

# PROJECT FINAL REPORT

## Publishable

Grant Agreement number: 217784

Project acronym: DelibProcessSCP

Project title: Identifying research needs and designing elements of deliberative processes on sustainable consumption and production in the demand areas of food, housing and mobility

Funding Scheme: SP4-Capacities, Coordination and support action, Support actions

Period covered: from February 1, 2008 to January 31, 2010

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## 1. Background in Brief

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have a major role to play towards encouraging more sustainable consumption patterns. Governments and businesses alone cannot motivate sustainable lifestyles nor can they create the necessary supply and demand for environmentally friendly and fairly traded products. Given sufficient financial and human resources CSOs can work effectively at a number of different levels; from supporting grass roots community action to working at the EU and international levels, such as by contributing toward the UN Marrakech Process.



Figure 1. The project logo.

SCP implementation programmes and activities to date have tended to focus mainly on business and research initiatives and have not consistently involved civil society stakeholders. The CSO Platform on Sustainable Consumption and Production (DelibProcessSCP Project) aimed to address this gap by actively engaging CSOs to both identify research needs from their unique perspective and design elements of deliberative processes on sustainable consumption and production.

The project focused on the three demand areas of food, housing and mobility which have been identified as being responsible for some 70% of EU environmental impacts. During the conduct of the project, workshops were organised around each demand area to define trends, drivers and future actions. The overall process was framed by an opening and a closing conference. An online platform was also established to host an ongoing and open dialogue.

The UNEP / Wuppertal Institute Collaborating Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP, Germany) coordinated to project with support from the Centre for Sustainable Design (CfSD, United Kingdom) and the Regional Environmental Center (REC, Hungary) as partners. The project partners brought their extensive experience with both organising participatory stakeholder processes and bringing together political and academic stakeholders to work on sustainable consumption and production issues. The project was funded by the 7th Research Framework Programme of the European Union. More information is available on the project website [www.scp-dialogue.net](http://www.scp-dialogue.net).

## 2. Project Objectives

The overall objective of the project was to identify research needs and design elements of *deliberative processes* on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in the demand areas **food, housing and mobility** by actively involving civil society organisations. The specific objectives were to:

- **Develop material** promoting the SCP concept and communicate the current status and future potential of the field to CSOs. The material was to contain information on previous research, the status of relevant policy processes, programmes and action plans and relevant stakeholders and networks (especially concerning the EU SDS, the EU SCP Strategy and Action Plan and CSOs);
- **Identify and discuss** patterns and sustainability impacts and factors that limit progress toward SCP in the **food, housing and mobility** demand areas with the active involvement of societal stakeholders (First Conference, see figure 2);

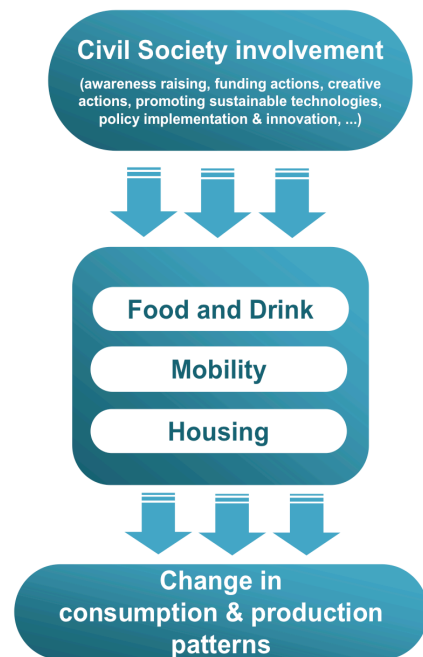


Figure 2. The three working areas

- With the active involvement of societal stakeholders, identify and discuss trends and drivers connected to finance, technology, policy instruments, capacity building and education, and behavioural change as **factors that limit or enable SCP** (Second Conference);
- Draw and discuss conclusions for the **future research agenda**, for the implementation of SD and SCP processes, programmes and action plans and for deliberative processes to involve societal stakeholders with a focus on CSOs and similar organisations (Final Conference);
- **Provide an online platform** to foster dialogue and interaction and improve the flow of targeted information on SD and SCP and provide open discussion spaces with a particular focus on involving CSOs.

### 3. Description of Project Activities

#### Kick-off

The project partners kicked off the project in June 2008. As a first step toward the CSOs Platform on SCP the project consortium prepared a background report.

The background report was published in October 2008 on the project website [www.scp-dialogue.net](http://www.scp-dialogue.net) (see figure 3). The structure and content of the report was aimed at CSO organisations rather than the research community. At the same time, however, the report provided valuable insights on the role of CSOs in SCP processes for the research community. The report illustrated a number of examples of CSO participation within the SCP research and policy arenas. It included examples drawn from each of the three main impact areas (food, housing and mobility) and explained how innovative tools and creative instruments can be applied by CSOs to promote SCP. Furthermore, the report provided information on the EU SCP Action Plan and rationales for CSO involvement in SCP.

The report was widely distributed and the project partners marketed the report both directly and through their networks.



Figure 3: Project website at [www.scp-dialogue.net](http://www.scp-dialogue.net).

#### First Conference

The form of the CSO Platform on SCP was refined through the first project conference, held on October 13-14, 2008, in Szentendre, Hungary. The conference introduced participants to the SCP theme by means of expert speeches and presentations with the aim to inform later discussion panels and dialogue. The first conference addressed the three impact areas of food, housing and mobility, and outlined trends, impacts and drivers as well as potential actions CSOs could consider in advancing SCP. The conference hosted 90 participants from across Europe with a special focus on participants from Central and Eastern European countries to connect CSOs in the whole European region to the SCP processes.

## Second Conference

The second conference was organised in Wuppertal, Germany, on March 16-18, 2009, under the title “Dialogue & Action Platform for Sustainable Consumption and Production”. The conference provided a platform for discussion and action among nearly 100 CSO representatives, researchers and policy makers to shape ideas and strategies on how to work more efficiently together. The second conference was intended to serve as a follow-up to the discussion that began during the first conference where participants developed and refined concrete project ideas for future partnerships and SCP implementation.



Figure 4. Photos from the second conference (CSCP, 2009).

## Online Platform

Following the second conference, the process of generating project ideas and discussion continued via an online networking platform hosted by the NING online platform (<http://csoplatfrom.ning.com/>). The online platform was launched in November of 2008 and attracted nearly 200 members from across the globe by March 2010. The platform provides information on SCP workshops, conferences, projects and online lectures. Informative videos, photos and discussion groups on the relevant topics are also provided (figure 5). An online lecture on “Linking SCP Policy to Local Action” was offered through the project on June 17, 2009.

## Final Conference

The third and final project conference, titled “Making an Impact – Collective Action Toward SCP”, was held in Brussels, Belgium, on December 7-8, 2009. As with the previous conferences, this conference gathered some 100 participants from across Europe. The first day of the event was hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the second day was held at the location of the Brussels representative of North Rhine-Westphalia facility. The conference served as a platform for European CSOs, researchers, governments and businesses to shape ideas and develop partnerships to promote SCP at different policy levels. The conference identified linkages between top-down and bottom-up processes at regional, national and EU levels. The conference report was published on the project website. In addition, two short videos and a conference photo series was also published online.



Figure 5. The NING Online Platform

## EU strategy workshop

Following the final conference the project consortium and the EC DG Research organised half day workshop on January 19, 2010 in Brussels, Belgium, to strategise methods “to engage civil society in research and policy processes” in the context of the services provided by the Commission. Twenty participants from several DGs attended to workshop to discuss the main findings and conclusions of the project. During the workshop both immediate and future possibilities to support SCP through enhanced integration and participation of CSOs in European policy processes were discussed.



Figure 6. Photos from the final conference (CSCP, 2009)

## 4. Project Results

The primary results of the project are:

1. The project developed communications material on the concept of sustainable consumption and production that illustrated the current status and the potential contribution of CSO stakeholders. The material contains a **background report, a public website, three conference reports, two short videos and a booklet** containing case studies on how SCP can be advanced through partnerships between CSOs and other actors. All these materials are accessible to project participants and the public on the project website [www.scp-dialogue.net](http://www.scp-dialogue.net).
2. The project identified and discussed trends, drivers, impacts and factors that limit progress towards SCP in the food, housing and mobility demand areas. With the active involvement of CSO stakeholders the project also identified and discussed issues connected to finance, technology, policy instruments, capacity building and education, and behavioural change as factors limiting or enabling SCP. Based on the discussions within the project, **new project ideas** and **research needs** were developed with regard to the potential contribution of CSOs toward SCP, the most promising of which are published on the project website.
3. The project organised **three conferences** where CSO participants from across Europe discussed and explored their diverse range of interests as they relate to SCP. Attending the first conference were 83 participants representing 19 countries. 58 of these were CSO delegates, 10 government delegates, 12 researchers and 3 business delegates. The second conference was attended by 90 participants mainly from Europe. This event was host to 45 CSO delegates, 11 government delegates, 31 researchers and 3 business delegates. The third conference attracted 100 participants with most having participated in one of the earlier project events for a second or the third time, although there was a greater business presence at this final event. These events provided a platform for participation, partnership development and cooperative actions.
4. The project created an **online NING platform** to foster dialogue, interaction and to improve the flow of information on SCP by providing targeted information for CSOs as well as a space for discussion. Any individual or organisation can join the online platform at <http://csoplatform.ning.com>. In March 2010, the platform had 199 members from 42 countries. The platform overcomes physical distances and now serves CSOs in regions outside Europe (see figure 7).
5. The project consortium prepared and presented papers at several scientific conferences to raise awareness of the project and opportunities in the research arena. As a consequence there was a greater participation rate among researchers during the second and third project conferences, which supported an active dialogue between CSO stakeholders and researchers on future partnerships.



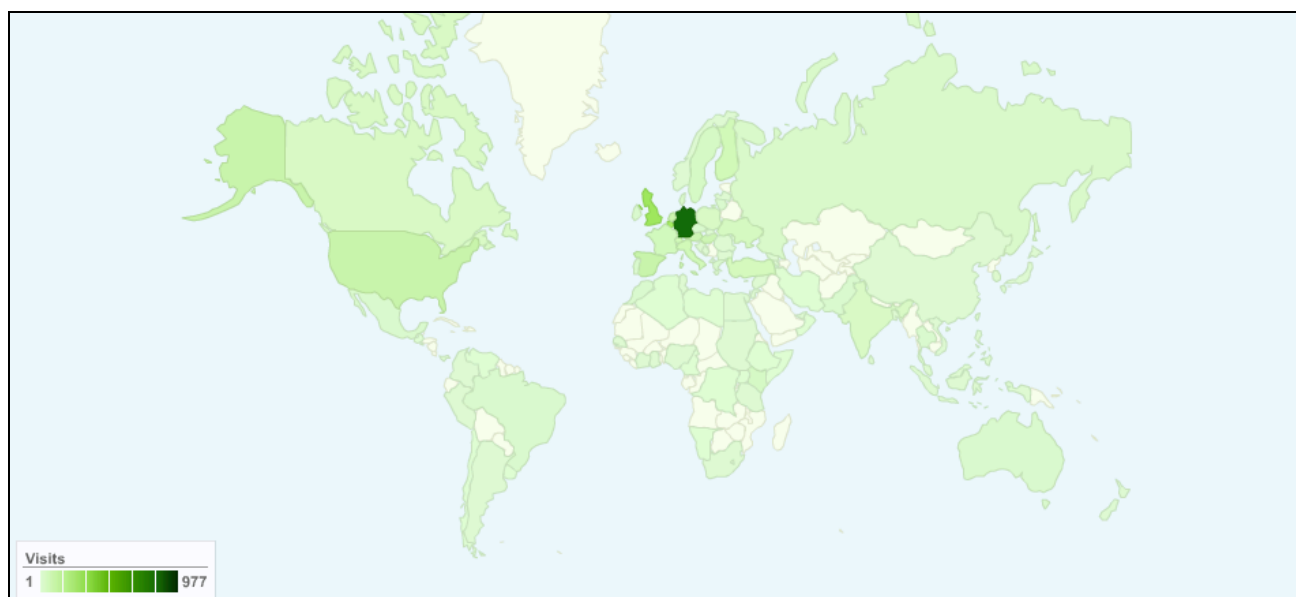


Figure 7. The project website [www.scp-dialogue.net](http://www.scp-dialogue.net) was visited from five continents.

## 5. Impacts and the Use of the Project Results

All project activities focused on enhancing the involvement of CSOs in promoting SCP. A substantial quantity of materials has been published through the project on CSOs and SCP and this information is available via the project website. With respect to the development of the SCP agenda in Europe the project results are relevant to a broad cross section of societal stakeholders: policy makers, civil society, academia and business.

There are a number of societal implications of the DelibProcessSCP project. First, awareness of SCP issues among European CSOs has been raised and an online platform was created to support learning, interaction and collaboration among CSOs and other stakeholders. In total, more than 200 organisations were involved in at least one stage of the project. The impact of the project for these organisations is not easily quantified as processes to develop new partnerships, to begin new projects and to engage in policy processes are slow and the impacts are in many cases directly apparent over longer periods of time. Moreover, the DelibProcessSCP project did not aim to directly evaluate the progress of participating organisations toward advancing SCP issues but rather aimed only to offer a platform for networking and dialogue.

The project was successful in facilitating CSO networking and collaboration efforts. The project also enjoyed a productive co-operation with a separate FP7 project entitled “Action Town – Research and Action for SCP”. At the EU level, the project facilitated collaboration with the European Economic and Social Committee during the process of organising a workshop and the final project conference. At the regional level, the project supported a regional dialogue on SCP both in the CEE region and in the German state of North-Rhine Westphalia.

A primary outcome of the project is an enhanced understanding of ways to involve CSOs in SCP policy and research processes. To this end, the project has introduced the concept of the ‘network of change’ (see figure 8). This network illustrates the shared responsibilities and opportunities for cooperation among different stakeholders in society. The role of government authorities is to provide and adjust the regulatory framework that supports SCP practices. The role of business is to produce and sell goods and services that are sustainable across product life-cycles. The role of academia is to inspire and relate knowledge and information on how to improve sustainability at various levels. CSOs have a unique and valuable position in advancing SCP given their potential for forging effective connections with academia, policymakers, consumers and the business community. CSOs have the capacity to bring different stakeholders together and to bring issues forward into public discussion. Many innovative new and profitable sustainability solutions began through the work of civil society organisations,

including car sharing, city bikes and online second-hand shops. Finally, consumers can make sustainable consumption decisions based on a framework provided by all the stakeholders.

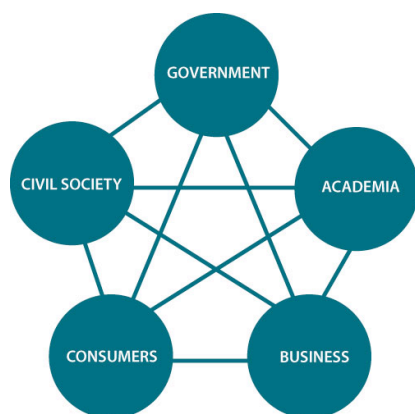


Figure 8. The Network of Change connects all the key societal actors (CSCP, 2010).

To encourage partnerships between CSOs and other stakeholders, the project developed a booklet that explains the work of CSOs and the value they can offer as partners. The booklet introduces five different types of CSO partnership. These are elaborated upon through case examples that outline the potential role and benefit CSOs can offer in different SCP projects and processes. In addition, the booklet presents several promising new project concepts and ideas developed during the CSO Platform on SCP project (CSCP 2010, in press).

## 6. Recommendations

Establishing a platform and building a community is a long process that requires considerable time to engage the different actors within the community. This project began this process and raised awareness of SCP issues and opportunities for CSO involvement significantly. It is the hope of the project consortium that the work completed with the community and platform established within the current project can continue and that further topics such as sustainable lifestyles could enter into the discussion for further development of the EU SDS and the EU SCP Strategy.

Based on the project conclusions, the consortium identified four recommendations to improve the role of CSOs in SCP research and policy processes.

### 1. Support and create CSO networks

Active networks can reach small CSOs which in turn enables these groups to be heard. To maintain an active network, it is necessary to for at least on organisation with adequate resources to take the lead over time. Local level CSOs that may lack the capacity for direct involvement in EU level policy processes can be reached via active and effective networks. These networks can act as a link between bottom-up and top-down activities. CSOs can obtain information on ongoing processes, timing and funding opportunities while the EC can obtain enhanced channels to hear the voice of the bottom-up actors.

### 2. Develop new funding frameworks to involve CSOs and support partnerships

To enable the participation of small and local networks and organisations in policy development processes, new funding frameworks are needed. These frameworks should have a streamlined and accessible process for submitting proposals and funding should be available for longer time periods (e.g. greater than 2 – 3 years) in recognition of the fact that functional networks and platforms require time to develop and mature. New funding



frameworks could also develop and support enhanced partnerships between CSOs and researchers from different European regions.

### **3. Take advantage of new social media and e-consultation tools**

New online tools can be used to provide citizens opportunities to express opinions, add solutions or missing information to policy processes at all levels. This co-operation requires active actors among both policymakers to communicate and cooperate with civil society and vice versa.

New social media offers a solution to narrow the distance between civil society and policy makers and young people in particular are accessible via web 2.0 tools. Barriers to participation in e-consultation and other processes can be reduced through such interactive tools. Many political representatives communicate directly to the wider public by means of social media tools such as Facebook and MySpace.

### **4. Involve big and capable CSOs in the policy processes from the beginning**

During the DelibProcessSCP project there were only a small number of large CSO organisations from the different European regions that had the capacity and resources for direct involvement in EU level SCP policy processes. These large CSOs, such as the EEB and ANPED, should be provided opportunities for greater involvement in the SCP policy development processes that extends beyond consultation. This could be accomplished through engaging CSO representatives during the agenda-setting phase. For example, the Board of the European Research Area (ERAB) organisation does not have CSO representation. A CSO representative could represent a broad network or platform of European CSOs. CSOs can bring new topics into the policy discussion, such as potential new projects and ideas developed and explored by CSOs during the DelibProcessSCP project. CSOs can provide input for comprehensive integration of SCP to EU services from all EU member countries. CSOs are well equipped to reach and engage citizens to provide an interface for policymakers. Similar opportunities should be explored and developed at local, national and international policy levels.

## **7. Contact Information**

For more information and questions on the DelibProcessSCP project, please contact the project partners or the EC project officer:

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