

Carl Dalhammar – Control measures are crucial for a circular shift

Carl Dalhammar is an associate professor at the International Institute of the Environment at Lund University. Among other things, he researches instruments for a circular economy, and his research shows that a number of public instruments need to be adopted both by the EU and nationally to increase product quality and give consumers incentives to repair products.



Within Mistra REES, Carl Dalhammar leads research on various public instruments – that is, laws, taxes and so on – and how they can contribute to a circular economy. He also examines which instruments can help sustainable companies, as it is difficult for many companies with circular business models to compete in today’s “linear” economy.

With regard to political and legal challenges in the shift to a circular economy, Carl emphasizes that it is not just a matter of introducing new instruments but also of examining how existing rules hinder sustainable business. Another problem is that political decision-makers are not radical enough: the planet is facing an ecological collapse, and then we have to change much faster. There is really only room for companies that are part of the solution.

The research conducted within Mistra REES is very applicable. Companies, organizations and politicians can absorb the results that the research shows, and it is also possible to use Mistra REES’ research results as a basis for policy. Companies can also gain a greater understanding of where the barriers to circular business models lie.

Mistra REES applies a method that is relatively unusual for policy research, using a “bottom-up” perspective on circular business models. In practice, this means starting from circular business models and examining the obstacles that exist to scale up the business. This results in more concrete results from companies about what policies are needed to better support and promote a more circular and sustainable future.

Carl believes that we must become more radical in environmental policy in order to really promote a more resource-efficient and circular economy. This means that we must dare to think about what is really needed. For example, there is no place for cheap, low-quality products in the future. We must invest in policy instruments to achieve this, such as product regulation by the EU and public procurement in Sweden. This means that political courage is needed both within the EU and nationally.