



Research for Sustainability

5th BMBF Forum for Sustainability

hosting the 12th European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production

Berlin, 23-25 September 2008

Outcome Statement

The 5th BMBF Forum for Sustainability and the 12th European Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production have featured vibrant discussions on the state of research for sustainability and offered opportunities to strengthen the network of stakeholders from research, science support, politics and industry. This year the Forum invited a group of international observers to further explore the potential of sustainability research as a driver for innovation.

In our view, the presence of high-level representatives of research policy from Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary, following up on the previous Forum in Leipzig demonstrates BMBF's strong engagement to open the way to an international and gradually to a more global practice of sustainability research.

As science policy experts from major emerging economies, we were invited to observe, engage and reflect on the 5th FONA forum, so as to bring an international perspective into the debate on future scientific objectives and approaches to sustainability.

We would like to offer the following observations and recommendations:

- I. Germany's contribution to research for sustainability has been greatly appreciated, serves as an excellent example on a national scale, and should be broadened. In a continuously globalising and still unequal world where production, consumption and resource flows are happening across national borders, the need to address sustainability transcending national borders is urgent.
- II. Sustainability is a complex concept – it is understood differently depending on socio-cultural (incl. ethical, behavioural), economic and ecological contexts. Emphasis, priorities and values may vary according to the countries and regions. In order for FONA and its follow-up projects to have a significant international impact, it is necessary to

identify common leading principles and to find a comprehensive science-based framework.

- III. Germany is encouraged to provide a platform to facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices from the different regions of the world, as an important contribution to science for sustainability. Although specialized technical solutions are essential, a broader vision for sustainability is needed and transdisciplinary approaches should be enhanced. New forms of research including action research and learning by doing should be encouraged.
- IV. During this Forum, presenters highlighted the potential and value of technological innovation. However, sustainability research should not be limited to this issue; it is urgent to further integrate social sciences. A social sciences perspective would contribute in a holistic way to the design, implementation, and assessment of the most effective ways to reach sustainable pathways.
- V. Human behaviour is an essential dimension and should be at the heart of research efforts towards sustainability. Sustainable livelihoods, lifestyles and consumption patterns should be addressed with equal emphasis as technology for sustainable production processes.
- VI. Open science-policy dialogues at FONA should engage other important stakeholders, including civil society, to promote a better understanding and broaden the impact on a larger scale. We call for more awareness-raising efforts, which could potentially lead to ownership and responsibility.
- VII. Sustainability demands innovation and creativity - new models of thinking are required. We would like to suggest that future FONA forums feature more interactive activities such as networking sessions or open discussions in which the audience is invited to engage actively. The program should also include case studies reflecting the diversity of cultural and social experiences.
- VIII. We suggest that the following dimensions are addressed in future FONA forums:
 - a. Decoupling economic growth from environmental pressures
 - b. Education and training
 - c. Social justice
 - d. Internationalization
 - e. Consumption patterns
- IX. To integrate an international perspective into Germany's debate on sustainability, we recommend establishing an advisory board composed of international science policy experts.

Annex A.

IOG - List of participants

Name	Land	Institution / Function
Mr. Ademar Ribeiro Romeiro (PhD)	Brazil	Associated Professor of the Institute of Economics at the University of Campinas - UNICAMP
Ms. Elena Nikitina (PhD)	Russia	Director of the EcoPolicy Research and Consulting
Mr. Vefa Moustafaev (PhD)	Azerbaijan	UNESCO Consultant for Science Policy, former director of a research institute on lubrication engineering
Mr. Iouri Oliounine (PhD)	Russia	Oceanologist, former Deputy Secretary of IOC-UNESCO, former Executive Director of International Ocean Institute, Malta
Mr. Suresh P. Babu (PhD)	India	Chief Executive Officer of TERI Technology Limited
Mr. Anand Patwardhan (Prof.)	India	Executive Director of the Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment council (TIFAC)
K. V. Devi Prasad (Prof.)	India	Counsellor of the Science and Technology Wing of the Embassy of India (Berlin)
Mr. Imraan Patel	Republic of South Africa	General Manager for the S&T Economic Impact of the Department Science and Technology
Ms. Susan Pick (PhD)	Mexico	Director of the Mexican Institute for Research on Family and Population (IMIFAP)
Ms. Jill Jäger (PhD)	Austria	Senior Researcher at the Sustainable Europe Research Institute in Vienna (Austria)
Ms. Eva Sternfeld (PhD)	Germany	CIM Expert for environmental education at the China Environmental & Sustainable Development Center
Mr. Reza Ardakanian (PhD)	Iran	Former Vice Minister for Water, Director of the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development