

ENEA Capacity-Building Working Group

The ENEA Capacity-Building Working Group was created by ENEA members to

- investigate capacity-building needs for integration of environment into Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund programmes and projects;
- to identify key issues and concerns related to covering capacity needs; and
- to facilitate exchange of materials, documents, and experience among ENEA members for capacity-building.

The working group is coordinated jointly by the EC Unit D3 and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), and has members from Italy, Malta, and Lithuania. The working group also welcomes the contributions of other ENEA members on an ongoing basis. Since its creation in September 2004 the working group has met four times to clarify its mandate and objective and carry out its work.

2005 Work – Needs Assessment

During 2005, the objective of the working group has been to investigate and further define capacity-building needs among ENEA members, and to pull together the network's resources to address them as simply and practically as possible. The "ENEA Anthology" is the result of that work.

The working group conducted a brief assessment of needs and issues related to capacity for environmental integration throughout the EU. The group asked ENEA members to evaluate and rank a series of capacity-related needs and issues that could affect their environmental authorities and countries. ENEA members evaluated the importance of each need or issue with a score from 0 (no importance at all) to 5 (top priority); working group members compiled and analysed the results. The working group received 17 responses to the assessment from ENEA members.

Issues which received an average score of 3.7 or higher are:

- **Improved understanding and awareness of the need to integrate environmental issues in SF and CF programmes within all institutions (4.2 average score).** 14 out of 17 respondents scored this issue 4 or higher. This issue relates not only to capacity building of environmental authorities but to the need to improve awareness of the importance of environment within public institutions and society.
- **Guidance and procedures on how institutions are to deal with integration of environment into programmes (3.9 average score).** This need was scored 4 or higher by all but 4 respondents, and relates to the need for external guidance and specific procedures. These may come "officially" from the EC, but may also come from other member states.

- **Improved capacity for integration of environment into the planning process, including SEA (3.8 average score).** This issue was ranked 4 or above by 12 out of 17 participants. The high priority given to this issue may reflect the applicability of the SEA Directive to Structural Funds plans and programmes for the upcoming programming period.
- **Capacity of national and regional authorities to promote and assist the project development/preparation process (3.8 average score).** This issue was ranked 4 or above by 13 of 17 participants, including nearly all of the new member states.
- **Capacity for project appraisal and selection, including use of EIA procedures, environmental indicators, and inclusion of environment into cost/benefit analyses (3.8 average score).** This issue received a wider range of scores; it was ranked above 4 by 10 of the 17 participants but still received a relatively high average score.
- **Improved experience, knowledge, and skills in dealing with all issues related to EU funds within environment authorities (3.7 average score).** The need for more skills specifically within environment authorities was ranked above 4 by 10 of the 17 respondents, including all of the new member states.

Issues which received lower average overall scores but were nonetheless ranked highly by the six respondents from the new Member States are:

- **Assistance to final beneficiaries for project development and preparation (average new MS score 4.00 vs 3.65 overall)**
- **Improved contacts and working relations between EAs, MAs, and regions (average new MS score 3.6 vs 2.7 overall)**

Some issues have been added to the list by the ENEA members, including:

- **Capacity of the MA to negotiate the environmental theme in the national package**
- **Improved capacity to promote the benefits of integrating environment into SF and CF programmes and individual projects**

The limitations of a rough assessment of this type are clear – the responses are subject to the opinions of those individuals filling them out (although most respondents reported that they developed the answers with a group of colleagues). No effort has been made to adjust for the difference in value attached to the scores by different respondents. Some respondents reported that they scored the issues in terms of priority for the EU overall, and others focused more on the particular needs of their own country.

Despite these limitations, the working group agreed that the needs assessment, particularly the overall list of needs and issues, can have value for ENEA members. For one, it is useful and interesting to see how one's own country's responses compare with the averages. Some of the working group members have used the list within their environmental authorities as a checklist for developing their own capacity-building plans or programmes. The list itself is a useful checklist or starting point to begin planning environmental capacity-building efforts. Finally, the list and priorities provided guidance for the working group in deciding which inputs to include in the ENEA Anthology and how to describe them for Anthology users.

2005 Work – The ENEA Anthology

The ENEA Anthology is a collection of case studies, guidance materials, training materials, best practices, and other materials produced by ENEA members which can assist EAs, MAs, regional authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders to build capacity for integration of environment into Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund programmes, by harnessing the experience of other members. In this sense, the Anthology is truly the output of a network, and the content of the Anthology is completely dependent upon the voluntary inputs of ENEA members.

The initial round of inputs to the Anthology was finalised in October 2005 and contains nearly 70 entries. Inputs were submitted by **12 member states: Austria, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.** The Anthology also includes the products of several non-governmental ENEA members, including the WWF, the REC, Bankwatch, Friends of the Earth Europe, the European Environmental Bureau, and the Greening Regional Development Programmes (GRDP) partnership.

It was agreed that the Anthology could be updated regularly on a quarterly basis.

The materials in the Anthology address a variety of capacity needs, including the priority needs mentioned above.

Several inputs address **human resource needs**, particularly those submitted by member states which have developed networks specifically aimed at integration of environment into Cohesion Policy. Anthology inputs include the technical assistance project developed by the Italian environmental authority to support environmental capacity building, and terms of reference for employees to support the network. The Anthology also includes many training materials, for environmental authorities' staff (Italy) but also for environmental awareness raising for all stakeholders (Spain, UK) and for specific sectors like agriculture, tourism, fisheries (Spain).

Another topic addressed by many of the inputs is **project development and preparation.** Here inputs include specific guidance on how to best use the funds for environmental projects (France, Spain), techniques for integrating environmental objectives into larger projects (Italy, UK); specific guidance on completing the environmental impact requirements of funding applications (Spain, UK); case studies and manuals for Cohesion Fund projects (Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia); and guides to specific project preparation activities such

as cost-benefit analysis (Ireland). Finally, the guidance prepared by the WWF points out the types of environmental investments which each of the funds can address across the EU.

Evaluation and assessment of the funds, including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), is covered by inputs from many members. Inputs include guidance from Austria; the Spanish guidance for SEA of planning documents for 2007-2013, and a handbook for general use throughout the EU produced by the Interreg partnership Greening Regional Development Programmes (GRDP). Guidance on mid-term evaluation is provided by Austria and Spain.

Methods for the evaluation of the **overall impact of the funds on the environment** are provided by Austria, as well as the report of the ENEA working group “Impact of Structural Funds on the Environment.”

Project-level evaluation and appraisal are addressed by environmental selection/appraisal criteria submitted by Austria, Italy, and Spain.

Inputs from Malta, and Italy address the **role of environmental authorities** in the management of EU funds including guidelines for relations between EAs and MAs.

Another potential topic of interest is the use of funds for **supporting environmental projects within small and medium enterprises (SMEs)**. Guidance from Italy and Spain includes sustainable development for enterprises, and the use of state aid schemes by SMEs for environmental improvements.

Several of the countries submitted **general manuals on management of the funds** (Ireland, Malta, Slovakia); these may serve as useful comparisons for countries developing new versions of these documents.

A contribution from Sweden provides an evaluation of how examples of **best practices, good examples, and success stories are used in work for sustainability**, and can assist users to make better use of the documents provided in the Anthology.

Using the Anthology

The working group envisions that the Anthology will have several uses for ENEA members and other interested institutions or individuals. The documents themselves will provide ideas, examples, formats, tips, tools and even direct guidance or procedures for use in other member states. In addition, the Anthology provides more information about those members which have developed the kind of capacity which other members believe they need. The ENEA network is meant to encourage bi-lateral contacts between members, and the Anthology is a way to facilitate these contacts, twinning-type work or more informal exchanges. Users may contact the national ENEA representatives available on the DG ENV webpage for more information or further exchange.

The Anthology also provides an excellent overview of what work has been done for integration of environment into Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund programmes for those

who wish to have an European-level overview. It can help in assessing what further guidance or documentation is needed from this perspective.

Almost all of the documents listed in the Anthology have been published on the internet and are accessible simply by following the web links provided. Where this is not the case, contact information has been provided. Most of the documents in the Anthology are written in the national language of the issuing authority, although some have been fully translated to English as well. Many of the documents not originally drafted in English come with an English-language summary which provides enough information for the user to determine whether or not to have the document translated in full.

The Capacity-Building Working Group wishes ENEA members and other users of the Anthology all the best in their efforts to build capacity for environmental integration and would like to express sincere thanks to those individuals and institutions who provided the information which has made this product possible.

Annex: Abbreviations used in the Anthology

CF – Cohesion Fund

EA – Environmental Authority

MA – Managing Authority

SEA – Strategic Environmental Assessment

SF – Structural Funds

SME – Small and Medium Enterprise