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Economic Assessment of Design Orienting Scenarios: Strategies towards the Sustainable Household

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Abstract

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The SusHouse Project (Strategies towards the Sustainable Household, financed by the EU) has so far organised eight stakeholder creativity workshops in five countries (Netherlands, UK, Germany, Italy and Hungary) on three household functions (Shopping, Cooking and Eating; Clothing Care; and Shelter). The workshops produced innovative ideas that have been structured by means of the GSP-chart methodology (Goals, Strategies and Proposals) into Design Orienting Scenarios (DOS). Each DOS includes a Vision of Function fulfilment, related Strategies, and a number of Proposals, that is, ideas for specific goods and services.

This paper presents a methodology, developed within the SusHouse Project, for assessing the economic credibility of the DOS Proposals. The approach is descriptive and qualitative, and is sufficiently general to assess a variety of Proposals, in different Functions, in different countries. The economic assessment complements the environmental assessment, and the assessment of Consumer Acceptance.

The economic assessment considers whether business opportunities are enhanced or reduced under the Proposals, focussing on the opportunities firms have to increase their competitiveness. The assessment also considers the potential barriers firms might face in implementing the proposed goods and services, and whether the Proposals imply improvements in the conditions of other supply-side stakeholders, including employees. In addition, the assessment asks whether more or less government intervention might be required, and what form this might take. The paper illustrates the methodology with examples of assessed Proposals, drawn from a variety of SusHouse Functions in different countries. It also considers the wider applicability of the methodology.