



Context

In the late 1980s, the concept of “sustainable development” launched by the Brundtland Commission marked a turning point in global development and environmental politics. Then, the international community recognized that development and environmental sustainability are interdependent and must be tackled together. At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, industrialized countries reiterated their commitment by adopting Agenda 21, thereby agreeing to foster access for developing countries and economies in transition to sustainable production methods, practices and techniques.

Strategy

After the Rio Summit, UNIDO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) launched pilot projects in resource-efficient and cleaner production to demonstrate preventive environmental strategies. Upon their successful completion, both partners agreed to sustain such production by establishing national capacities, known as the National Cleaner Production Centres (NCPCs), in developing countries and economies in transition. They focus on reducing the use of energy, water and other natural resources while also reducing the generation of waste and emissions, especially from small and medium-sized enterprises.

In Guatemala, the NCPC was established in 1999, with the financial support from the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Since its inception, the Centre has rendered a substantial amount of services, both to advance knowledge and information on cleaner production techniques and to improve business processes of local small and medium-sized enterprises. Today, the Centre is a technical, non-profit institution that receives support from UNIDO and UNEP while enjoying strong collaboration at the national level with institutional partners such as the Del Valle University, the Sugar Manufacturers Association and the Chamber of Industry.

Results

Since its establishment, the NCPC of Guatemala has:

- Provided technical assistance to more than 100 enterprises from different industrial sectors, including food and beverage, plastics, textiles and leather, metal processing, and tourism
- Published several guides and manuals on best practices
- Participated in the development of a national policy on cleaner production technologies
- Conducted numerous awareness-building events and related training workshops

Impact/Outlook

Working close with the local authorities, the NCPC expanded the range of its activities and services to include support to policy-making processes. Overall, the UNIDO-UNEP National Cleaner Production Centres and programmes have been established in 47 countries. In 2009, the partners agreed to expand and scale-up the global networking activities of the NCPCs.

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At a glance:

- Goal:** Cleaner production in Guatemala
- MDG:**
1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
 7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- Thematic area:** Environment and Energy
- Donor:** Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)
- Partners:** United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Chamber of Industry of Guatemala
- Status:** completed (ongoing cooperation with UNIDO and third-party funding)