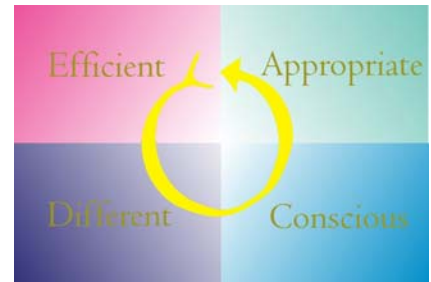


Consumption Opportunities Project Concept Proposal (Draft)

JM, 19.07.06



delivering more, using less through better systems of consumption

The Consumption Opportunities Project (Co-Op) is a dynamic information and documentation project bringing the opportunities of sustainable resource consumption and lifestyles to people and organisations in clear and creative ways. It enables and presents incentives to entrepreneurs, policy-makers and civil agents in their own contexts, facilitates co-ordinated systemic action, and creates a platform for more targeted and creative engagement and communications, to make sustainable consumption a welcome and exciting reality.

Summary

Sustainable consumption of resources is the central global challenge of environmental sustainability. Conventionally, environmental work has been focussed on reducing impact of human activities - shifting from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, for example - but industrialised society must learn to reduce demand for consumption of natural resources and energy, in addition to reducing impact per unit of consumption. Some of this will happen through individual changes to personal consumption, but experience now shows that most will happen through structured transformation of whole systems of production and consumption, which individuals cannot change. While depletion of the natural resource base and the need to reverse that is not a negotiable feature of future human progress, it is in the interests of everyone - individuals, governments, and businesses - to make sustainable consumption a positive and desirable enterprise rather than horizon-reducing burden.

The Co-Op Project is a documentation project aiming to demonstrate the possibilities to achieve just that, and indeed to promote development of excellence in linking reductions in demand for resources to enhanced quality of life. It overcomes the problem, in sustainable consumption documentation and communication of lack of distinctiveness in relation to general sustainable development work, and a generally negative tone. From the business perspective Co-Op represents the next generation of eco-efficiency thinking: extending the winning more-from-less philosophy from product manufacture to the whole consumption model.

Co-Op is based on the *Consumption Opportunities* framework of the UN Environment Programme, as promoted by the UK government's expert commission, and as used by countries across Europe in the UN Environment Programme's *Sustainable Consumption Opportunities for Europe* programme. It incorporates breakthrough analysis developed by UNEP such as the functional perspective, and builds on major research programmes and networks on sustainable consumption such as SusProNet, It is led by a group of the world's leading experts and advocates on sustainable consumption, backed by research institutions, businesses and business groups, and governmental departments and agencies.

Audiences/Clients

Co-Op is a project with multiple audiences and materials, based on a coherent message and content base that is consistent through all messages and formats. It relies on stylish, simple, and powerful Web 2.0 delivery. The core content material (CO-OP, ROCK; see below) will be structured for and useful to policy-makers, business strategists, and researchers. Secondary materials (CLICK; see below), with higher applicability and ease of engagement, will be developed using the core content base and for more narrowly-defined and less technical audiences, including businesses.

Products

Below are the key products of the Consumption Opportunities Project, with indicative baseline budget, not including printing costs.

CO-OP Consumption Opportunities (c. 300K USD)

Key resource book for sustainable consumption, clarifying and organising the agenda, demonstrating benefits, with all essential information on mandates, concepts, policies, resource consumption and consumer data, methods. CO-OP intends to be the key reference for technical or informed agents entering and acting with the sustainable consumption agenda. Chapters to be written by main experts in each area. If financing permits, CO-OP can be reproduced in different versions for specific audiences.

CLICK Clear Information for Critical Knowledge (c.30K USD/web; c.70K USD/briefs)

Simple web-based resource with downloadable extremely clear briefs on concepts, policy, actions, case-studies, methods. Not a database. Users- will be able to take away briefs either dedicated to their context, or highly crafted briefings on key areas of sustainable consumption, all supporting the development of critical knowledge in sustainable consumption.

ROCK Research Oracle For Connected Knowledge (c.50K)

Simple web-based tool to stimulate research exchange and creativity, across the many sciences working on sustainable consumption. User-generated summaries of sustainable consumption-related research, structured and presented online in computer-generated format, for example auto-generated cluster maps, with 'oracular' computer-generated matching of apparently similar but currently unrelated research across disciplines. Site contents is auto-updating using automated archiving and reminders to record owners.

Organisational Structure

The Consumption Opportunities Project is led by a group of top experts, public interest advocates, creators and communicators, who individually and collectively manage and/or produce the main projects and products associated with sustainable consumption. The organisational structure is simple. The *Editorial Group* (paid) is the core editorial team responsible for structuring and writing the products and leading the project development, the *Editorial Advisory Group* (mainly unpaid) is responsible for reviewing materials and adding specialist expertise in key areas. A *Membership Group* is comprised of experts, advocates, business people, members of the public and other supporters of the projects, which contributes knowledge, advice, expertise, and support, and helps to distribute materials and inject the conceptual frame into policy making and discussion

The Editorial Group currently comprises:

Annika Carlsson-Kanyama, Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden

Doris Fuchs, University of Stuttgart, Germany

Tim Jackson, University of Surrey, UK

Louis Lebel, USER, Thailand

Sylvia Lorek, SERI, Austria

John Manoochchri, University of Surrey, UK; RVC, UK

Arnold Tukker, TNO, Netherlands

Many other experts are being approached to join the Editorial Group and complete the Editorial Advisory Group.

Lead institutions currently supporting Co-Op include the Unit for Social and Economic Research (USER) research institute at Chiang-Mai University, Thailand, the Sustainable Europe Research Institute (SERI), Austria, and Resource Vision Consulting (RVC), UK. Governments, business associations and other expert institutes are being invited to support the project institutionally and financially.

Timeline

The Co-Op Project expects to deliver its products, within 18 months of commencement, but will continue to plan ongoing and additional activities subject to financing; in principle the current proposal is a first phase of a rolling agenda-building, information delivery project.

Finance

Co-Op will be financed by grants from governments, private foundations and corporations. Some content may be developed as revenue generating, which may permit loan-based financing, public or private.

Annex I Proposed outline of CO-OP

Introduction and Forewords

Key messages from environmental leaders;

Introduction to centrality and complexity of sustainable consumption challenge;

Need for clear focus on demand (separate from impact), systems (not just consumers), opportunities (not just risks and costs).

Mention of Co-Op Perspective/Pathway/Partnerships approach

1 Background

History of environmental concern; shift in 70s from impact to intensity/demand.

Intergovernmental mandates.

Summary analysis of classic policy methods (economics/pricing, social methods/information, engineering/efficiency) and their technical problems and limitations.

Study of characteristics of impact reduction vs. demand reduction.

Study of real-world systemic demand formation vs. theoretical autonomous consumer-led demand.

Study of social, economic opportunities vs. social, economic costs and risks, in sustainable consumption transformations.

2 Consumption Opportunities Method

Perspective: Introducing the functional perspective, simple but powerful system analysis for production-consumption systems

Pathway: Introducing the Consumption Opportunities pathway, Dematerialisation/Optimisation, Efficient, Different, Conscious, Appropriate Consumption.

Partnerships: Introducing participation and partnership methods to release and achieve major, all-round opportunities and benefits through sustainable consumption.

3 Applications

Demonstration of Co-Op method applied to key functional areas, food, mobility, housing, heating/lighting/power, with summaries in other areas.

Case-study boxes.

X Interspersed sections

Key interlinkages: mini-chapters on link of sustainable consumption to trade policy, international development, health, security, etc.

Key mandate texts reproduced in full.

Key data - on resource consumption levels, and trends in consumer behaviour.

Annex II Outline logframe

	Narrative	OVI	MOVs	Risks/Assumptions
Aims	Provide central reliable reference and agenda-shaping message to clarify what sustainable consumption is, and how it can be beneficial, by consolidating a robust communication and action model (Co-Op framework)	Clearly developed sust cons agenda, widespread use and reference to Co-Op framework, and opportunities to be realised through system transform for sust cons.	Increased confidence in stability of sust cons agenda, numbers of references to Co-Op model in literature regarding sust cons, general awareness in discouse on consumption of benefits of action.	Community of those dealing with sust cons are interested in clarifying, developing, advancing agenda – i.e. that they see the centrality of it, and the current limitations, peripherality and confusion of it.
Objectives	Demonstrate need, in sustainable consumption discourse, for special focus on: demand (vs. impact); systems (vs. individual consumers); opportunities (vs. risks and costs).	Stated understanding in policy materials and other that sust cons is about demand not impact; new focus on systems not just consumers; new focus on opportunities	Changes in policy, research, advocacy and business materials, discourse, and actions; public and political awareness that sust cons is about demand/systems/opportunities.	Those interested in and responsible for SC are prepared to a) separate understanding impact and demand, b) see demand as formed by systems not just consumer preferences, c) look for and see opportunities in system transformation.
Activities	Collaborative secondary research and creative information presentation, comprehensively covering the sustainable consumption domain.	Numbers of experts and institutes involved; levels of funding; good working atmosphere; creative and productive outputs.	Membership of editorial group, advisory group, member group; working to deadline; willingness to contribute, create and continue project.	Experts wish to be involved; funding is achieved; atmosphere is good; project management is effective.
Outputs	Co-Op textbook (CO-OP); user-generated research coordination database (ROCK); structured online knowledge-base (CLICK).	Numbers printed; data records and users; files and page visits.	Printing and distribution numbers; file records and user numbers; web files and stats.	Products are of sufficient quality and innovation, and reach and influence audience.