

„National Activities towards changing Consumption and Production Patterns“

NGO COUNTRY REPORT LATVIA

1. Is there a National Consultation towards Sustainable Consumption and Production Pattern?

There is no National Consultation process towards SCPP. However several ad-hock working groups have been set up to work on preparation of the policy documents, like the one on National resource tax (2003), on Chemical pollution and REACH (2004-2005), Waste management and others. But they are not permanent and strategic.

Just before the Johannesburg the National Strategy for Sustainable Development was prepared and the Sustainable development boards was set up, but since then not much has happened and no discussion or work on SCPP has been initiated.

2. Are there other national (governmental or non-governmental) activities that can be seen as part of a Programme towards Sustainable Consumption and Production?

From NGO side there is informal network of several environmental NGOs working with issues of SCPP set up. The main activities of the network concentrate on the consumer education and not so much on the production side. However there are also cleaner production centres working with businesses.

In summer 2004 in Vilnius there was a Baltic Regional workshop organized by UNEP (<http://www.unep.ch/scoe/archive/baltic.htm>). This was the first Baltic regional meeting which brought together different stakeholders to discuss SCPP issues. At the end of 2004 Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in Tallinn organizes meeting on Ecological fiscal reform in Baltic States.

3. Are the following key elements dealt with?

	Ecological fiscal reform	Clean and eco-effective production	Education for sustainable consumption and production	Corporate responsibility and accountability	Information and public participation
action made*	<p>There are: - Environmental taxes: on natural resources (NRT) (packaging, natural resources, vehicles, etc), excise tax on oil products. - NRT reductions for companies investing in environmental protection,</p> <p>These taxes are not working as they don't motivate producers and consumers to change their behaviour.</p>	<p>- The principles of Cleaner Production have been integrated in the Law on Environmental Protection, National Environmental Policy Plan. - Law "On Natural Resources Tax" provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> natural resources tax allowances to taxpayers who financed project with objective to reduce environment pollution or who realized voluntary packaging waste management program; natural resources tax refund on recycling of goods or products harmful for the environment. <p>These tax allowances are administratively complicated and are not encouraging business to change. - Some sectoral legislation provides incentives for cleaner production, for example in agriculture for promotion of organic farming. - There are EU structural funds available for innovative business activities. Nevertheless this possibility is not used by business as there is no capacity to do so. At the same time funding for business modernization is highly demanded. - Voluntary initiatives - ISO 14 000 – has increasing popularity (59 certified organizations in 2004); system for EMAS is developed, but not implemented. Nevertheless there are several upcoming projects and possibility to receive state support for consultations on ISO and EMAS.</p>	<p>- Environmental protection agency has prepared Sustainable development indicator report (2003), covering issues of SCPP and Report on Material flows (2004). - Baltic environmental fund (intergovernmental institution) has prepared 2 Environmental indicator reports on Baltic states, covering sustainable consumption issues.</p>	<p>Corporate responsibility and accountability is a new subject for national businesses. - About 6 biggest companies are annually preparing their environmental reports. Reports are also prepared by some smaller companies which are the branches of international organizations demanding that. - Corporate responsibility is also practiced by those who has received ISO certificates, - Some companies have also joined UN Global compact initiative.</p>	<p>- Chemical Substance Label – gives the basic information on use and threats of the product and its ingredients. - Energy Efficiency Label – currently only obligatory for washing machines, light bulbs, refrigerators and electrical ovens. - Packaging Label - applies to plastic, paper and metal packaging. The packaging is required to show the material code and recycling method. - Food Products Label – include labelling for genetically modified organisms which gives consumers information of GMO content in the food products (weak enforcement). - National eco-label for organic food products (353 farms in 2002), eco-tourism and Blue flag for beaches (green key is coming in 2005). - Sustainable forestry certification: Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) (35 companies, covering an area of 906,000 ha) and the Pan European Forest Certification (PEFC) - 17,000 ha. - NGO activities on promotion of eco-labels. - Environmental protection agency is promoting EU eco-flower (mostly among businesses). - Environmental consultation board set up to involve NGOs and business association in decision making of MoE.</p>
Action mentioned *		<p>- In 2005 government plans to start promotion of green public procurement and prepare legal assessment.</p>	<p>- In school and university curriculum SCPP are not integrated directly but partly mentioned as part of the Sustainable development and environmental protection.</p>	<p>- There is a governmental plan to move from state subsidies to corporate responsibility and introduce producer responsibility on packaging, transport vehicles and electronics.</p>	
Generally addressed		<p>- Environmental investment fund give soft loans for environmental projects in industry. This is ineffective mechanism - not attractive to business and money is not used.</p>			
Not part of the process	<p>- Nothing has been done on removal of perverse subsidies not by government nor NGOs; - No work has been done on Green budget reform.</p>	<p>- There is no elaborate environmental product policy developed in Latvia. - Lack of state support for sustainable forestry.</p>			

4. What do you require to be done from your national governments and other national stakeholders?

- a) Assessment of existing perverse subsidies and the plan for phase-out should be prepared.
- b) Assessment on environmental efficiency of existing eco-taxes (NRT) should be made.
- c) Eco-labelled goods should have tax alleviations.
- d) All ethical investments (at least 4 environmental and 4 social criteria) should have at least 2% lower taxes than others.
- e) Study on the potential for introducing the "Green Budget" should be conducted and plan for implementation of reform should be prepared.
- f) Government should start development of new measures of progress accounting.
- g) System for efficient Cleaner Production should be set up:
 - One state authority should be appointed responsible for implementation of CP;
 - CP program and plan should be prepared and implemented;
 - Cooperation among state and other authorities and organizations involved into CP implementation process should be improved;
 - National CP centre should be established;
 - Businesses should be better informed about investment possibilities of CP projects;
 - Scientific and technological centre for investigation of industries' environmental aspects and developing CP solutions should be established.
- h) Elaborated environmental product policy should be developed in Latvia and sales of non-recyclable goods in Latvia should be limited.
- i) Governmental support for sustainable transport is needed.
- j) Green public procurement rules and practices should be established and implemented.
- k) Studies of the product life cycle should be introduced to the school curriculum.
- l) Indicators for determining consumption quantities, and modeling their changing dynamics as well as environmental impact should be developed.
- m) One chapter of the annual Sustainable development report should be dedicated to issues of SCPP.
- n) Businesses should be educated on corporate responsibility and accountability issues.
- o) Eco-labelling and consumer education activities should be supported by government.
- p) Large scale public information campaign about sustainable consumption patterns should be started, with the goal to inform people on energy and resource consumption and environmentally friendly goods.

- q) Forbid advertisements in schools or teaching materials and prevent the commercialization of schools and the dependence of school financing on commercial sponsors. Forbid any commercials oriented towards children under 16 and create commercial free zones
- r) Create a three sided (NGO/Government/Business) institution which would examine ethical complaints of consumers. This institution would also examine various statements about goods and advertisements (for example, that organic products aren't tested on animals, etc.) to substantiate their accuracy.
- s) Review government investment in infrastructure development specifying environmental impact as a criterion. ■