

Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy Action Plan

Update on Progress



May 2010

Issue No 1

The SCP/SIP Action plan was presented by the Commission in July 2008. Since the launch of the Action Plan progress has been made towards its key aims and objectives. The following news letter gives updates on many of the actions proposed - it does not provide a conclusive list of progress made.

Headlines:

- Ecolabel Directive recast to increase efficacy and work being started to align related instruments.
- Retail Forum celebrates first birthday and initial successes
- Extensive advice and guidance made available on GPP

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1. Retail and Consumer Awareness

Retail Forum - Launched in March 2009, the Retail Forum has recently celebrated its first anniversary. This first year was a success: the number of retailers members increased from 21 to 28, almost 100 key stakeholders from industry and NGOs are actively involved in the work of the forum and a significant political momentum was generated.



The Retail Forum has met 5 times so far, elaborating on a variety of issues with the aim to improve the sustainability of the sector and its supply chain, as well as to increase consumers' awareness and thus stimulating change in their behaviour. 3 "issues papers" have been finalised (Energy Efficiency of Stores; Optimisation of Distribution Systems; Marketing and Effective Communication). They are the tangible outcomes of the debate among stakeholders, and address the key challenges identified.

The first annual event of the Retail Forum will take place in Brussels on 24 June 2010 at the presence of Commissioner Potocnik. A panel with high level representatives from policy makers, industry and NGOs will highlight the role of the retail sector to contribute to the EU2020 strategy.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/industry/retail/index_en.htm

The European Food SCP Roundtable

This public-private initiative that is co-chaired by the European Commission and food supply chain partners. There are 24 member organizations representing the European food supply chain from "farm to fork". The initiative was launched in May 2009 and it is attracting growing interest; recently EEB (European Biodiesel Board) requested to participate as an observer, and BEUC (The European Consumers' Organisation) expressed interest.



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The European Food SCP Round Table's vision is to promote a science-based, coherent approach to sustainable consumption and production in the food sector across Europe, taking into account environmental interactions at all stages of the food chain. A key principle is that environmental information communicated along the food chain, including to consumers, should be scientifically reliable and consistent, understandable and not misleading, so as to support informed choice.

The work is carried out in 4 ad-hoc working groups. So far, a set of draft "guiding principles" for methodology and communication have been prepared and circulated to a wide range of stakeholders for consultation, with the aim being to adopt them by the plenary assembly at its meeting on 13 July in Brussels. See: <http://www.food-scp.eu/>

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2. Ecolabel - <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/>

In the last 6 months the Regulation on Ecolabel has been revised to increase its effectiveness and streamline its operation.

Changes include: more product groups, quicker criteria development process, product group development by the Commission, reduction of annual fees, simplification of assessment procedure and more focus on the most significant environmental impacts of products while keeping the ambition levels high. See: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/about_ecolabel/revision_of_ecolabel_en.htm



The Criteria for Ecolabel are constantly evolving to keep up with market developments. Criteria have been revised for the following and will be voted on in June: *Laundry detergents, Laptops, Dishwasher detergents and PCs*. And in October: *All-purpose cleaners, Refrigeration, Hand dishwashing detergents, Lubricants, Copy and graphic and printed paper, Washing machines and Light bulbs*. Procurement guidance is also under development for buildings.

A tender for a study on extending Ecolabel to food has been launched, the study will be performed by the end of 2011.

A new desk officer is being recruited to work on Ecolabel.

3. Green Public Procurement - This voluntary instrument promotes the use of Green Public Procurement in Member States while at the same time reduces environmental impacts and stimulate the growth of green industry.

The first set of GPP criteria (ten) had already been developed and are published on the GPP website (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp>), while the second set of GPP criteria (*Combined Heat & Power, Thermal Insulation, Hard Floor Coverings, Windows, Wall Panels, Street Lighting & Traffic Signals, Road Construction & Road Signs, and Mobile Phones*) is being finalised and will be published by the end of June 2010.



To disseminate information and to support the uptake of GPP, a Helpdesk was launched in January 2010. The Helpdesk is tasked with providing answers to enquiries and questions, issuing a monthly News-alert, preparing Frequently Asked Questions on GPP and renewing the GPP website. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm.

Unit C.1 is also running two contracts dealing with GPP awareness-raising and training seminars. In this context 19 national GPP conferences are being organised and 42 GPP national experts have been trained so far. More on the ITCILO website - <http://gpp.itcilo.org/>.

In June the update of GPP National Action Plans in all Member States and analysis on the assessment and comparison of national GPP/SPP criteria and underlying schemes in eight EU Members States and Norway will be concluded.

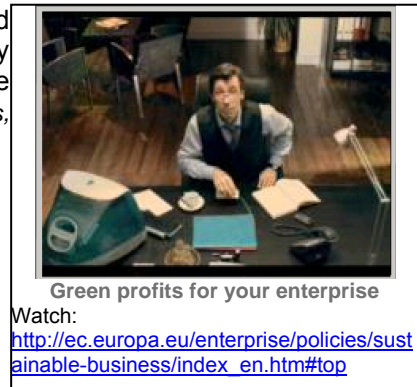
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4. Ecodesign Directive provides consistent EU-wide rules for improving the environmental performance of energy related products through placing minimum requirements on their design.

The extension of the Directive in 2009 to cover energy related products means that products that do not necessarily use energy but have an impact on energy consumption and can therefore contribute to saving energy can be covered, including; *windows, insulation materials, shower heads and taps.*

- More information on the Ecodesign Directive can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sustainable-business/ecodesign/index_en.htm
- As well as in the following brochure: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sustainable-business/ecodesign/files/brochure_ecodesign_en.pdf

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5. Aligning Sustainable Product Policy Instruments - JRC-IPTS has started work on a project to develop a common evidence base for water taps and shower heads that can be used for the development of Ecolabel and GPP criteria and eventually for the implementing measures under the Ecodesign Directive.

The processes for developing Ecodesign, Ecolabel and GPP requirements are presently separate. To ensure policy coherence, compatibility, stakeholders/industry compliance and overall working efficiency, the work will be co-ordinated to develop a shared evidence base for the three different policy instruments.

Output of this project will be proposals for Ecolabel and GPP criteria. Implementing measures under the Ecodesign Directive will not be developed because these products are not in the current work plan. Nevertheless, the project will provide an evidence base for use in the future should these products be listed in the next work plan which is planned for end of 2011.

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6. ECAP - Environmental Compliance Assistance Programme for SMEs

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/programme/programme_en.htm

A pilot project on the transfer of best practice on environmental support for SMEs was concluded in February. Consequently, a cross-border recipe for the successful support of non-profit environmental services has started to take shape; with special emphasis on indicators, planning, innovative incentives and communication. Read more:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/training/pilot_workshops_en.htm

Additional environmental expertise is provided through the Enterprise Europe Network to SMEs under the Small Business Act (COM (2008) 394) and ECAP. Read more:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/een/een_en.htm

A second pilot project will take place during 2010, aiming to take best practice transfer concept further through on-the-job training sessions designed for both SME support organisations and their "clients". The first session is planned for the 11-12 June in Prato (Italy). Read more:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/toolkits/training2010_en.htm

The first assessment study on the implementation of ECAP will kick off this year. The study will examine the compliance assistance measures undertaken, data on SME compliance and will formulate recommendations for future actions. The final recommendations will be formulated with the representatives of Member States sitting in the ECAP expert group and finalised in 2011.

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7. ETAP – Environmental Technologies Action Plan



ETAP was set up to speed up the removal of financial, economic and institutional barriers to the development of environmentally-friendly technologies. Current priorities are mobilising finance and other actions to promote market opportunities for business involved in environmental technologies. This includes establishing credible verification of environmental performance to boost confidence in eco-technologies. Tools will be developed to monitor, benchmark and boost the uptake of eco-innovation. It also aims to improve access to new technologies and financing for small firms in particular. Find out more - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/etap/index_en.htm this site also includes policy information and a newsletter.

In 2010 ETAP is being revised to promote eco-innovation across the wider economy. The Eco-innovation Action Plan will build on the Environmental Technologies Action Plan and will be linked to the Commission's forthcoming Research and Innovation Plan.

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8. Environmental Technology Verification (ETV) pre-programme- <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/etv/index.htm>

New environmental technologies face difficulties in breaking into the market and accessing potential users. Purchasers tend to opt for established technologies. The ETV pre-programme is a new voluntary scheme, being initiated by the Commission on an exploratory basis in 2010-2011. It aims to provide technology developers and vendors with the possibility to have an independent, credible validation of the performance claims related to their new environmental technologies. This pre-programme will test the need, and possible benefits that could be derived, from a fully-fledged EU ETV Scheme.



The organisations performing the verification of technologies under ETV, called Verification Bodies, will have to be accredited by national accreditation agencies, following the 'new legal framework' implemented for internal market product directives. This will ensure the credibility of the system and relieve the Commission from evaluation and monitoring functions. The allocation of grants from the EU budget to accredited Verification Bodies is under consideration, to cover the fixed costs of the system and facilitate the access to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

ETV will provide objective evidence on environmental performance. It will not substitute existing regulatory or voluntary systems such as type-approval or labels; but fill the gaps for those technologies going beyond applicable regulations or standards and for innovations not fitting into existing legislative, labelling or standards frameworks.

An information meeting on the ETV pre-programme is planned on July 2nd in Brussels (CCAB), if interested please contact ENV-ETV@ec.europa.eu

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9. EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm

The EMAS regulation was modified in late 2009 to improve the applicability of the scheme for organisations – particularly for SMEs – and strengthen EMAS information and communications activities.



In order to improve the applicability of the scheme, the revised regulation (EMAS III):

- gives flexibility in the frequency with which SMEs are required to publish their environmental statement and updates;
- allows organisations to make a single corporate registration of all or some of its sites irrespective of whether these are in different member states;
- provides special assistance in the development and implementation phases of EMAS registration;
- introduces environmental core indicators to achieve a harmonised and thorough consideration of environmental effects; and
- requires reference documents to be developed by the European Commission to facilitate the practical implementation of EMAS requirements.

And the in order to ensure the scheme is communicated effectively EMAS III:

- obligates Member States to actively promote EMAS and make information available on the scheme; and
- encourages the global uptake of the scheme by allowing Member States to decide if they allow registration of organisations or single sites located outside the EU.

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10. Eco-industries - Industries that produce goods and services to improve resource and energy efficiency. Europe's core eco-industries, including the large sectors of waste management and water supply, have a turnover in excess of €300bn and provide nearly 3.5 million jobs - around 1.5% of all employment, and 2.5% of GDP. The market is growing fast, but despite the EU's initial head start, its share of this market is under threat from rapidly expanding industries in the US and Asia.

The Commission is working to ensure optimal framework conditions for these industries. A recent study on the competitiveness of these industries made a number of policy recommendations including the need to improve the functioning of the internal market in this sector (See: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=3769&tpa_id=203&lang=en). DG Enterprise & Industry has been testing the results of this analysis with concerned actors in the field with the aim of understand the current reality of business life for Europe's environmental industries and deliver practicable recommendations for improving it.

This initiative embraces the two most pressing challenges facing industry and policymakers today namely how to grow our economies and create jobs while making the transition to a more resource efficient economy. The Europe 2020 strategy recognises this with its sustainable growth pillar focusing on both objectives.

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11. Natural Resources - EUROPA 2020 strategy has as its flagship initiative a 'resource efficient Europe: to help decouple economic growth from the use of resources'. Environment Commissioner Potočník has chosen resource efficiency as a key political priority and has given numerous speeches on the topic including the following: (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/10/185&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>).

Resource-efficiency means making the best possible use of all the resources available to us – using them wisely and sustainably. In order to decouple resource use, and its related impacts, from economic growth Europe will have to improve resource efficiency and thus competitiveness; taking a full life-cycle perspective on resource use; and, using resource in a cleaner way.

There is a clear need to continue to change behaviour through the traditional routes of environmental legislation and its compliance. Ways of changing behaviour through a combination of economic and fiscal tools, markets, prices and eco-innovation are also being investigated. Further cross cutting dialogues with other DGs will be developed to ensure that resource efficiency is addressed in the wide range of relevant policy areas.

In order to meet these challenges we will need to further develop existing work including the Thematic Strategy on Natural Resources (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/natres/index.htm>). This strategy has achieved the following to date:

1. An International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management has been established:
 - Two reports have been published "Assessing bio-fuels" and "Metal Stocks in Society" (<http://www.unep.fr/scp/rpanel/>);
 - At Greenweek (1 June), the next report will be published: "Environmental impacts of production and consumption: priority products and materials"; and,
 - Reports on "The Recycling Rates of Metals" and "decoupling of environmental impacts from growth" are under preparation.
2. Indicator development is underway: Preparatory work has been undertaken to measure progress in reducing the ecological stress of resource use by the EU. The objective is to develop a headline



indicator that can be compared to GDP; this might enable a process of setting resource-efficiency targets in the future.

3. A pilot version of the data centre on natural resources has been set up.

A communication on the progress that the strategy is making, will be published towards the end of 2010. A stakeholder meeting on the thematic strategy review for resources is planned for the 23 June, in Brussels.

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12. DOLCETA on-line consumer education tool on sustainable consumption



In cooperation with the European Universities Continuing Education Network (EUCEN), the Commission has developed web-based consumer education materials on sustainable consumption. This information is part of a wider consumer education website called DOLCETA which contains information and teaching materials on other consumer issues. Materials exist in 27 customized versions in 21 languages (almost 100.000 web pages in total). Information targets adults and teachers of primary, secondary and adult education. It is also meant as a training or reference tool for consumer organisations. More than 1.2 million people have visited the DOLCETA website up to now.

The section on sustainable consumption is available on each country's website at: <http://www.dolceta.eu>

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13. The SWITCH-Asia Programme -

<http://www.switch-asia.eu/> launched in 2007 with EU funding of €90 million over the period 2007-2010 the SWITCH-Asia programme aims to spur a systematic change towards environment- and climate-friendly consumption and production in the Asian region by advancing SCP practices from demonstration to replication.



The Programme works simultaneously on the ground, with producers and consumers, and at the level of policy-making by supporting formulation and implementation of SCP-related policies. So far, the Programme is funding 30 projects in 15 Asian countries in areas such as Green Public Procurement, Cleaner Production, Eco-labelling, etc. Each of the funded projects will bring about quantifiable reductions of CO2 emissions and consumption of water, energy and other inputs.

The Programme consists of three components:

- Firstly, projects with potential of multiplication are started on the ground via a bottom-up approach and in accordance with local demands;
- Secondly, a network of projects is created, able to exchange and disseminate project experience and drive results; and,
- In the third stage work is disseminated further and linked with national policy goals of a social, economic and environmental nature to strengthen implementation.



Switch approach and Switch and poverty
Watch:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cf-sZoKGoY>
and <http://vimeo.com/11393152>

The SWITCH model was recently presented at the 18th UN Commission on Sustainable Development as an example of how to scale-up SCP implementation.

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