

Benefits of innovation under constraints

'When it comes to innovation, the single most common piece of advice may be to "think outside the box." Constraints, according to this view, are the enemy of creativity because they sap intrinsic motivation and limit possibilities. Sophisticated innovators, however, have long recognized that constraints spur and guide innovation.'

[McKinsey Quarterly, May 2015](#)

Innovation under constraints can, in particular, help companies to:

- become more **resilient**, by acting in anticipation of future resource supply constraints and disruptions; and/or
- access markets and contribute to **social development** at the 'base of the pyramid'.

Other potential benefits of such innovation are:

- future-proofing against more stringent regulations;
- joining the circular economy (by eliminating waste);
- satisfying growing demand for 'sustainable' products or services;
- providing cost effective and/or differentiated solutions that can maintain or increase market share;
- stimulating R&D by injecting fresh challenges and perspectives;
- developing creative/ leading-edge responses (e.g. distributed/ agile/ additive manufacturing) to sustainability opportunities or challenges;
- preparing for competition from emerging-market rivals or disruptive new entrants;
- achieving ambitious sustainability targets ('walking the talk', reputational enhancement).