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Sustainable consumption – an unwieldy object of research

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Nourishing ground of the *GAIA* special issue *Sustainable Consumption* is the focal topic *From Knowledge to Action – New Paths towards Sustainable Consumption* funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The introductory paper describes the synthesis process, which focused on fundamental conceptual and normative issues of sustainable consumption as an object of research, and summarises its main results – classification systems, conceptual structures, and clarifications of normative positions pertaining to four questions: how to conceive individual consumption, how to relate consumption and sustainability, how to assess sustainable consumption, and how to change individual consumption. It also explains how the individual papers of this issue under the headings *Viewpoints* and *Reflection* relate to these results.

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