

July 5-8, 2023

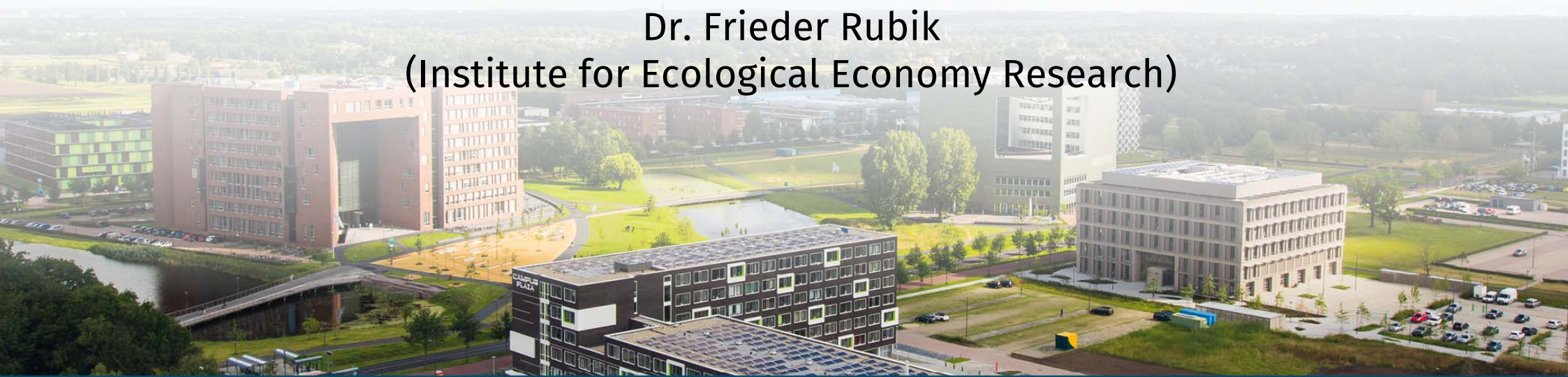
Wageningen,
The Netherlands



SCORAI-ERSCP-WUR Conference

Civil society feedback loops as stimuli for sustainable product design

Dr. Frieder Rubik
(Institute for Ecological Economy Research)



www.scp-conference-2023.com

Civil society feedback loops as stimuli for sustainable product design (SDGPro)

Wageningen July 7, 2023

Dr. Frieder Rubik

IÖW – Institute for Ecological Economy Research

Berlin/DE



Mit **zivilgesellschaftlichem
Feedback**
zur **nachhaltigen
Produktentwicklung**

Key figures

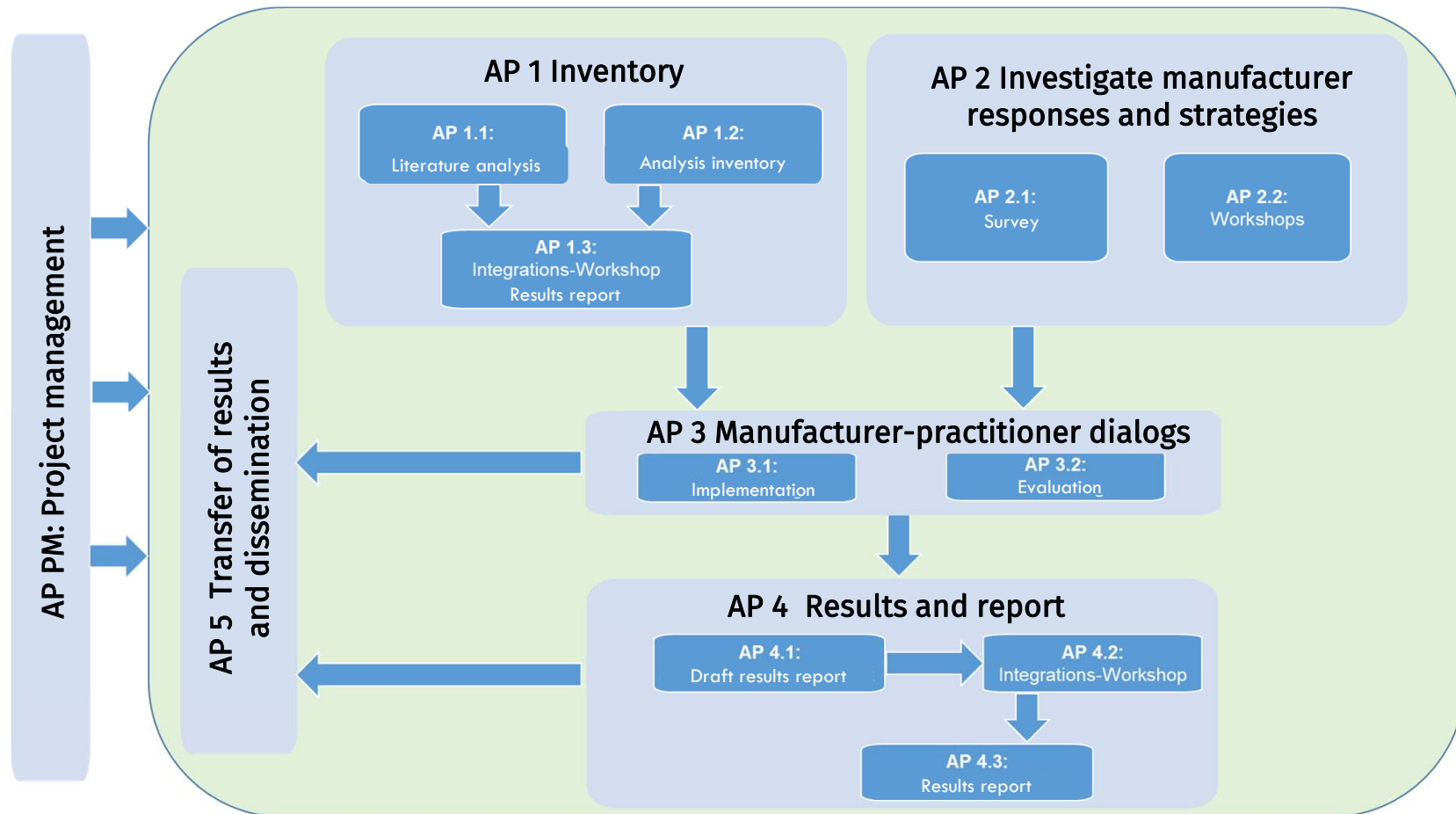


- Project title: Civil society feedback loops as impulses for sustainable product development (SDG Pro)
- Project duration: 1.2.2021 - 28.02.2023 (25 months)
- Funding (meanwhile) by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment and Consumer Protection (BMUV) within the program "Consumer Protection in the Service of the UN Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals", funding volume: 150,000 Euro
- Project processing:
 - Institute for Ecological Economy Research (IÖW)
- Practice partner:
 - Bund für Umwelt- und Naturschutz Deutschland (*German Federation for the Environment and Nature Conservation*), Berlin/DE
 - Küste gegen Plastik e. V. (*Coast against plastics*), Sankt Peter-Ording/DE
 - Orang-Utans in Not e. V. (*Orang-Utans in trouble*), Leipzig/DE
 - Runder Tisch Reparatur e. V. (*Roundtable repair*), Stuttgart/DE

Scope of interest

- Citizens with a variety of roles:
 - Buyers and users
 - Information seekers
 - Information and experience transmitters („citizen scientists“)
- Roles → individual actions of consumption and use
- But:
 - Project focusing on different forms and types of civil society initiated and organized pooling of experiential knowledge from product search and product use
 - Analysis of the transmission of this knowledge to manufacturers/producers
- **Working hypothesis: Through this knowledge transmissions, valuable guidance can be generated for manufacturers to provide guard rails in product development and design for a stronger focus on sustainability**
- Analysis of the scope of this knowledge transmissions and their potential to have an impact "below" governmental regulatory interventions

Project structure SDG Pro






FOCUS



Investigation of the following initiatives:

- Consumer apps ReplacePlastic, Replace PalmOil and ToxFox
- The Repair Community with the Roundtable Repair e.V. *[not dealt today]*

Apps	Apps operators	Targets	Dissemination	Application	Links
ReplacePlastic 	Coast against plastics e.V.	... claims to substitute plastic packaging especially in the food and cosmetics sectors	~ 270,000 downloads	~ 800-1,000 scans/day	www.replaceplastic.de
Replace PalmOil 	Orang-Utans in trouble e.V.	...claims to substitute, palm oil in food	~11,000 downloads	Not available	www.replacepalmoil.de
ToxFox 	German Federation for the Environment and Nature Conservation (BUND)	... intends to replace potential health and environmental hazardous substances in cosmetics, toiletries and everyday products	> 2 Mio downloads	~ 200,000 scans /day	www.bund.net/toxfox

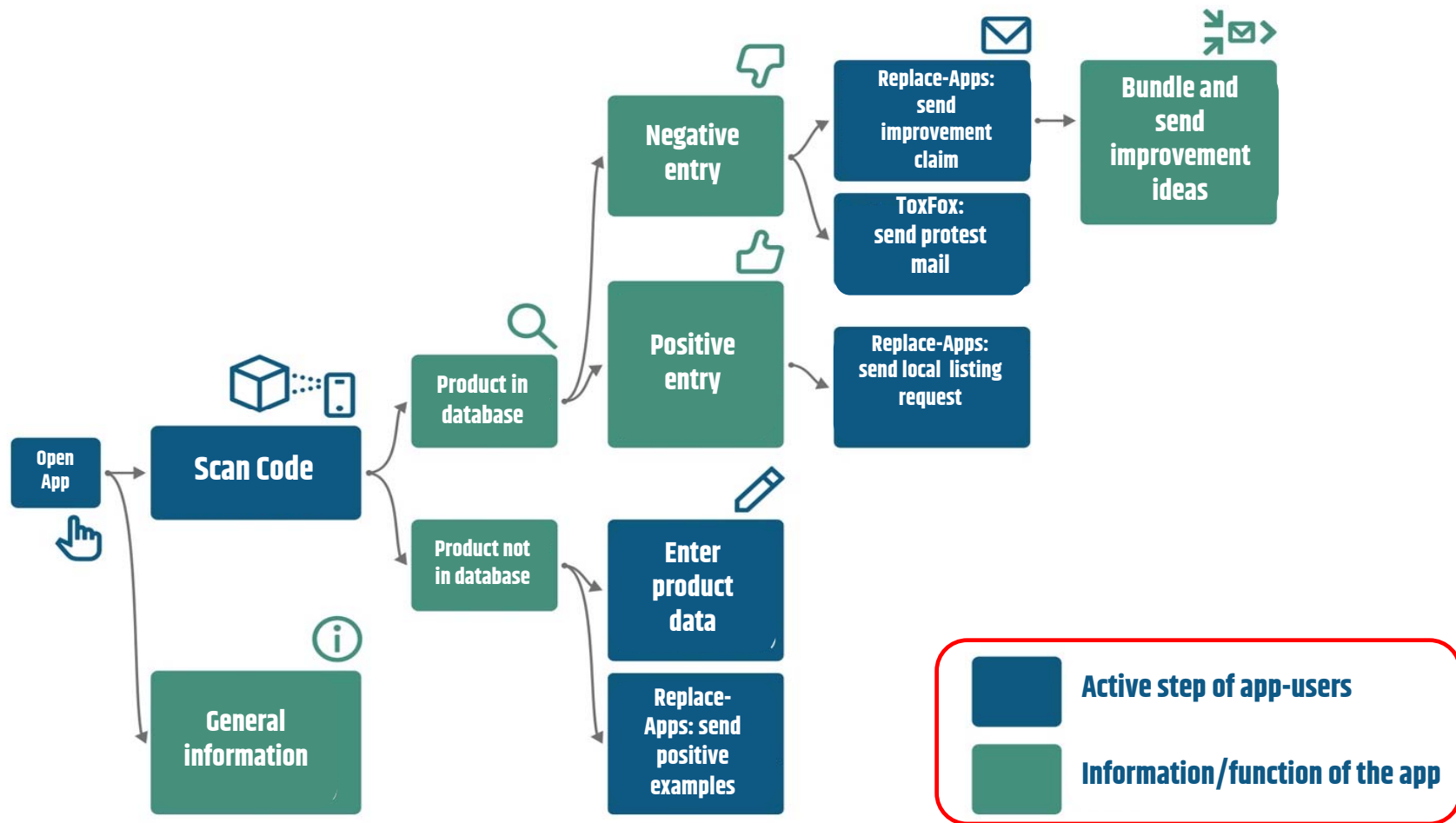
Methods



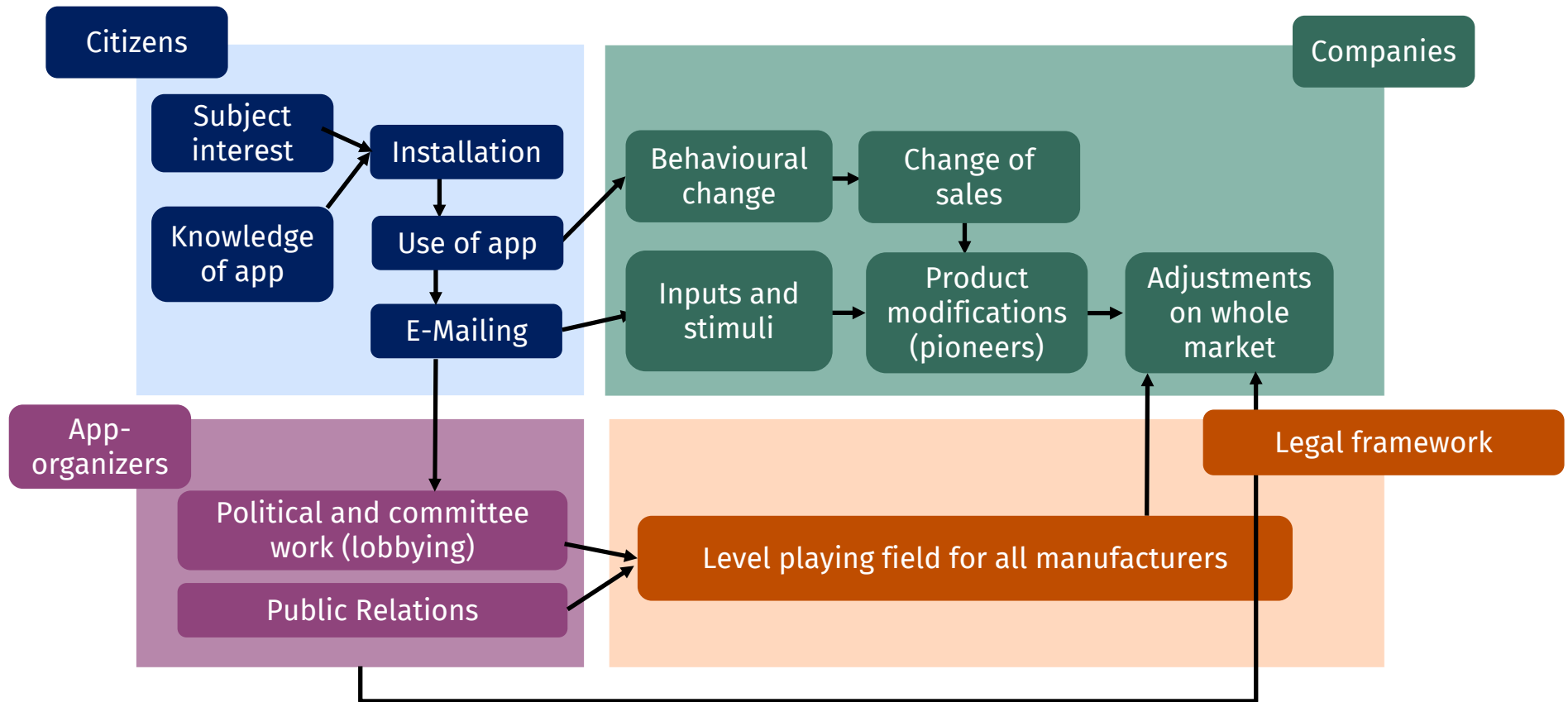
Empirical access :

- An online survey of manufacturers in the relevant sectors (n=70 responding, quota ~ 2.3 %)
- 5 virtual business association interviews
- 7 virtual company interviews
- Integration workshops
 - Business associations & companies
 - Business associations, companies & initiatives

Functionality of the apps (without Roundtable Repair)

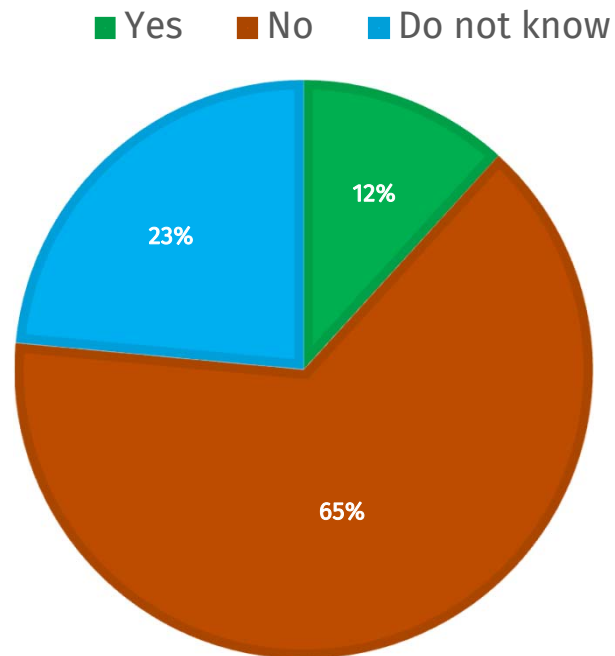


(Conceptional/interpretative) effect chains of the apps



Reality check I: Adaptations of products

■ Existence of success stories (adaptations)



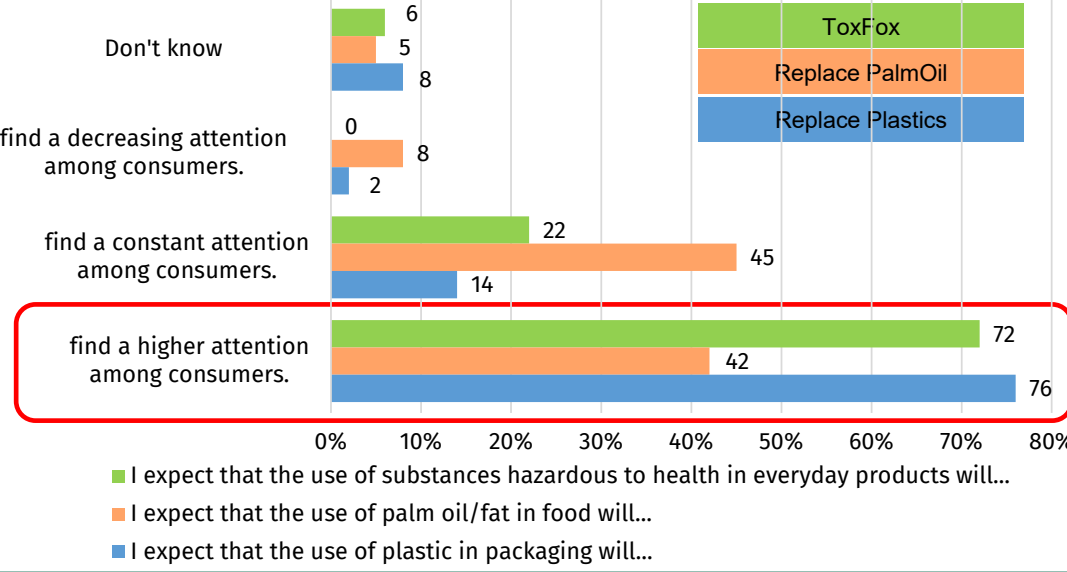
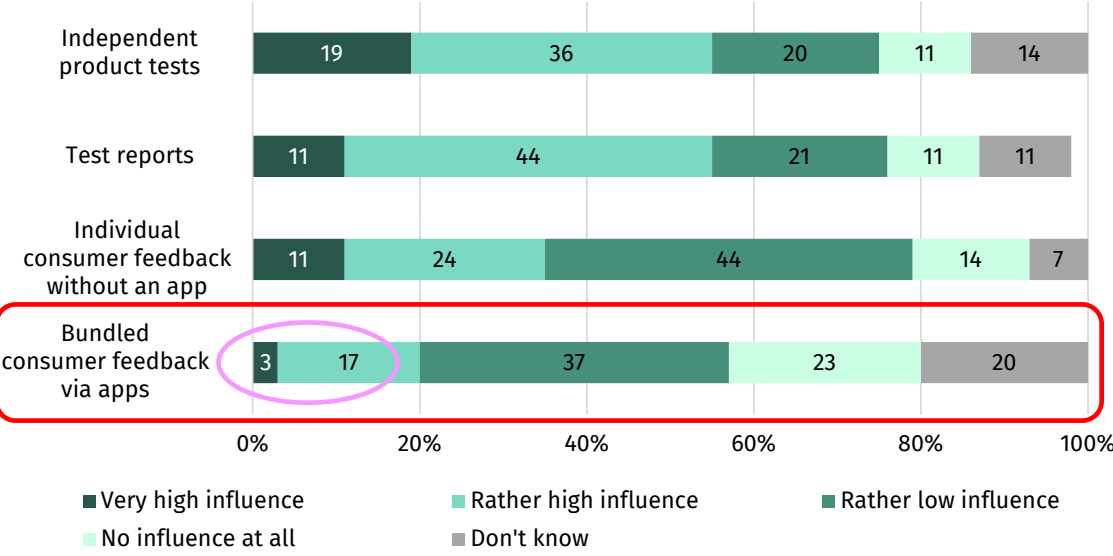
- Results of the survey
- Based on interviews some more hints for adaptations/changes

Reality check II: Intentions & „fractures“

- Media work & contacts to politics ("level playing field")
- Companies between reluctance & future expectations

Question: How high do you rate the influence of the following feedback channels on product development within your company (in %)?
(n = 70, all sectors)

Expected roles of the topics highlighted in the apps (in %).
(n=70, all sectors)



Reality check: Intentions & „fractures“

- ❖ Degree of dissemination (partly) low
- ❖ Activation level & routinization to be expanded
- ❖ Feedback loops to citizens interrupted (due to data protection)
- ❖ Partly self-referential & nichy

Recommended actions

- App operators' & Roundtable repair
 - Modification of structure and content
- Civil society
 - Future new apps in areas of high concern
- Companies
 - Active tracking ("free" market research)
 - Offensive dialogue with app operators
- Policy
 - Strengthen volunteerism and support app operators' activities
 - Address concerns & change competitive framework („level playing field“)

Further readings (only in German)



Leitfaden für Unternehmen



Policy Paper



Frieder Rubik, Eva Wiesemann (IÖW) unter Mitarbeit von Robina Kienitz und Chiara Rohlfis

Zivilgesellschaftliche Impulse und Einflüsse auf die Produktentwicklung

Wissenschaftlicher Schlussbericht zum Projekt „Zivilgesellschaftliche Feedbackschleifen als Impulse für eine nachhaltige Produktentwicklung (SDGpro)“

gefördert durch Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, nukleare Sicherheit und Verbraucherschutz (BMUV) im Rahmen des Programms zur Innovationsförderung im Verbraucherschutz in Recht und Wirtschaft, FKZ 28V1307X20
Heidelberg, 28. Februar 2023

Nachhaltig innovativ durch Kundschaftsfeedback

Wie Unternehmen Verbraucher*innen-Apps in der Produktentwicklung einbinden können

Eva Wiesemann, Frieder Rubik



Zivilgesellschaftliche Impulse für nachhaltige Produkte fördern

Wie die Politik Verbraucher*innen-Apps und Reparaturinitiativen stärken kann

Frieder Rubik



Download:

<https://www.ioew.de/projekt/zivilgesellschaftliche-feedbackschleifen-als-impulse-fuer-eine-nachhaltige-produktentwicklung>



Thank you for your attention!

Dr. Frieder Rubik

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Wageningen/NL July 7, 2023

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