

### **Social acceptance of CO<sub>2</sub>-based products**

Niels de Beus, Online webinar, 23 November 2021



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### Approach & methodology

We wanted to look at two perspectives:

- Industry
  - How the CCU (Carbon Capture and Utilization) industry in general thinks about the issue of social acceptance by consumers with regard to converted CO<sub>2</sub> in products.
  - How companies that already have CO<sub>2</sub>-based products on the market think about acceptance issues
- Consumers
  - How **consumers** feel about the issue on converted CO<sub>2</sub> in their products
  - Which **factors** play a major role for the acceptance?

#### Methodology:

- Literature research on consumer perception
- **Online survey** with 11 questions (n=93) circulated via our industry networks
- 4 expert interviews with companies who already launched CCU products
- 4 focus group discussions with 4-6 consumers each







Previous studies on the Social acceptance & public perception on CCU products

• Few studies have investigated the social acceptance of captured CO<sub>2</sub> in consumer products.

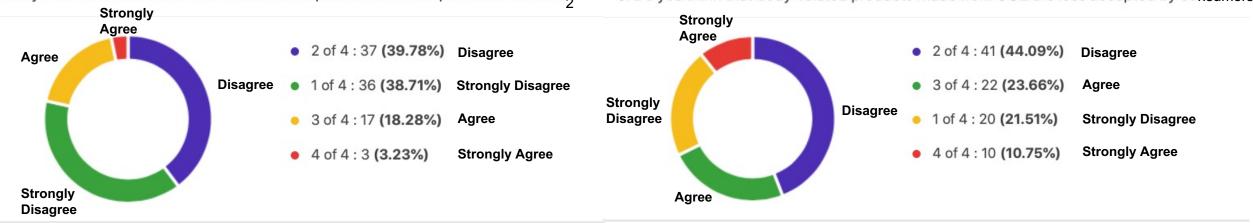


- Little is known about CCU as a technology among the wider population.
  - Found positive correlations for people:
    - with regard to the attitude "environmental awareness"
    - with regard to a more technical background
    - with regard to the age of people (higher awareness when younger)
- Acceptance and trust in novel technologies like CCU are strongly dependent on the source of knowledge (knowledge provider)
  - $\rightarrow$  e.g. in Germany, the government and NGOs are considered trustworthy
- Difference between general agreement with a technology and having to interact personally → NIMBY effect (not-in-my-backyard effect)

# Highlights of the online survey circulated via the chemical & material industry







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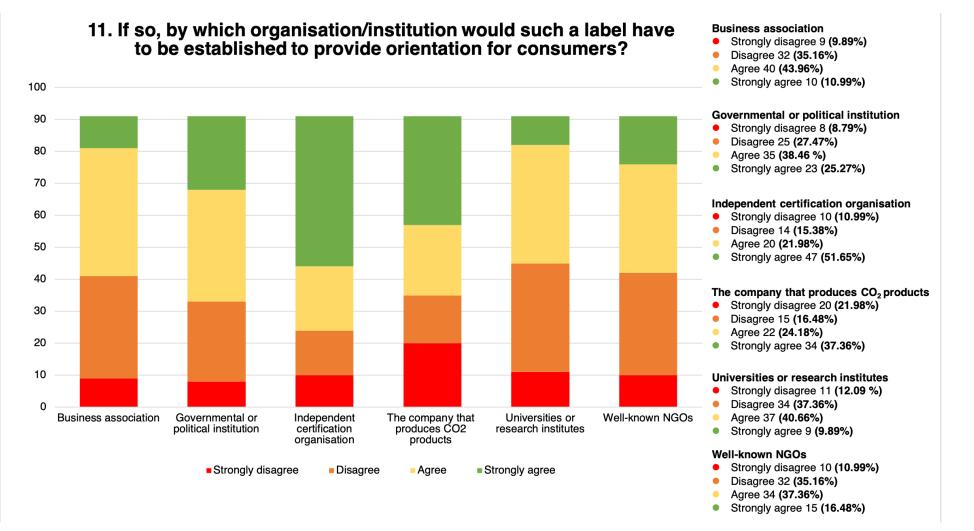
## Highlights of the online survey circulated via the chemical & material industry



10. Do you think that a CO2 label could help consumers to be more aware of CO2 utilisation



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### Insights of the expert interviews



Rather positive social acceptance for CCU

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- All companies have difficulties in indicating sustainability in a way that it is understandable for consumers → Most companies describe the term "sustainability" as "fuzzy and imprecise"
- More specific, CCU and CO<sub>2</sub> utilisation is considered highly difficult to sell due to lack of understanding, so that some producers did **not stress that converted CO<sub>2</sub> is included** at all
  - "I know that in their marketing, they are not so much highlighting the carbon dioxide, so they try to describe it in a way that usual persons, who are not chemists, can understand it's more sustainable, but I think they do not stress CO<sub>2</sub> as a word or explain what CO<sub>2</sub> is".
  - Terms like renewable or circular are well-received
- When educating lay-people it is highly important to have "real applications" made from converted CO<sub>2</sub> to showcase consumer the value of CO<sub>2</sub> utilisation



### Insights of the expert interviews



- Need to have big brands on board to introduce a new material at the consumer market → Sustainability as a big selling point with high demands!
- A CO<sub>2</sub> label from a trustworthy and well-known certifier with concrete figures on the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> contained would be very valuable to give consumers an orientation.
- Incentives from politics could help that large industries jump on board
  - For example, a CO<sub>2</sub> tax on products in combination with such a label would clearly show consumers by the price which product contain more and which products contain less CO<sub>2</sub> (especially for the European market)

## Highlights of the four focus groups

- 2 focus groups with the attitude "high environmental awareness" → most have been active in environmental NGOs
- 2 focus groups without particular strong relation toward the environment
- Participants received 4 different samples in advance and were instructed to test the products → the participants did not know that the products contain captured CO<sub>2</sub>.
  - Wax crayon
  - Soap

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- Piece of foam (used e.g. for mattresses)
- Household cleaner

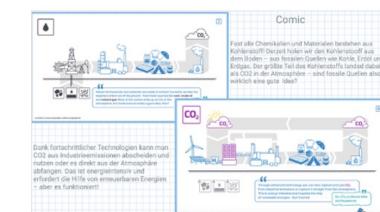






## Highlights of the four focus groups

- A general explanation of CCU was given in the middle of the focus group discussion
- After that we showed them different information trails about CCU:
  - Comic
  - Label
  - Fact sheet
  - **Tweet** about a CO<sub>2</sub> product and
  - Video









#### Datenblatt

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### Statements from the participants

- In general all participants were basically positively surprised that such technologies already exists
- They knew next to nothing about CO<sub>2</sub> use beforehand

### Statements of the participants after they learned that the products we sent them contained captured CO<sub>2</sub>:

- In most of the products we tested, the acceptance of the CO<sub>2</sub> contained was very high.
  - Some where concerned about the mattress foam and the soap due to health reasons
- No real differences between people with a high environmental awareness and no or less environmental awareness
- Regarding the information trails **most people preferred the video** over the other options
  - However, we would guess that the way of communication is strongly dependent on the environment and the target group.



# Main take-aways social acceptance of CCU

• Companies

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- Difficult to market the concept of CCU
- Similar to bio-based, it might be feasible to use simpler terminology to get the message across → a
  good example: Circular carbon
- Currently, brands are a stronger driver than regulation & policy for CCU
- Companies are largely convinced that a **reliable label** would be a strong tool for marketing
- Consumers
  - No knowledge of CCU
  - In principle, consumers are positively surprised about CCU when they understand the concept
  - Trust is strongly dependent on the source of information
  - Issues can arise via the **NIMBY-effect**: If people perceive issue to their personal health or other personal limitations (e.g. a CCU plant in the neighbourhood), they might oppose
  - Transferring information via video was received best, but this is likely dependent on the circumstances (e.g. videos not feasible in supermarkets)



# Thank you for your attention!



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