

Link between eco-innovation and the challenge of microplastics - proposing environmental neutrality as an obligatory main driver in future innovation(s)

Rune Aardal Hansen

MScEng, Tech. Business Development, PhD fellow

rah@btech.au.dk

Department of Business Development and Technology, Aarhus University

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ABSTRACT

During recent years, microplastics has entered the domain of public media and public awareness and become a tangible confirmation on the declining viability of global marine environment. As a scientific problem microplastic first appeared in journals in early 1970ties and therefore, contrary to general understanding, this is not a new environmental problem. Current estimates shows that as much as 12.7 million tonnes of plastic is entering the oceans annually. Additionally, studies on plastic in both soil and atmospheric compartment indicates that the problem extends, in some degree, to these compartments consequently establishing the problem on a much large scale. Potential sources of microplastics are abundant, originating from both primary and secondary sources. All together as plastics in its diverse types and forms has become an intrinsic part of modern lifestyle.

First introduced in the 1980ties the concept of Eco-innovation was presented as a mode of balancing economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. Still, focusing strongly on financial gains as main driver in innovations the concept of eco-innovation has its challenges in proposing itself as a sustainable approach to innovation. Therefore, this seminar proposes a radical approach to innovation denoted Environmental Neutral. By providing a stringent focus on upholding strong environmental benefits in innovative initiatives, this concept tries to position environmental neutrality as the main driver in an innovative process or product innovation. Environmental Neutral does not exclude the possibility of financial gains however; it does focus on the environmental effect(s) first.

In brief, the seminar will discuss:

- Microplastic(s) and its link to modern society
- Eco-Innovation,
- Environmental Neutrality, and why more environmental focus matters