



European
Commission

Directorate-General
for Enterprise



TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION IN SMEs:

The Role of Environmental Management Systems and What Public Authorities Can Do To Encourage Their Uptake



CONFERENCE

BRUSSELS, 10 FEBRUARY 2004 (9.30 am – 6pm)

**VENUE: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
(Rue Wiertz, Room P1A002)**

BACKGROUND AND AIM OF THE CONFERENCE

Environmental management systems are an important business-led tool to achieve more sustainable production patterns. However, at present the uptake of such systems in Europe is low, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises, which face a number of specific barriers in this respect. This raises the question what public authorities – together with other actors – can do to address these barriers and to significantly increase the numbers of SMEs with an EMS.

Over the past 18 months, this question has been examined by an Expert Group composed of Member State representatives, under the chairmanship of the European Commission's Enterprise Directorate-General. This was done in the context of a so-called "Best" (i.e. benchmarking) project, the key findings of which will be published in a report to be released early in 2004.

The aim of the conference will be to publicise the project's main results and recommendations, present a number of the identified good practice case studies and, most importantly, start the follow-up process. The conference is of interest for all actors involved in promoting the adoption of EMSs by SMEs: public authorities at all levels, business organisations and chambers of commerce, consultants, verifiers and certifiers, trade unions, NGOs, universities etc.

THE BEST PROJECT REPORT

At present the uptake of both formal and less formal EMSs by SMEs in Europe is low. Nonetheless, some countries and regions clearly perform better than others. This raises two questions: i) what are the policy options available to public authorities to significantly increase the uptake of EMSs by SMEs? and ii) what can they learn from successful public policy approaches in other countries, regions and municipalities?

To answer these questions, the report describes and analyses 24 good practice case studies in 13 different European countries. It does so by distinguishing the following five categories of public policies:

- **Administrative arrangements for EMSs** - e.g. in relation to accreditation, certification/verification, registration, promotion and evaluation.
- **Embedment of EMSs** – the use of EMSs as one tool amongst others, in public environmental policy strategies at national, regional, local and/or sector level.
- **Assistance provided to enterprises establishing EMSs ("push" factors)**, - e.g. in the form of direct subsidies, information provision, attempts to promote an SME-friendly implementation of formal EMSs, sector-specific initiatives as well as the use of horizontal, vertical and multi-stakeholder networks.
- **Initiatives involving less formal approaches to environmental management** - in particular "staged", "alternative", "simplified" and "integrated" EMSs.
- **Benefits offered to enterprises with an EMS ("pull" factors)** - such as raising public awareness and recognition as well as providing material benefits such as access to finance.

On the basis of these selected good practices, the report makes a series of recommendations for the design of relevant policies and programmes, both at national, regional, local and European level.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

- **Chair Morning Session : Michel Catinat, Head of the Unit “Environmental Aspects of Enterprise policy” of DG Enterprise, European Commission**

9.30 - OPENING SESSION

Opening speech by **Mr. Jean-Paul Mingasson**, Director-General of DG Enterprise: *Achieving Sustainable Production – The Role of Voluntary Instruments*

Introduction by **Dorothy Maxwell**, Senior Environmental Specialist at the Irish Enterprise Development Agency (Enterprise Ireland) and a member of the Expert Group: *Key Findings of the Best project on EMSs in SMEs*

10.00 - EMSs IN SMEs : POTENTIAL AND BARRIERS

Environmental management systems can be a key instrument to help SMEs address their environmental impacts and progress towards sustainable production patterns. However, to facilitate their wider uptake account must be taken of SME-specific barriers and needs. Three speakers will give their views on these issues:

Dr. Ruth Hillary, Technical Director of Corporate Sustainability at the Consultancy Firm “Scott Wilson”

Jan T. Persson, Research Fellow at the Swedish Business Development Agency (NUTEK)

Giorgio Russomanno, Chairman of the Environment Committee of the European Association of Craft Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME)

Questions and answers

11.00 - COFFEE BREAK

11.20 - THE ROLE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES CAN PLAY – EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE (1)

Public authorities across Europe have developed a large variety of initiatives to encourage a wider uptake of EMSs by SMEs. In this session four good practice examples will be presented, divided into two categories:

➤ Administrative Arrangements for EMAS and ISO 14001

Hans-Jürgen Reitzig, Managing Director of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in the German Lower-Rhine Region (Duisberg-Wesel-Kleve)

Frans Stuyt, Managing Director of the Dutch Association for the Co-ordination of the Certification of Environmental Management Systems (SCCM)

➤ Embedment of EMSs: Local Agenda 21 and Voluntary Agreements at Sector Level

Timo J. Lehtonen, Environmental Manager, City of Mikkeli, Finland

N.N, Representative of the Dutch Organisation “FO Industrie”, which supports the implementation of the Dutch covenants

Questions and answers

12.45 LUNCH

14.15 - THE ROLE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES CAN PLAY – EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE (2)

In this session six further good practice examples of public policy initiatives will be presented in three categories:

➤ **Approaches Involving Less Formal EMSs: Eco-lighthouse and BS 8555**

Hans Otto Lund, Marketing Manager of the Norwegian “Eco-lighthouse Programme” and Member of the Executive Board of the Municipality of Kristiansand

Matthias Gelber, Director of Environmental Management Systems at the Consultancy Firm “White Young Green”

➤ **Providing Subsidies: The Use of Networks and the EU Structural Funds**

N.N., Speaker on the experiences made with the Swedish “Environment-Driven Business Development Grant Scheme”

N.N., Speaker on the experiences made with EMAS-related funding in the context of the operation of the Structural Funds in Portugal

➤ **Approaches Involving Multi-Stakeholder Networks**

Erik Oerskov, Co-ordinator of a Danish “Green Network”

Sylvie Letouche, Co-ordinator of the Programme “Performance Bretagne Environment Plus” in the French Region of Brittany

Each sub-session will be followed by questions and answers

17.00 - FOLLOW-UP - IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking account of the various good practice examples identified in the Best project, the final report makes a series of recommendations directed at public authorities. In this session, a number of Member State representatives will give their initial reactions on how they intend to follow-up on these recommendations.

➤ Panel Discussion with Member State representatives

17.30 - CLOSING SESSION

➤ Conclusions from the Commission’s perspective

Registration Form

Conference “Towards Sustainable Production in SMEs”
Tuesday 10 February 2004
European Parliament, rue Wiertz (Room P1A002), Brussels

PLEASE RETURN THIS REGISTRATION FORM (PER FAX OR E-MAIL) BY 15 JANUARY 2004 TO:

European Commission - DG Enterprise/E.1
B - 1049 Brussels
Fax : +32 2 299.86.30 - E-mail : ENTR-SME-CONF@cec.eu.int

- Title Mr
 Ms
 Dr
- Family Name _____
- First Name _____
- Organisation _____
- Address _____
- Post Code _____
- City _____
- Country _____
- Tel. _____
- Fax _____
- Email _____

I would like to attend the conference

I will not be able to attend

Practical Information

- **Participation in the conference including lunch and coffee is free of charge.** However, participants are expected to pay their own travel and accommodation costs. The Commission will not make hotel reservations.
- **Registration will occur on a “first come, first served” basis.** However, in order to ensure a geographical and sectorial balance amongst the participants, the Commission reserves the right to give priority to registrations from countries/stakeholders that are underrepresented. All places will be confirmed two weeks before the conference.
- **Interpretation** from and into English, French, German, Italian and Spanish will be available.