

The quest for policies to radically reduce consumption

ESEE 2015, Leeds

Future of consumption policies

What kind of policies would ensure that we will reduce our consumption of natural resources 50 – 80 % by the year 2050?
What should the 'new normal' be in 2030?
How much of individual freedoms could be limited for the sake of our planet?

The quest is part of a PhD research titled "The images of the future of Finnish decision makers as enablers of sustainable development", which has started in Jan 2015. Policies to radically reduce consumption have been sought from literature and through expert interviews. The process is still ongoing. The identified policies will be utilised in a delfoi process in which Finnish decision makers are asked to discuss, comment and develop the policies further.

Join in & share your opinion at users.utu.fi/sajoahv

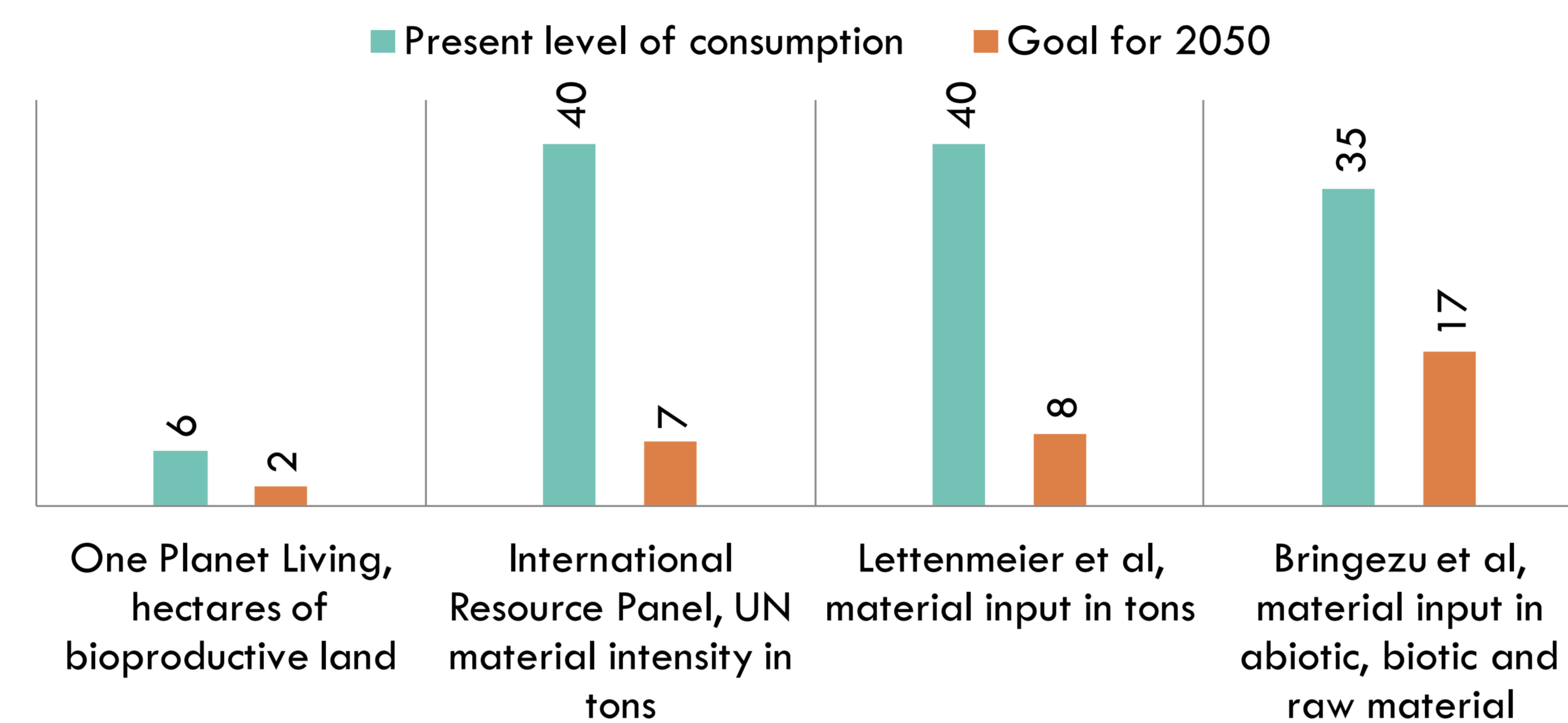
Help identify and develop possible means to be presented to decision makers. Answer a brief survey.

Contact

Sanna Ahvenharju
Finland Futures Research Centre, ffrc.utu.fi
University of Turku, FINLAND
sajoahv@utu.fi
Project website: users.utu.fi/sajoahv

This research project has received funding from Tiina and Antti Herlin Foundation.

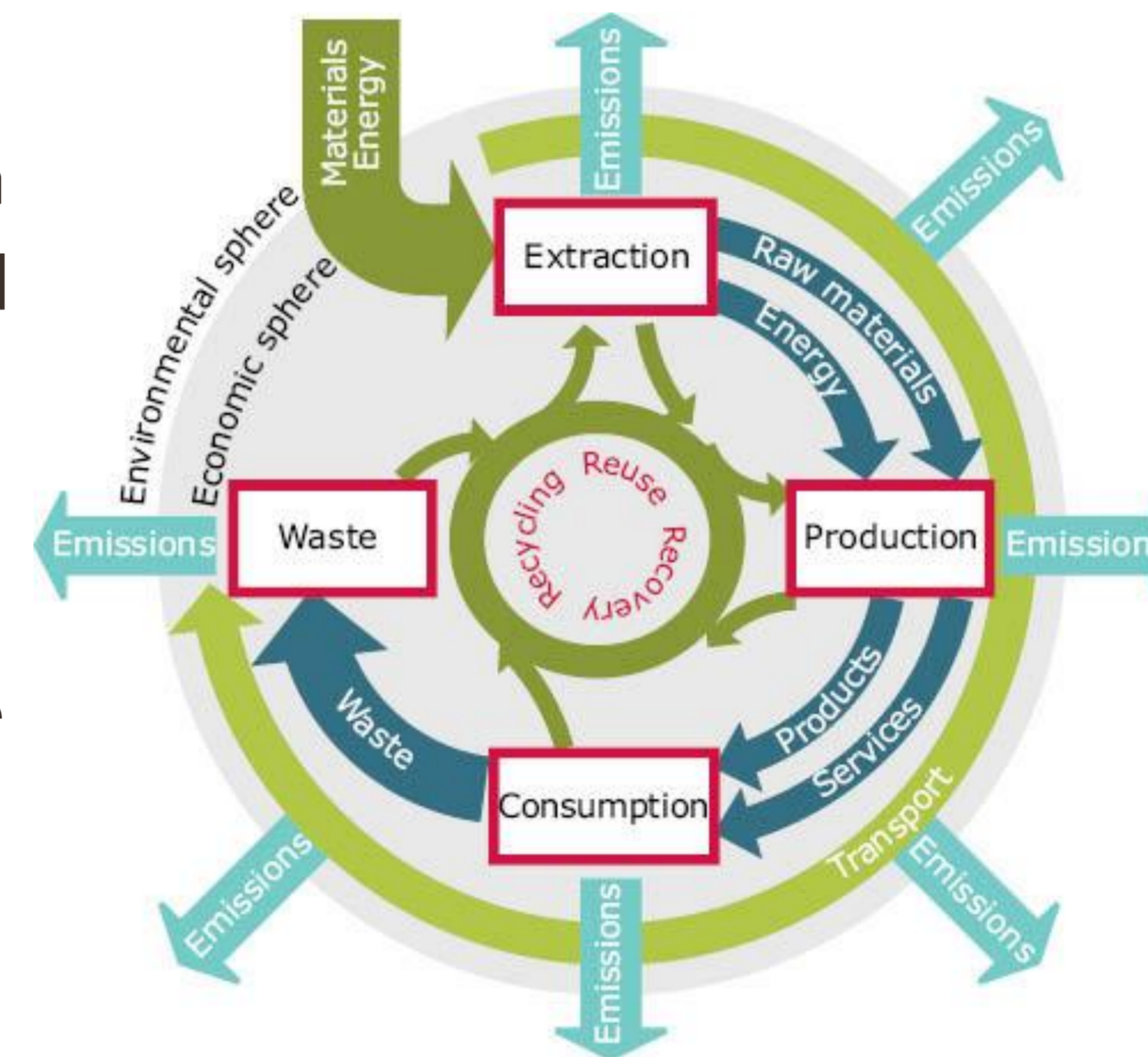
Consumption Challenge



Current research estimates 50 – 80 % cut in natural resource consumption per head is necessary in Western European countries.

The production-consumption systems need to be capped by government policies targeted at consumption demand. Until now, most environmental policies have focused on the supply side while consumption policies have had a minor role.

Without more active government interventions to harness consumption demand, the rebound effect cannot be blocked.



Sources for the graphs:

BRINGEZU, S., 2015. Possible Target Corridor for Sustainable Use of Global Material Resources. *Resources*, 4(1), pp. 25-54.
LETTENMEIER, M., LIEDTKE, C. and ROHN, H., 2014. Eight Tons of Material Footprint: Suggestion for a Resource Cap for Household Consumption in Finland. *Resources*, 3(3), pp. 488-515.
UNEP, 2014. *Managing and Conserving the Natural Resource Base for Sustained Economic and Social Development. A reflection from the International Resource Panel on the establishment of Sustainable Development Goals aimed at decoupling economic growth from escalating resource use and environmental degradation.* UNEP.
WWF One planet living http://www.panda.org/what_we_do/how_we_work/conservation/one_planet_living/about_opl/footprint/
Life-cycle chain: extraction-production-consumption-waste, EEA, ETC Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Policies identified thus far

The following criteria were used for the selection of the policies: 1) **Fresh** – they have not been used, or largely discussed, in the public policy arena in Finland. 2) **Transitional** – they should induce permanent systemic changes in the production-consumption systems. 3) **Radical** – they aim at considerable reductions (50 – 80 %) in consumer demand for natural resource use. 4) **Strong** – they are not based on voluntary activity.

Individual consumption quotas ★★

E.g. for meat, water and energy. Exceeding one's quota could lead to notably higher prices or require the exchange of quotas with other consumers.

Promoting sharing through regulatory means ★★★

E.g. increasing shared living spaces through planning and housing regulation or extending library networks and including tools and other objects to lend.

Progressive consumption taxes ★★

High consumption taxes (up to 75 %) could be targeted at non-sustainable products.

Bonus schemes for reduced consumption ★

Bonuses could be earned from e.g. low water consumption or vegetarian diet. Bonuses could be used for selected purposes with low impacts or sold to others. Each citizen should earn or buy a certain amount of bonuses a year.

Curbing of advertisements ★★

Advertising products with high environmental impact would not be permitted.

Using other national indicators than GDP ★★★

For example Genuine Progress Indicator or Genuine savings.

Sustainability service – a compulsory period for all youth to participate

During the service period young people would participate in projects that promote sustainable consumption in businesses, public sector, NGOs or communities.

Limiting the sale of goods for individual use ★

E.g. cars could only be shared or a lawn mower could be bought only together with a group of people.

Reducing work hours ★

Weekly working hours would be limited to 25 hours. Decreasing incomes and increases in free time would decrease consumption.

★ The number of stars after policies indicate which ones have gained most support from experts interviewed during the project so far.