clear
- Some consider glass bottles as most environmentally friendly
- Others see reusability as crucial factor

I would say, of course, that you don't have to use the glass bottle, if you take a reusable one. In the meantime the PET bottle is another option – also reusable [...] therefore, it doesn't have to be glass, but, of course, you have the sense that glass bottles and PET reusable bottles are more environmentally friendly, because they are used more frequently. (w, 24)

- Little knowledge on the process of recycling after returning the bottles to the machine

Beverage deposit (D)

- High identification with the deposit system
- Area-wide return system makes it easy to drop bottles

The most important thing is that the machine takes the bottles back. Because this is the criteria, of course. (m, 52)
- Reducing the multiplicity of packages to a simple alternative

Meanwhile there are two different machines. One type has to be thrown into one machine and the other type into the other. [...] One type is recycled and the other is refilled, I guess. (w, 39)
- Being particularly appealing to women and children taking care of occasional smaller shopping

Beverage deposit (D)



- Shopping routines were adapted successfully to the system
 - return of bottles can easily be integrated into purchasing habits
 - reduced space for storage of empty bottles at home
 - one-way bottles do not block the rubbish bin
 - ...nor are they simply thrown away
- Adaptation of routines is supported by a robust social and technical infrastructure
 - enhancing the effect of the financial incentive!

Conclusions

- SC policy interventions can be effective and appealing to consumers even in the delicate field of nutrition, if they
- ...tie in with consumers' daily routines
- ...consider the needs of different target groups
- ...are sensitive to the different consumption-related responsibilities and competencies of woman and men
- ...strengthen consumer's knowledge and capacities
- ...enhance the agency of different consumer groups
- ...do not only tackle individual behaviour alone, but also improve access to and availability of SC options (systems of provisions)

Conclusions

- Policy making in the field of sustainable consumption can be improved by acknowledging a diversity of everyday needs
- Requiring sound knowledge on the responsiveness of different social groups to political instruments
- Considering that aspects of everyday needs and practices vary strongly (related to need area, specific instrument, social and institutional context), makes it difficult to draw general conclusions and formulate overall recommendations for policy making
- Stressing the importance of participatory approaches, by including gendered groups of stakeholders or other persons representing a user perspective in SC policy making
- Introducing and anticipating a consumer perspective in SC policy making can also be supported by qualitative research