

PRESOURCE

Promotion of Resource Efficiency in Central European SMEs

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Whether driven by market requirements, environmental concerns or EU policies: Resource efficiency is one of the core topics in the next years for all Central European countries.

The policy background

The topic of resource efficiency or productivity has reached a high importance in politics and business. Evidence on its past performance indicates that the EU's response must go beyond existing policy action. Consequently the European Commission put resource efficiency at the heart of its structural economic strategy.

Resource Efficiency is one of the 7 Flagship Initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. It is complemented by a EU Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe, which provides the strategic framework for future action and calls for an integrated approach across many policy areas at European, transnational and national levels.



The challenge

The EU12 countries (and most Central European partner countries belong to the New Member States) have a dramatically lower material productivity than the EU15 or the EU27 average (581 compared to 1304 USD/ton). This has been revealed by a survey conducted by the European Environment Agency in 2011. And the trend is even more alarming: While the material productivity in the EU15 has been increased constantly since 2000, the productivity in the EU12 has remained static or even decreased!

This calls for immediate action in Central Europe. Thus it will be crucial for enterprises in the region to increase their material productivity and - in a wider sense - resource efficiency in order to keep or even increase their competitiveness.

By doing so they could reduce at the same time their dependence on imports of increasingly scarce materials, minerals and fuels in order to be better prepared to cope with rising and volatile energy and commodity prices.



Two major barriers

Two major barriers for exploiting the potential for resource efficiency in products and production processes can be identified:

- Enterprises and especially SMEs are not aware of their resource utilization, real costs of pollution and the related (cost) reduction potential as well as means to improve it.
- SMEs have problems in financing necessary investments in eco-innovations in order to exploit their potential to increase resource efficiency.



Our understanding of Resource Efficiency

Natural resources are the material, energetic and physical basis of life. And mankind is constantly overexploiting the ecological capacities of our earth. Thus there are many potential areas of intervening against the overconsumption of resources in our daily life. But there is no “one-size-fits-all approach”. In this wide field the PRESOURCE partners from 6 Central European countries decided to focus on a narrow but important subarea: SMEs from the manufacturing sector. In this context we understand Resource Efficiency to be:

Reducing the use and the costs of energy, material and water in the production process and product life cycle



What we are doing

PRESOURCE aims at the achievement of the following results:

1. Improved in-house capacity (managerial and technological): We want to enable SMEs in the production sector to identify and exploit within their own organization potential for increasing the resource efficiency of the production process and products – for the benefit of economy & environment.
2. Improved knowledge and mechanisms for risk sharing and for financing eco-innovations in SMEs: We will provide incentives and innovative financing schemes for external and internal investment decisions.
3. Improved framework conditions: We want to enable policy makers, intermediaries and multipliers in CE to respond to the EU Roadmap.

Our outputs

1. The “EDIT VALUE” tool (Eco-innovation Diagnosis and Implementation Tool for Increasing the Enterprise Value) enables SMEs to increase their resource efficiency and thus to increase their competitiveness.
2. A Financial Guideline and a Cost Benefit Analysis that are translating the added value of resource efficiency into the “speak” of the financial sector and that are making the competitive advantages of investments in RE-technologies visible.
3. A Competence Platform that provides policy makers and stakeholders with data, information and best-practice examples on resource efficiency in Central Europe and incorporates the results of a transnational policy and stakeholder dialogue.

PARTNERS

Germany: Federal Environment Agency | German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety | Fraunhofer Center for Central and Eastern Europe

Czech Republic: ENVIROS Ltd.

Poland: Research and Innovation Center Pro-Akademia

Austria: STENUM Environmental Consultancy and Research Company Ltd.

Italy: ENEA – Italian national agency for new technologies, energy and sustainable economic development

Hungary: Corvinus University of Budapest

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