

ECOPROFIT - NEW PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN ADMINISTRATION AND COMPANIES

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Over 100 Austrian companies are certified according to EMAS by now. This implies that Austria is among the leaders in the EU concerning the implementation of environmental management systems. It is less well known generally that more than **150 companies located in 8 regions of Austria won awards in the framework of the „EcoProfit“ project.** These companies were involved in a one-year programme, in the course of which „environmental teams“ were established recruited from the staff, strategies to economize on the use of resources were identified as well as implemented by means of the introduction of „Cleaner Technologies“. All these activities were imbedded in a long-run plan to improve the environment related performance of the companies, simultaneously with production cost reductions. The awards as „EcoProfit“ companies were given for the voluntary implementation of these plans by the local authorities involved in such a programme. A scientific monitoring project accompanying one of these yielded the result, that new private-public partnerships between the local administration and the companies in the region can be initiated successfully in this way. It became clear additionally that in comparison to the alternative EMAS approach, local actors are central players as organizers and promoters of the image of a project as well as providers of the necessary safeguards for the quality of all actions. Such an approach, however, warrants new competences for and qualifications of administrators, facilitating the dialogue between partners rather than acting as a public authority.

At the Interdisciplinary Institute of Environmental Economics and Management a socio-economic research project was set up to monitor the process of an EcoProfit project in the city of Dornbirn in Austria (42.000 inhabitants, budget of 1.5 billion ATS). The main objective of the research was to check to what extent the **experiences are transferable to other towns**, to identify necessary **conditions for co-operative action** and to **assess and analyse the key factors of influence for success**. Within a period of one year about 40 personal interviews with involved actors have been carried out, the proceeding of the project has regularly been evaluated by questionnaires in written and the organized workshops and other events have been observed. The study demonstrates that the inclusion and dedication of the local administration constitutes a key element of success.

The **poster-presentation** will focus on the following topics:

- expectations and experiences of the participating companies
- the role of the administration within an EcoProfit-Project
- the most important factors for success of an EcoProfit-Project
- learning from EcoProfit for the implementation of EMAS and ISO 14000
- new partnerships by new public (environmental) management

THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS IN THE GREENING OF INDUSTRY

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Environmental Consulting has become a widely accepted, differentiated and high-quality service in Austria during the recent years. About 450 Austrian Environmental Consulting suppliers have an estimated sale of about 2 billion Austrian Schillings by Environmental Consulting. The beginning of the nineties was characterized by a rapid market-growth and excellent future possibilities for consultants. The market-growth depended largely on public activities (environmental laws, public customship, promotion of consulting), the general positive development of the economy and the high attention on environmental questions. The phase of extensive growth of the Environmental Consulting market is obviously over now, the main influence factors onto the growth of Environmental Consulting lost importance:

- there is no significant new development of environmental laws in Austria, which will induce additional needs for Environmental Consulting,
- because of the overall economic situation other problems get a higher attention than environmental questions
- and in addition to that the public sector is reducing its demand for consulting.

So nowadays the Environmental Consulting sector in Austria is transforming from a phase of general growth to a phase of establishing a stable position and differentiation. The EMAS Eco-Audit did lead to a significant response, but it is still adding only very little to the sales of the Environmental Consulting companies. Consulting that is leading to a reduction of costs and an obvious benefit, will stay on the market. Consultants who cannot clearly state the benefit of their products, will face serious problems.

Since 1993 the Development of the Environmental Consulting Sector in Austria is regularly monitored by the Interdisciplinary Institute for Environmental Economics and Management. On behalf of the ***Austrian Cleaner Production Center*** an Internet-Database of Environmental Consultants containing detailed data of more than 250 companies has been created. It gives the opportunity to analyse the Market Development over a period of 6 years and to identify the „winners“ and „losers“ among the Austrian Environmental Consultants.

The ***poster-presentation*** will focus on the following topics:

- the development and structure of the Environmental Consulting sector in Austria between 1993 and 1998
- a comparison to the Environmental Consulting sector in Denmark and Great Britain
- the market expectations and the most important potentials for marketgrowth
- the key elements of success of Environmental Consultants
- the contribution of Environmental Consulting to Sustainable Development