



UNCONFERENCE 2016 - INSIGHTS

Workstudio 1 | [#ws\\_handprint](#)

# From footprint to handprint

## Be part of the solution: Increasing the handprint of goods and services



photo by Laura Schleder



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### Mainstreaming positive sustainability impacts

Handprint, as being developed in collaboration with the CSCP, is a measurement-tool that captures positive sustainability impacts of products and production processes that cannot be pictured (or not precisely enough) by the established footprint methodology. During the work-studio, participants used the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to cluster potential hand-print effects from a variety of products and services, thereby visualising the huge array of important topics for which the handprint will be an appropriate tool to measure and communicate sustainability effects off the beaten footprint track.

During the workshop, participants got inspired and were delighted in how far the generation of handprints leads to a new way of thinking and agreed in the discussions:

“It is important to convey the handprint message globally”

### The basic idea of the Handprint

The Handprint is an innovative and holistic approach to facilitate the measurement, evaluation, and communication of positive ecological, economic, and social sustainability impacts of products.



### Increasing positive effects

- Quality of life
- Sustainability awareness
- Ecosystems quality
- Social gains
- etc.

### Reducing negative effects

- Resource overuse
- Waste generation
- Emissions
- Social consequences
- etc.

### Examples of thinking sustainability impact positively

- Only the **offer of sustainable product alternatives** gives consumers a choice for more sustainability.
- **Product design or smart chemicals and materials** can be the basis for (downstream) sustainability impacts.
- An **improvement of working conditions**, e.g. though fair trade, has an effect on health and income and subsequently on motivation.
- **Explainable products** raise sustainability awareness.
- **Products** can **inspire** people.
- **Business models** can make a contribution towards the circular economy.
- **Sharing and pooling opportunities** not only raise product use time but also foster community cohesion through social interaction.
- **Organic agriculture** not only provides sustainable food but also fosters individual well-being and protection of nature.
- **ICT can function as enabling technology**, e.g. in sectors such as transport and logistics, agriculture, energy, and building.

Linking the theoretical discussion to practical application, two speakers offered insights into their work and projects, focusing on potential sustainability impacts for which handprint could be the right measurement tool:



photos by Laura Schleder

**Rolf Heimann from Hessnatur-Foundation** presented a wool project from the German Rhön region, enabling innovative textile products from the special type of wool for Hess Natur. Handprints ranged from preserving biodiversity, strengthening the regional textile industry to the conservation and creation of jobs as well as maintaining liveability for local farmers up to raising awareness within consumers.

**Sylvia Campos from FairTrade International** presented FairTrade’s journey towards positive sustainability impacts. She outlined a number of handprint effects of FairTrade bananas including living wages, decent working conditions for female workers, fairer terms of trade, environmental protection, and biodiversity. Furthermore, producer-consumer partnerships are established that help to increase awareness at the consumer’s end. If done correctly, female workers—oftentimes disadvantaged— are particularly empowered by fair and long-term trade agreements and benefit from the processes established within their communities.

“It was really interesting to work on social aspects of sustainability and I learned a lot about banana-production.” (working table Fair Trade bananas)



photo by Janpeter Beckmann

### Applying the handprint to further products and services

Participants split into groups working on different products and services to firstly identify the handprints and secondly see how those potential handprints could contribute to the achievement of the UN SDGs. Examples chosen were Fairphone, Car-sharing as a service, a degradable dishwashing agent in a bottle from recycled waste from the sea, as well as Fairtrade bananas. The results from the groups were displayed and presented in a joint paper – which, due to the mix of goods and services, partly with more environmental handprint impacts, partly focussing more on the social SDGs a hands-on overview was gained over the potential of the handprint methodology.

The results from the groups were displayed and presented in a joint paper. This paper presented the hands-on overview gained on the potential of the Handprint Methodology, which –due to the mix of goods and services– focussed partly on environmental handprint impacts and partly on the social SDGs.

“It is incredible to see how many handprints of a product one can identify”, several of the participants commented.



photo by Janpeter Beckmann



“At our working table [identifying the handprint of car-sharing and corresponding SDGs] we had very good discussions. It was fun and the result was better than what I would have come up with by myself.”

**How to create a holistic approach?**

- The participants agreed that the concept and any future methods should be holistic and system-oriented not just separate components.
- They stressed the need to combine all aspects holistically and beware of focusing too heavily on only ecological aspects
- Participants also encouraged to join forces with similar initiatives.

## What's next?

While the CSCP is developing this methodology jointly with partners in Germany, the discussion amongst the participants showed how vital it will be to collaborate on an international level and, in the long run, agree on a common methodology. We look forward to taking this method forward and creating pragmatic approaches and new drivers to trigger innovation within your product and service portfolio.

The CSCP welcomes initiatives to support its handprint philosophy. Interested parties are invited to participate in the upcoming events linked to the Handprint project funded by the German ministry BMBF, too:

**1 June 2016** – 2nd Stakeholder Workshop conducted in Wuppertal – a documentary (in German) will be published beginning of July on [www.handabdruck.org](http://www.handabdruck.org)

**22–23 September 2016** – Handprint Workshop as part of the 20th International EMAN Conference in Lüneburg, <http://eman2016.org>

**October 2016** – Start of Handprint case studies for testing of the methodology. Interested companies to participate are invited to contact the project manager latest by end of July, [www.handabdruck.org](http://www.handabdruck.org)