

“Greening the paper chain: re-defining interests and roles in an international value creation chain under NGO and market pressure”, by Reinier de Man

Dr. Reinier de Man,
Environmental Policy Consult
Kloksteeg 33, NL 2311 SK Leiden, Netherlands
Tel. +31 (71) 512 8422, Fax +31 (71) 512 7541
Mobile Phone +31 (65) 316 5441
e-mail rdeman@worldonline.nl (personal)

Abstract

1. Introduction

On the basis of an historical background of the ecological debate related to paper and paper resources (wood, forestry), we conclude that whereas the earlier debate on paper making that was closely related to the chlorine debate has largely been resolved, the newer debate, as in many other industrial fields, focusses on the resource side of the problem. End user markets and especially NGOs who influence those markets ask for transparency of the resource chain and the production chain. As a result of increasing market pressures, several paper companies have looked for strategic answers to the question of how to realize this transparency. Publishers have forced paper makers into strategic partnerships for developing new ways of marketing green paper. This paper highlights the role changes and the re-definition of strategic interests involved and analyzes the barriers during the build-up and implementation of green partnerships.

Actors in the Paper Chain: interests, positions and roles

In this section, interests, perceptions and strategies of the following actors have been analyzed in more detail: NGOs, Publishers, Paper Companies in Scandinavia and Finland, Forest owners and their associations and National and international forestry certification platforms. From the analysis follow both the opportunities and the barriers for cooperation that are dealt with in the following section.

2. Cooperation for ‘green paper’: opportunities and barriers

A small number of anonymized case histories, including experiences with companies in Norway, Sweden and Finland and their cooperation with German publishers/printers are presented. From these case histories plausible hypotheses on opportunities and barriers are derived: it is shown that the real barriers are not so much the objective interests of the partners in the paper chain but rather the self-definition of the interests by the actors involved. This then leads to a discussion of the feasibility of re-defining interests in order to create opportunities for alliances for sustainability.

3. Discussion

In the final part, some tentative conclusions beyond the empirical area of forestry and paper are formulated. Two questions are central here:

- (1) what strategic abilities, knowledge, etc. do actors in the value creation chain need in order to build up ‘green’ alliances successfully?
 - (2) what does the development towards NGO-driven and market-driven cooperations in a value creation chain mean for government policy, its instruments and content?
-