

NGO meets Design: Future cases from upstreaming sustainable innovation

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This paper will present the results of a unique creative collaboration between Forum for the Future and IDEO. Both organisations work in similar ways on different issues in different contexts, i.e. constantly striving to operate at the strategic stages/levels of companies - where there is the greatest levels of influence and largest degrees of freedom to innovate. This project looked at ways to bring together The Forum's strategic sustainability approach with IDEO's strategic design and innovation work – into a potentially powerful combination.

The collaboration took place as a part of a larger project titled Upstreaming Sustainability, which looks to integrate sustainability at the earliest stages of the product and business development process as the primary driver for new concepts and solutions. This paper will briefly highlight stage 1, but will describe stage 2 - the project realisation phase conducted chiefly between The Forum and IDEO in more detail. Here a series of key insights and findings from two stage 1 'Upstreaming' company case studies – plus a methodology developed as part of that - were taken to a collaborative creative process between the two parties, which were then realised and synthesised as a series of Futures Cases.

The paper will highlight the background project, going on to describe in detail the collaborative design/creative process as well as presenting the resultant Futures cases of what happens when you upstream sustainability.