



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 Slovakia, the NCPC was established in 1994 with financial support from the Government of Austria. It is both a non-profit organization that advocates for cleaner production and a business enterprise, which delivers added value services to Slovak companies. The Centre has extensive cleaner production experience in a wide range of industries, including chemicals and pharmaceuticals, machinery, automotive, pulp and paper, food processing, bio-fuel production, wood products, and energy generation and distribution (gas and electricity). The Centre also covers the sectors where mechanical, physical and chemical processes are applied and provides integrated solutions for production processes, health, safety and environment, and sustainable chemicals management. It is active in all life cycle stages of installations, from the investment

preparation and selection of sites for future operations, to construction, start-up, operation, modifications, shut down and decommissioning.

Results

Since its establishment, the NCPC of Slovakia has:

- Implemented more than 400 projects
- Built national capacity for preventative and proactive environmental protection
- Provided training in a range of areas including eco-innovation, emissions trading, international environmental standards and resource-efficiency
- Provided assistance to other countries including Latvia, Kenya and Uzbekistan

Impact/Outlook

In 2007, the NCPC received the Slovak National Prize for the Environment in recognition of its contribution to the national efforts for sustainable, environmentally-friendly development. 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 the Slovak Republic
MDG: 1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Thematic area: Environment and Energy

Donor: Government of Austria

Partners: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Economy

Status: completed (ongoing cooperation with UNIDO and third-party funding)