

# ERSCP 2012: Workshop

## Sustainability Management Beyond Growth

Resilience of Management Strategies and Business Cases in a Degrowth Context

### Objectives

1. Understanding and Clarification of what "degrowth" and "sufficiency" actually mean in a business context on the industry and company level
2. Reflecting on current business models, strategies and management approaches of participating companies with regard to their exposure to degrowth
3. Identifying business models, strategies and management approaches that are potentially consistent with no growth and degrowth scenarios
4. Cross learning among company representatives and researchers
5. Isolating factors that qualify business models, strategies and management approaches for a degrowth reality by increasing resilience

### Workshop Outline

The impacts of current human activities exceed the limits of our finite planet on multiple levels. Evidently the related consumption and production processes require an unsustainable amount of resources, resulting in serious challenges for humanity.

Substantial improvements in resource efficiency and the use of renewable resources (consistency) are a commonly echoed fix to these problems. However, efforts to decouple the use of natural resources from the escalating scale of consumption and production in affluent societies have yet failed, as improvements in terms of resource efficiency and consistency have been outweighed by rebound effects and economic growth. As a result the absolute impacts (carbon dioxide emissions, materials extraction, and energy consumption) are permanently increasing, not decreasing. The blind spot in the sustainability mainstream focusing on concepts such as "green growth" or its political counterpart of a "green new deal" blocks every truly sustainable view on management and the future of business in a long-term maintainable economy.

While consuming and producing "more but greener" has not been successful so far, strategies of sufficiency, including to do less, to do things slower and more locally, move to the center of attention. Apart of sufficiency or degrowth scenarios on an aggregate economic level, growth may be challenged for specific industries or even single companies, as they are facing significant changes in lifestyles and consumption patterns, transformations in the global organization of production, disrupted supply chains (e.g. due to climate change impacts) or scarcities of specific resources (such as rare earth metals). No matter whether scenarios of degrowth and sufficiency are desired or imposed, they may become real in the near future on all scales from global economy to national industries or single companies.

Not much been done yet to translate degrowth scenarios to a firm or industry level, to develop business models, strategies and management approaches that allow dealing with upcoming challenges and are capable of meeting the requirements of consumers, stake- and shareholders and employees in a degrowth context.

This workshop will address this gap. Practitioners and researchers from various disciplines will work on 4 major topics:

1. Business Models for Doing Degrowth Business
2. Strategies for the Degrowth Landscape
3. Management Approaches (incl. Absolute Measures of Environmental Firm Performance) and
4. Ways of Organizing Businesses for Degrowth

Starting point will be a reflection on current business cases with regard to the threats and chances in case of degrowth. This reflection shall lay ground for a conceptualization of business models that are consistent with sufficiency and degrowth scenarios.

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