

# ***QUALITY STANDARDS FOR ECO-COUNSELLING IN EUROPE***

## ***HANDBOOK***

2006



Education and Culture

**Leonardo da Vinci**

**Motto:**

**AN ECO-COUNSELLOR SHOULD KNOW  
SOMETHING ABOUT EVERYTHING  
AND EVERYTHING ABOUT SOMETHING**

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# PREFACE

Eco-counsellors from different European countries have set a common objective – to create quality standards of eco-counselling.

Generally, a standard is described as something that is customary, or something that is considered an etalon or a model which is used for comparison.

Standardization processes are at different levels in different countries. Usually there are some criteria to become a member of a national association or internal rules for the evaluation of quality. The European report<sup>1</sup> shows that in different countries eco-counselling varies in methods, target groups, and topics. Despite this there are some common links and this handbook aims to describe them so that they may serve as a base for a quality standard of eco-counselling at the European level.

To prepare this handbook several transnational meetings with workshops and discussions were held and constituent chapters were prepared by small groups of representatives of eco-counselling from different European countries.

The handbook is prepared within the “Quality Standards of Vocational Training for European Eco-Counselling (**Eco Stands For**)” project, which aims to develop quality standards and vocational training for European Eco-Counselling - Offices.

In general, Eco-Counselling Organisations and Eco-Counsellors give advice to private households, consumers, and enterprises as well as to local, regional and national authorities and governments and multipliers (teachers, journalists, ...), as to how to fulfil the aims of sustainable development. They are mediators between the public, companies, authorities, scientists and politicians. Another working field is the development of pioneering projects and solution-oriented proposals based on experience gained. Eco-counsellors’ specialty is working for the increasing of environmental protection in public policies not only with technical skill but also by promoting a participatory stakeholder and citizenship approach in order to obtain voluntary agreements rather than permanent conflicts. The thread of the project is the following question: What kind of competences and know-how does an Eco-Counsellor need in order to transmit her or his knowledge to target groups, multipliers, citizens, etc.?

Within the project several steps have been realized:

1. Continual analysis of the status quo and demand analysis of Eco-Counselling in the participating countries according to various criteria (job profile of Eco-counsellors, pre-education of the employees, structure of Eco-Counselling, demand of the labour market, structure of vocational training, national role of Eco-Counselling, gender-criteria, strategies, ...)
2. Development of quality standards for vocational training of Eco-Counselling – according to perspectives and principals of gender mainstreaming and sustainable development. The basis of the quality standards will be the needs of the participating countries. Quality standards are a milestone on the way to

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis of Eco-counselling networks, job profiles and vocational trainings in Europe, “EcoStands For” project partners, December 2005

obtaining acceptance and the establishment of the job profile of “Eco Counselling”.

3. On the basis of quality standards a certain number of training modules (e.g. training course, E-learning modules) will be developed. The modules are accompanied by training materials in English and some by the national languages of the participating countries. The vocational training modules have – according to the various numbers of partners all over Europe – European background and European purpose. The following modules are planned:
  - E-learning modules contain the so-called “basic skills” like eco-knowledge in general, environmental law, etc. The E-learning modules will be translated into some of the national languages of the participating countries.
  - The vocational course contains social and communicative competences and as well as competences in methods.
4. Test stage and evaluation of the training modules: The E-learning modules will be tested within the participating organisations. Approximately 20 Eco-counsellors from the participating countries will take part in the training course. The working language will be English. The course should require about 10 days for common learning. Following satisfactory attendance the participants of the course will receive a certificate.
5. The lobbying for quality standards of the vocational training will be done at the European and national levels. The implementation of quality standards for the vocational training will be fulfilled at the national level of the participating countries.

The multinational and multisectoral partnership between environmental and educational organizations as well as universities and training institutes strengthens the transnational character of experience sharing. The development of skills aimed at the environment as a main topic will be combined with the use of new technologies (E-learning modules).

For further information about the project see [www.ecostands.org](http://www.ecostands.org).

# **POSITION OF ECO-COUNSELLING**

## ***Short History***

The idea of “Umweltberatung” (Eco-Counselling) was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1985. An article was published in “Spiegel” magazine in January 1986. Since then the topic has spread throughout different European countries.

1986 was the “Year for the Environment”, named as such by the European Union. Pilot trainings for Eco-Counsellors were founded in Strasbourg, France, Bilbao, Spain, and in Namure, Belgium. In April 1986 the “Tschernobyl accident” happened; so this was also the starting point of Eco-Counselling in Austria, Luxemburg and Switzerland.

In 1989, the first European Workshop on Eco-Counselling took place in Strasbourg. It finished with the ideas to found a European network, to start cooperation over national borders and to help in the integration of the former Eastern European countries.

At that time, Eco-Counsellors worked in very different structures with different approaches to citizens, administration, industries, etc. The educational systems also varied, like e.g. learning by doing, studying of curricula or participation in trainings.

In 1991, at the “Workshop of Eco-Counsellors” in Vienna with 250 participants, the association “Eco-Counselling Europe” was founded. Founding members were from Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, France and Luxemburg. Another member from Italy joined the network in 1996.

Until now “Eco-Counselling Europe” has had contact with all these national associations as well as with observer partners in Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the Ukraine.

## ***Goals of Eco-counselling***

Eco-Counsellors focus their work on the change of society; from being market driven to a sustainable orientated society.

These experiences, which were had in many project areas and within many different target groups, were published in the book **101 Projects for Sustainable Development** in 1995, with translations into German, French, Hungarian, Czech, Italian and Romanian.

On UNEP Environment Day in 1996, Eco-Counselling Europe successfully realized, with EU support, activities, presentations, debates, etc. in many European countries within the key-project “**World Environment-day**”.

The transfer of the results from the Global Summit in Rio, in 1992, to Europe, in the UN-ECE Environment for Europe process, the Aalborg Process, was supported and followed by Eco-Counselling Europe, which tried to implement the new strategies, indicators for sustainability, empowerment, and environment information rights, within their network.

As “change-agents” in the new millennium, Eco-Counsellors now work in many fields of sustainability (renewable energy, clean production, Local Agenda 21, waste-minimization, green public procurement, ecological building, EMAS, organic food and agriculture, water-saving, etc.

Their workplaces are organised as companies, as associations, in organizations of the church and as environmental managers in companies, as well as at different levels from regional to state administration.

Last years activities extended from the European to a worldwide approach; supporting activities in Africa and in Syria, in the Caribbean, and developing contacts with Australia and India show the need for a strongly and clearly orientated network under common ethical standards.

The slogan “Vom Wissen zum Handeln” (from knowledge to action) and the clear message we learned from Tschernobyl (environmental problems do not have borders) give our network, with more than 2000 eco-counsellors, the vision to work together on a common sustainable local and global future.

## ***Gender and Eco-Counselling***

In a variety of different contexts, gender refers to the masculinity or femininity of words, persons, organisms, or characteristics. In feminist theory, gender is used to refer solely to socially, psychologically, and culturally constructed differences between male and female behaviour. Gender is continuously created and re-created by all the social actions we perform daily.

It is arguable, however, that because of the inequalities that exist for women, there must be further action for gender to be taken into account in the discussion of sustainable development and Eco-Counselling.

On the basis of the common definition of sustainable development we are bound to take full responsibility for our current and future social action. Sustainable development also includes the normative dimension “justice” – mainly discussed as “justice between today’s and future generations”. But looking at the worldwide inequality between women and men, like unequal payment, unequal distribution of work, power, responsibilities, resources, goods, etc., gender equality must be recognised as a basis of sustainable development. Gender justice is considered an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable development.

A gender-equal society is a society in which all persons, irrespective of their sex and their gender, are seen as equal members, with equal opportunities to participate in all

kinds of social activities, to equally enjoy political, economical and cultural benefits, and equally share responsibilities.

The programme of action from Rio de Janeiro, AGENDA 21, already calls for women to have greater involvement in social and political opinion-forming and decision-making processes. All environmental measures shall be scrutinised for their impact on women. Women's contribution towards the attainment of sustainable development is to be acknowledged and actions are needed to ensure that political measures take gender justice properly into account.

## **Gender inequalities**

Looking at the current situation one has to take into account that gender inequalities are in evidence all over the world, in all cultures and societies. There is inequality between men and women in terms of wealth, income, work, duties, power, and status. Gender inequalities occur in all social institutions such as the workplace, family, and educational systems.

- The pay gap between women and men is still wide, more so in the private sector than in the public sector.
- Women are still particularly vulnerable to poverty, especially when they are less well educated, suffering from domestic violence, older or living alone with children.
- Women still perform the majority of domestic and family tasks.
- Women are still under-represented in political and economic decision-making processes at European and national levels.
- In our society certain jobs and activities, like secretarial and household work, or child care are attributed to women. Jobs labelled "women's jobs" are accorded little value.
- Women and men are not involved to the same extent and in the same way in the generation of environmental problems.
- Women and men are affected differently by environmental policy measures.

We find gender inequalities also in the field of Eco-Counselling, such as an unbalanced number of women and men representing Eco-Counselling umbrella organisations or several gender stereotypes in printed materials. For further details see the gender analyses at [www.ecostands.org](http://www.ecostands.org) or [www.knollszalai.at](http://www.knollszalai.at).

## **Gender mainstreaming**

The concept of gender mainstreaming is based on the assumption that there is no gender-neutral reality and that, therefore, the different circumstances and interests of women and men must routinely be taken into account. All subject areas and proposed actions / measures must be examined from the viewpoint of gender so that possible disadvantages and opportunities for both sexes can be identified and allowed for. The equal status of women and men is a universal guiding principle here. In 1997, the Treaty of Amsterdam adopted not only sustainable development but also environmental protection and gender justice as guiding principles to be integrated



into all policy areas of the European Community. The Treaty of Amsterdam is obligatory for all member states of the European Union.

### **Integrating a gender perspective**

Issues to consider when integrating a gender perspective into sustainable development and into Eco-Counselling include:

- Use of gender-sensitive written and spoken language
- Use of non gender-stereotypes in pictures
- Developing of gender-sensitive education and training modules (Who is the target group?)
- Analysing the different responsibilities, roles and needs of women and men in sectors related to sustainable development, such as food production, water and sanitation, forest resources management, and energy
- Analysing gender impact: Do women and men value or use particular natural resources for different community needs? What impact do these uses have for sustainable management and environmental protection?
- Implementing gender mainstreaming strategy in the national organisations of Eco-Counselling
- Gender training for Eco-Counsellors

# SYSTEM OF QUALITY STANDARDS

## **What is Quality?**

- Meeting expectations and requirements, stated and un-stated, of the customer.  
[www.vmec.org/glossary/](http://www.vmec.org/glossary/)
- Quality refers to the inherent or distinctive characteristics or properties of a person, object, process or other thing. Such characteristics or properties may set a person or thing apart from other persons or things, or may denote some degree of achievement or excellence. When used in relation to people, the term may also signify a personal character or trait.  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quality)
- The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.  
[www.chesapeakebay.net/info/qa\\_glossary.cfm](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/info/qa_glossary.cfm)

*Quality and offered service of an organisation is always the subjective experience of the client. When a client has his/her first approach and contact with an organisation the process of quality starts. And it finishes, when the service for the customer is completed. The subjective perception defines the quality and influences the client's satisfaction (Hofbauer, 1996).*

*We should always be aware, that the gap / discrepancy between what "is" and what is "ideal" exists.*

## **What is Standard?**

Standards are produced by many organizations, some for internal use only, others for use by groups of people, groups of companies, or a subsection of an industry. A problem arises when different groups come together, each with a large user base doing some well established thing that between them is mutually incompatible. Establishing international standards is one way of preventing or overcoming this problem.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>

A standard is that which has been selected as a model to which objects or actions may be compared.

*Britannica 2001 Deluxe Edition CD-ROM:*

Standard – benchmark, norm, criterion, generally accepted model  
<http://www.slovník-cizích-slov.cz/>

**Standard** - Something established for use as a rule or basis of comparison in measuring or judging capacity, quantity, content, extent, value, or quality.

**Standard Method** - An assemblage of techniques and procedures based on consensus, or other criteria, and often evaluated for its reliability by a collaborative testing and having received organizational approval.

**Standard Operating Procedure** - A written document which details the method of an operation, analysis, or action whose techniques and procedures are thoroughly prescribed and which is accepted as the method for performing certain routine or repetitive tasks. It may be a standard method or one developed by the user.

[http://www.chesapeakebay.net/info/qa\\_glossary.cfm](http://www.chesapeakebay.net/info/qa_glossary.cfm)

## ***Introduction to quality standards***

Standardization processes are at different levels in different countries. Usually there are some criteria to become a member of a national association or internal rules for the evaluation of quality. The European report<sup>2</sup> shows that in different countries eco-counselling varies in methods, target groups, topics, etc. Despite this there are some common links, and this handbook aims to describe them as a base for a quality standard of Eco-Counselling at the European level.

Generally, a standard is described as something that is customary, or something that is considered an etalon or a model which is used for comparison.

Standards can be used for description of Eco-Counselling and its aims and results, for strategic planning and development, evaluation, quality control and management, benchmarking, certification, etc.

Standards are often described as minimal requirements or an optimal state.

### **Why are they important?**

Standards make it possible to:

- ensure a uniform minimum quality of services
- help NGOs dealing or intending to deal with Eco-Counselling to systematize their activities in this field
- provide transparent services for clients, possible donors, policy makers, government, other stakeholders, etc.
- identify the needs of counselling and improve the focus of services such as educational activities

The situation and nature of Eco-Counselling is different in different countries. That is why this handbook defines European standards as:

- the proposal of possible criteria and conditions for individual aspects of Eco-Counselling: methods, human resources and knowledge base, processes, ethics, etc.
- the proposal of possible tools for control and evaluation

This set of criteria and evaluation tools can be modified according to national conditions. Such implementation consists of the following steps:

- the selection of suitable criteria for relevant aspects
- the choosing of proper tools for the control and evaluation of each criterion
- according to the tools for control, measurable parameters have to be chosen and their minimal or optimal value has to be set
- the agreement on these standards at national level

This systemic approach will also help to negotiate for support (also financial) at national or regional levels.

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<sup>2</sup> Analysis of Eco-counselling networks, job profiles and vocational trainings in Europe, "EcoStands For" project partners, December 2005

For quality control systems on the national level see more in the following chapter “Existing Quality Management Systems of Eco-Counselling at the National Level”.

## ***Criteria and possible fields to apply quality standards***

To cover all important aspects of Eco-Counselling, such as different methods used by Eco-Counsellors, personal abilities like competences in communication or knowledge of environmental and sustainable development content, and ethical rules, criteria are divided into the following groups: Methods, Human Resources and knowledge base, Ethical standards, Processes.

### ***- Methods***

On the most general level we can consider **systemic counselling** the basic method for Eco-Counselling. Systemic counselling can be thought of as a common and unifying approach always used by Eco-Counsellors.

#### **Systemic counselling:**

- **A way to construct a client-counsellor relationship which is brief, collaborative and consultative in purpose.**
- **In systemic coaching / systemic counselling the human is seen in the context of the surrounding environmental systems.**
- **There is no existing reality. It is being created by the eye of the beholder**

On the basis of the **intensity of the contact with clients** there exist 5 different ways for Eco-Counsellors to put together a system of services for clients:

- **delegation** (to show a correct way of finding help, referring to another expert or organization)
- **providing information** (via personal contact, phone, e-mail, internet pages, as well as through printed materials, leaflets, brochures, books, seminars, and courses, etc.)
- **expert opinion, assessment** (analysis and evaluation of clients' problems and recommendations of environmentally friendly/sustainable solutions)
- **expert and processional counselling** (counselling system is connected with the system of the client, expert suggests and steers processes and supervises their implementation to system of client)
- **management for limited period** (the only case in which an Eco-Counsellor takes over responsibility and problem-solving for a certain time)

#### **The main methods carried out by Eco-Counsellors are:**

- Integration of the environment in all sectors
- Respect of legal aspects
- Participative citizenship
- General environmental skills

- Change of behaviour
- Self training
- Communication skills: Communication is a basic tool for Eco-Counselling and communicative competences are essential complementary skills of Eco-Counsellors in addition to environmental and sustainable development expertise. Main demands in this field are: communication (interpersonal, target groups, media), comprehensible and clear language (tailored to the target group), target groups and gender sensitive language, process facilitation, mediation, conflict management, etc.

For further information about the methods see the chapter “**Methods in examples**”.

## ***- Human resources and knowledge base***

Motto: AN ECO-COUNSELLOR SHOULD KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT EVERYTHING AND EVERYTHING ABOUT SOMETHING

With regard to **Environmental and sustainable development content** an Eco-Counsellor has **General** knowledge with **Special** expert extension and orientation in one or more fields.

On a general level an eco-counsellor (Generalist) is able to provide basic information and consultancy on all topics, to arrange contact to an eco-counsellor–specialist, to communicate with clients, partners, and media, to prepare seminars, workshops, etc. A generalist has an overview about basic information sources and basic skills in project management, fundraising, and so on.

On a Special level an eco-counsellor (Specialist) provides general counselling, but s/he is concentrated especially on expert counselling in her/his topic. A specialist develops, deepens and upgrades her/his topic, prepares publications, works as a lector at seminars, cooperates on strategic and conceptional materials, ...

### **Possible topics are as follows:**

- environment and health,
- water,
- air,
- waste,
- noise,
- energy,
- eco-consumption,
- nature preservation,
- agriculture,
- forests,
- clean technologies,
- transport,
- tourism and environment,

- company and environment,
- ISO, EMAS and other environmental management systems
- climate protection
- law
- green public procurement
- local agenda 21
- sustainable development

**Personal criteria can be as follows:**

- type, field and degree of background education
- continuous vocational training
- number of topics at generalist and specialist levels
- years of practice
- number and type of projects realized personally
- number and type of publications
- language skills
- functional skills (e.g. with PC, ...)

The quality of eco-counselling services is mainly determined by the counselling staff of the organisation. Eco-counselling therefore relies on motivated and competent employees. Qualification is a key issue in the quality management of eco-counselling organisations.

The recruitment process and human resource development are central elements of safeguarding and further developing the quality of eco-counselling. The required qualification of eco-counsellors as well as the optimization of working structures and workflows should be defined by quality standards. Quality management offers assistance to improve work flow and communication structures (e.g. time management, team coordination, etc.).

In the case of training programmes for new staff members, short term trainees, project workers or members of the board, solid documentation and systematic information are crucial elements of a quality management system.

In the case of frequently changing staff members the use of an “Info Package for Newcomers” or a written procedure concerning information duties is advisable in the introductory phase. This package should contain the following information:

- general aim or mission statement of the organisation
- basic data on the organisational and financial structure
- services provided by the institution
- detailed description of the individual duties and the distribution of responsibilities

Personal capacity and qualification should also be supported with proper technical working conditions, equipment, and infrastructure, such as an appropriate personal office (size, place, environmentally friendly mode of operation, ...), phone line, sufficient opening hours, webpages with regular upgrades, technical equipment – computers and software, access to internet, printer, copier, camera, etc.

## ***- Ethical standards***

### **Which ethical characteristics should an Eco-Counsellor have?**

Generally, ethical standards are an important part of human character. This is especially the case for professions in which contact with people is very close and has influence on its further personal development, as in the case of the eco-counsellor job profile. Therefore, ethical standards should be a natural part of each eco-counsellor's individuality.

Because the backgrounds of European eco-counsellors differ widely, the requirements for ethical standards or codes are quite various also.

### **Some of the typical ethical characteristics of an Eco-counsellor:**

- s/he works for the good of people, the environment and sustainable development
- s/he should be able to play an intermediary role in a conflict situation instead of defending his/her own ideas or interests
- s/he prefers preventive rather than corrective solutions
- s/he tries to improve his/her skills, knowledge and working methods to provide the best possible results and outlets
- s/he is able to protect each client's data

Some European eco-counselling organizations have their own Ethical Codex; some still do not have an official one. Examples of ethical codes demonstrate their content and common points, as well as a diversity of approaches. Please find in Annex I Ethical codes from several European eco-counselling organizations together with the history and process of development of these documents.

## ***- Processes***

Processes and rules for processes are also an important framework of eco-counselling. On the level of processes we can consider mainly the following criteria:

- time limit for the answer
- respecting opening hours
- records of the counselling services provided
- correctness and suitability of provided consultation
- flexibility
- putting stress on participation and internal/external communication in all projects where relevant

## ***Needs according to different target groups***

In considering the different target groups of eco-counselling, are considered, needs can be divided into three main groups. There are also common ones, which are necessary for every eco-counsellor, others are more or less connected with some of the target groups.

Brainstorming and discussion of quality standards, methods and skills of eco-counsellors according to the main target groups were held. Results and main points from these events are as follows:

### **COMMON Quality Standards:**

- proper expertise/knowledge (environmental, sustainable development)
  - to be able to offer the most environmentally friendly solutions and advice
- to have practical experience or to improve/share/get practical experience
- infrastructure/access to services
- communication skills (developed in different ways for different target groups, skills with different tools for different tasks)
- networking, facilitator between clients
- best practices reports
- eco-counsellor follows ethical codex
- proper marketing of services
- language in the case of international programmes, cooperation
- keeping of clients' secrets (data protection)

### **Quality Standards for SPECIAL TARGET GROUPS:**

#### **Eco-counselling for individuals, households**

- credibility and trust
- adequate local information
- equal treatment of all clients
- responsibility

#### **Eco-counselling for communities**

- knowledge of local environmental infrastructure and institutions
- knowledge of local and regional laws
- social and historical context/background
- methods of public participation, e.g. community vision (in terms of LA21 principles)
- local development plan – if existing
- knowledge of local stakeholders, neighbours
- to be a link between citizens and municipalities (and other sectors)
- contact with local media
- time flexibility (events in the evenings/on the weekends)
- to be objective, face problems, projects, political pressure
- presentations for bigger auditoriums
- skills of analyzing local development opportunities
- project management

#### **Eco-counselling for SMEs**



- knowledge about local environmental infrastructure and institutions
- knowledge of local and regional laws
- results useful for the contractor
- clear profile of what we can/cannot do
- state-of-the-art debates for sustainable development
- list of references/publications
- continuous communication with clients
- flexibility and responsibility for contracts
- local development plan – if existing

## ***Checking of quality standards***

In order to manage and control quality standards there should be **measurable parameters** for each different point. Suitable checking criteria are as follows:

Regular appraisal interview with eco-counsellors: during the interview you can check several points: competences, working fields, and in which sectors advanced vocational training would be necessary. It's also an opportunity to give feedback to the eco-counsellor in a constructive way.

Participants of the appraisal interview are the eco-counsellor and the chief/boss of the eco-counsellor.

Self-reflection: strengths and weakness of an eco-counsellor. This is also important for his/her operational areas because they are always changing.

Statistical report: With the statistical report you should check the following issues:

- Number of customers an eco-counsellor can reach with his/her work.
- Number of consulting services and the type of consulting inquiry – personal, on the phone or in written form, e.g. e-mail.
- How long was the duration of the consulting service e.g. 10 minutes or 1 hour?
- Number of events, which have been organised, and number of participants, who have taken part.
- Regarding our work with communities, it is important to know especially how many and which communities have called on our services and which thematic fields are important to them? What was the total number of inquiries?

Working regions, local area and minimum inquiries have to be fixed by the organisations / eco-counselling centres.

The detailing of the statistic report and especially the minimum of customer contacts, e.g. the number of carried out events, also have to be fixed by each organisation / eco-counselling centre.

Check the satisfaction of the clients: customer survey over the phone or in written form of all customers or a random selection.

Survey can be done just after the consultation service (after seminars, workshops, events, and projects) or afterwards based on a fixed interval.

For the evaluation of events or exhibitions you can use response-cards, which have to be filled out by the participants.

For example, we can check if the customer is a regular customer or if it was his/her first contact with our organisation.

Check the satisfaction of the contractor (contracting authority, communities, and public institutions) via interview or questionnaire.

FAQ's (frequently asked questions): elaborate a standard for FAQ's. The abidance of them can be done through target/actual comparison through an external evaluation.

Practical feasibility: evaluation of the practical feasibility and practicability of the consulting service via external evaluation.

List of references: There should be a detailed listing and also documentation of projects that have been carried out.

Potential reduction areas: point out and activate potential reduction areas – like reduction of cleaning materials, reduction of waste and sewage waste, and also reduction of costs. Furthermore, documentation of these points should exist.

Media: Check the relevant media with a press review

Responsibility: stick to agreed commitments and time schedules and finish contracts in time.

Use of internal (within the organization) or external (from another expert organization, for instance university) opponents (especially for printed materials, webpages, etc.)

External evaluations and audits of services, benchmarking: evaluation and comparisons among eco-counsellors or eco-counselling offices

### Overview of the checking criteria according to target groups:

Checking criterias	private clients	communities	SME's
appraisal interview	<b>Common</b>		
Self-reflection			
Statistical report			
Check satisfaction of clients			
Check satisfaction of contractor			
FAQ's (frequently asked questions):	<b>X</b>		
Practical feasibility	<b>X</b>		
List of references	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

Potential reduction areas		<b>X</b>	
Media		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Responsibility			<b>X</b>

# **EXISTING QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS OF ECO-COUNSELLING AT NATIONAL LEVEL AND MEMBERSHIPS**

Within this chapter a review and comparison of existing quality management systems is made. Conditions of membership of networks or umbrella organisations, conditions of getting the job title "eco-counsellor", measurement of clients' satisfaction or ensuring the quality of eco-counselling in any other way have been surveyed. As any public service, eco-counselling is also established to satisfy the clients' needs, to answer their questions and to help solve their problems. The European eco-counsellors have client satisfaction as their highest priority, but the quality management systems of this special service are very different from country to country, ranging from almost nothing to detailed lists of requirements. Quality management is usually not an external pressure on eco-counsellors, but rather their own internal interest that may contribute to the long-term survival of these services.

The national eco-counselling organizations do use different standards for their members in each country. As the job title "eco-counsellor" is usually not officially recognized, no clear and generally accepted definition exists regarding who can be called an eco-counsellor in Europe. At the same time the clients' satisfaction is not really measured directly; only a few countries try to take steps in this direction. Several further tools are used to ensure the quality of eco-counselling in the countries of Europe.

Below we describe the results of a European-wide survey about the membership and the quality management systems existing in the 8 countries covered by our project as well as in Luxembourg, an associated partner.

## ***Austria***

There are 3 different categories for membership in the Austrian umbrella organisation, "die umweltberatung":

- full membership / regular members,
- limited membership / extraordinary members,
- supporting membership.

### **Full membership / regular members:**

At the moment there are 10 regular members from different federal states. Regular membership shows the following characteristics:

- members are NGOs and NPOs; they work according to the rules of the mission statement of the umbrella organisation,
- appearance as "die umweltberatung" (eco-counselling offices) outwards and usage of the logo,
- providing counselling, education and service for precautionary environmental protection (supply of services for the population) as well as independent counselling for companies,

- codetermination regarding the nationwide strategy and coordination of the contents,
- passive and active suffrage at the annual general meeting,
- free participation at the trainee and advanced training programme,
- ongoing information about thematic and organizational news,
- payment of the membership fee.

#### **Limited membership / extraordinary members:**

An extraordinary member is a physical or legal person, who is supporting and/or sponsoring the aims and purposes of "die umweltberatung" on the basis of their actions.

- invitation to the annual general meeting,
- common cooperation,
- getting reduction in price for leaflets and brochures and for participation at the advanced training programme and seminars,
- ongoing information about thematic and organizational news.

#### **Supporting membership**

Communities, companies, organisations and private persons could also support the work of "die umweltberatung" Austria by paying a membership fee.

For the different groups of memberships staged member fees exist.

Number of eco-counsellors: The sum total of eco-counsellors associated with Eco-Counselling Austria ("die umweltberatung" Österreich) is 84. In addition there are 322 waste consultants organised in the "Verband Abfallberatung Österreich – Verband der Abfall- und UmweltberaterInnen".

#### **Quality management**

In the last years there have been some surveys about the client's satisfaction and the publicity of eco-counselling in Austria. At the moment, continuous measurements do not exist in Austria, but a new quality management system will be worked out now and will be finalised in the near future.

In the context of some projects (e.g. hotline of the project "Natur im Garten – Close to nature gardening", developed teaching aids for primary schools (Herdgeschichtentopf) and workshops in the field of building / construction) the clients' satisfaction has been evaluated by external evaluation organisations. There is also an internal evaluation in the different specialized fields of eco-counselling organisations concerning the daily work of eco-counsellors on a yearly base.

## ***Belgium***

In Belgium, to become a member of the national eco-counselling organization, one has to be "bachelor" (following the Bologna process) AND has to have a special training recognized by the association (6 trainings are recognized at this moment and the Institut Eco-conseil in Namur offers courses for eco-counselling). These trainings are composed of environmental topics and communication skills. It is also required to practice the job or to have various years of experience.

The title of “eco-counsellor” is not protected in the country, so everybody can call him/herself eco-counsellor.

There is no measurement of the satisfaction of the eco-counsellors’ clients.

The Belgians try to ensure the quality of eco-counselling by defending the access to financial support (for eco-counsellors in municipalities mainly) and through strict conditions (training, experience), and by writing a job referential (in process).

## ***Czech republic***

Criteria of becoming a member of the Czech Eco-counselling Network (STEP):

The organization

- is permanently active on the field of eco-counselling
- has proper office equipment
- has regular opening hours for the public
- has at least one experienced eco-counsellor
- provides at least the following services: providing information and consultancy (basic ones free of charge for the public), implementation of projects, providing contacts, supporting mutual communication among different sectors,
- publishes books, leaflets, etc.

Every new member should have a recommendation from 2 current members (based on visits.).

There is no special tool or system to measure the satisfaction of the eco-counsellors’ clients in the Czech Republic. (Inspiration for this could be the technique used by the green phone line in the Netherlands – they had/have a special questionnaire and at the end of every phone call they asked the clients several questions...)

While there is no real system to ensure the quality of eco-counselling, a few steps have been made in this field.

A lot of eco-counselling offices participate in a long-term programme on eco-counselling which is supported by the Ministry of Environment. Within this programme some criteria were introduced for eco-counselling (e.g. proper office spaces, regular opening hours, number of cases solved, eco-counsellor - job time, etc.), common form for cases record, obligatory training.

Within the Czech network there are some rules for special cases, for example, when quite a large common publication called Card Index (a catalogue of standard questions and answers from eco-counselling practices) was prepared – every chapter had its own external and internal opponent.

## ***France***

To call someone an eco-counsellor one needs to have graduated from Institut Eco-conseil in Strasbourg. It is a one year training and is open to graduates (quite the same as an MA degree) and/or people with professional background. Then the person can become a member of ASFEC, the national eco-counselling organization. He/she just has to pay a fee. In 2006 one will have to sign a charter.

There is no tool to measure the satisfaction of the eco-counsellors' clients in France, but it is known that people are looking for eco-counsellors, e.g. offer employment. There is also a good rate of employment (more than 80%).

There is a selection process for the students who want to be graduates from Institut Eco-conseil Strasbourg, and then there are several requirements to be a graduate (exams, projects and training course).

With AsFEC, they want to develop a kind of standard with their Charter.

## **Germany**

The Bundesverband für Umweltberatung (Federal Association of Eco-counselling – bfub) has formulated the main tasks and targets of eco-counselling in its statutes. All members have to sign the statutes with the membershipdraft. Everybody who is interested in supporting eco-counselling can become a member of the bfub. When bfub was founded in 1989, “professional” eco-counsellors, above all applied for membership. Institutions and companies, too, can become members. The bfub-board decides about the membership of institutions and companies. The bfub has defined the tasks and duties of an eco-counsellor. This definition can be found in the national report (see [www.ecostands.org](http://www.ecostands.org)). In Germany there is no definition which is authorized by the national authorities.

### **Service for Members**

In Germany, eco-counsellors can apply for an “acknowledgement of qualification standards” by bfub if they fulfil certain requirements of further education.

Every two years bfub sends out questionnaires to their members, asking them if the services of the association have met their expectations, and which, if any, could be optimised. Members can therefore give input regarding the kind of trainings they think should be offered, thereby influencing the focus of bfub's work in the near future.

In order to keep members well informed about the professional and political backgrounds of eco-counselling, a newsletter is issued every two months by the bfub. Every member has the opportunity to use the newsletter as a platform for raising questions, informing other members of the community about his/her work, and discussing problems .

Once a year, bfub organizes a weekend-meeting for all members with the goal of discussing the future of the bfub and its work, and to set targets to help eco-counsellors in their work.

### **Quality Management**

Since 1998, the bfub has developed criteria for “Qualitätsmanagement und neue Qualitäten in der Umweltberatung” (Quality Management and New Qualities for Ecocounselling). The project centred on measuring the success and quality of eco-counselling by concentrating on the interests of clients/consultants and their acceptance. The results of the project can be read in a manual, which is available at the bfub office. Eco-counselling offices can make use of the results for their own work.

The bfub-board presents the eco-counsellors' work to ministries, at workshops, congresses etc. Working groups for eco-counsellors in the fields of waste management, eco-management, and more discuss the strategies of the association.

In addition, fundraising efforts are made to extend the services of the association.

A bi-annual handbook for eco-counsellors, edited by the bfub, is issued to subscribers.

## ***Hungary***

In Hungary the situation is special: two umbrella organisations exist in parallel, the Hungarian Eco-counselling Association (HEA) and the Hungarian Network of Eco-counselling Offices (Network). The Hungarian Eco-counselling Association is a nationwide organisation of private persons, and the members of HEA established a new alliance of eco-counselling organizations, the Network of Eco-counselling Offices.

The statutes of both organizations describe the requirements to become a member:

HEA:

a) Any such person can be ordinary member of HEA who carries out public counselling either on a paid or voluntary basis in the major part of his/her activity, or who has gained experience in this field and wishes to co-operate.

b) Membership status is established by signing a written application for membership, in which the member-to-be accepts the Statutes and the obligation of paying the membership fee.

c) A further condition of the membership status is the approval of the Board or the General Assembly. The Board is obliged to ask for the approval of the next General Assembly in the question of new members' admission.

d) The membership status is stopped

- by written notice of leaving,
- if the member does not pay the membership fee beyond 6 months, without reason, even in spite of warning,
- on the recommendation of the Board by the exclusion of the General Assembly,
- on the member's death.

Network:

Only legal persons can become members that accept the Statute, sign an Application for membership and pay the membership fee. The future members have to go through a detailed admission procedure, they have to meet the sophisticated requirements detailed in the network's rules and regulations of quality standards, and at least two-thirds of all the network-members have to approve their admission.

In practice the regulations above mean that anybody interested in eco-counselling may join the Association, can have information and co-operate in projects, but to operate an eco-counselling office as a member of the network strict rules apply. These rules were formed during the seven years of the network's existence, and they are still continuously changed and improved. The rules are accepted by the general



assembly of the network, and only the assembly may change them. One person (a controller) is employed on a contract basis to monitor that the rules are observed. The controller writes a report each year about the operation of all the offices, and lists his/her suggestions to improve the operation of each office as well as the network itself. The same procedure applies to the applicant organizations that wish to become members of the network. The Board discusses the suggestions, modifies them if necessary, and these new suggestions will be presented at the general assembly – the forum that makes the final decision by secret ballot. The offices of the network are divided into two categories: B stands for the basic level, while A stands for the more advanced offices.

The controller uses data sheets (see annex II) to monitor the operation of the present and prospective offices. Some points refer to the satisfaction of the eco-counselling offices' clients, and even if a more thorough survey would be necessary, data protection issues hinder these endeavours.

## ***Italy***

In Italy a national organization that recognises eco-counsellors does not exist. One of the reasons for the constitution of the UNICA association is the recognition of this professional form. However, different organizations exist that have own criteria of recognition. There are different approaches: associations that generally identify different levels of members according to the years of work experience, and universities or training companies that identify counsellors in specific courses. This is because the national approach is the “environmental consultant” and not the “eco-counsellor”, which means a precise specialization. Many university courses exist regarding “environmental consultants”, some are very similar to eco-counsellors, but all of them differ slightly from each other.

For the associations the professional recognition of the “environmental consultant” derives from their previous work experience and specific training courses.

The purposes of UNICA are brought in the statute freely available on the website. There is a procedure UNICA uses: each member has to declare his/her own working experience and training run in environmental fields, and has to attach the appropriate documents. There is a form for the request, and the technical committee verifies the curricula and checks the documents. If necessary the committee asks for further documents. If the request is consistent with the documentation, the aspirant is approved as junior or senior member, depending on whether his/her experience is three or five years.

For the moment there is no standard system for measuring the satisfaction of eco-counsellors' clients in Italy. A system has been developed (but not yet tested) through a form that every member can send to his/her own clients. This form has some fields that should allow the analysis of the points of strength and weakness.

The possibility to discuss the results in the forum is left to single members.

All the members of UNICA participate in the thematic task-groups, whose purpose it is to allow exchanges of experiences and to create job opportunities for the members network (also EU competitions). The National Rule establishes that in all programs/projects a part is assigned to the junior members.

The board members have been assigned to introduce the member's qualification and the works of task-groups by the workshops, meetings and congresses, also with the newsletter “ComUNICA”.

One of the task-groups specifically works on the definition of common tools to assure a standard on the monitoring of the work's quality.

## **Luxembourg**

To become a member of the national eco-counselling organization in Luxembourg (called "Emweltberodung Lëtzebuerg" - EBL) there are different possibilities:

- Each eco-counsellor, who is employed by a commune, syndicate or a non-profit-making organization, can become a member of the EBL.
- Each person, who works in the eco-counselling and who is not employed by a commune, syndicate or a non-profit-making organization, can become an affiliated member of the EBL.
- Each person, private or public institution, can become an Unusual member.

To become an eco-counsellor in Luxembourg an education of a technical gymnasium and an environmental education or an environmental study is recommended.

At the moment there exists no method to measure the satisfaction of the eco-counselling clients in Luxembourg.

There is no system, method or tool to ensure the quality of eco-counselling in our country, but such a system seems to be necessary.

## **Slovakia**

There is still no official eco-counselling network in the Slovak Republic, but an informal eco-counselling network was established during the workshop for eco-counsellors organized in June 2005 by CEEV Zivica in Bratislava.

The requirements for joining the informal eco-counselling network are:

- activity in the field of eco-counselling (providing advices or tips in the field of environmental protection),
- membership in the informal e-mail conference where the most current questions, problems and news are discussed.

The requirements for calling someone an eco-counsellor are not strictly established. In our understanding, an eco-counsellor is a person providing any verified and truthful information in the field of environment protection.

The satisfaction of the eco-counsellors' clients is measured by:

- positive (or negative) reactions of clients – via website conferences, e-mail, or during personal visits in eco-counselling centres),
- increasing (decreasing) number of new clients,
- instant visits of clients.

Each eco-counselling centre in Slovakia has its own "quality standards". One of the methods which helps to ensure the quality of eco-counselling, in the sense of further education of eco-counsellors, is the regular information exchange between eco-counsellors, mainly via e-mail and also via new brochures and information leaflets from different environmental topics.

The other method is information exchange and participation in vocational seminars and meetings organized by eco-counselling centres or by the other vocational organizations.

**Summarizing table**

	<b>Criteria to become a member of the national association</b>	<b>Protection of the title of eco-counsellor</b>	<b>Measurement of clients' satisfaction</b>	<b>Ensuring the quality of eco-counselling in any other way</b>
<b>Austria</b>	criteria on 3 levels: full, limited and support partnership	no	in projects	internal and external evaluation in projects and in the everyday work
<b>Belgium</b>	special training and practice or years of experience	no	no	defending the access to financial support, writing a job referential
<b>Czech Republic</b>	detailed list of requirements	no	no	some criteria introduced, common form for case record, obligatory training, catalogue of standard questions and answers from the practice
<b>France</b>	graduation from Institut Eco-conseil in Strasbourg, membership fee, signing a charter in 2006	graduation from Institut Eco-conseil in Strasbourg	no	selection of students who want to be graduates from Institut Eco-conseil Strasbourg, several requirements to be a graduate (exams, projects and training course), developing a kind of standard in AsFEC with the charter
<b>Germany</b>	signing the statutes board approval for institutions, companies	description of "what is an eco-counsellor" by bfub	some eco-counselling offices have done it	the board is representing the eco-counsellors' work, developing working materials, handbook for counsellors
<b>Hungary</b>	individual eco-counsellors may join an association without limitations, but to join the network eco-counselling offices have to observe a strict system of criteria	no	regular monitoring of the offices with test clients	a detailed list of basic requirements, and another list of recommended tasks is regularly monitored in the eco-counselling offices of the nationwide network
<b>Italy</b>	work experience and training	no	form developed but not yet tested	thematic working groups for experience exchanges and to elaborate standards of eco-counselling
<b>Luxembourg</b>	regular member: eco-counsellors employed,	no (education of a technical gymnasium)	no	no system, method or tool to ensure the quality of eco-counselling, but such a system seems to be

	affiliated member: someone working in eco-counselling and not employed, unusual member: anyone, private or public institution	and environmental education or study is recommended)		necessary
<b>Slovakia</b>	only an informal eco-counselling network exists: - activity in the field of eco-counselling - membership in informal e-mail conference	no	- reactions of clients - number of new clients - instant visits of clients	- the eco-counselling centres have their own "quality standards", - regular information exchange between eco-counsellors, - participation in vocational seminars and meetings

Our survey shows that almost all the national umbrella organizations employ some kind of criteria for their members. The basic requirements consist of accepting the statutes and paying the membership fee, but a few countries have differentiated memberships depending on the member's status. The most sophisticated systems of requirements list a series of issues the members have to observe.

The title of eco-counsellor is usually not protected in the nine countries covered – this means that basically anyone can call him/herself an eco-counsellor. Even though two institutes of eco-counselling operate in Europe (Namur and Strasbourg), the job is not an officially registered one anywhere. Recommendations of the national organizations are used, but these are not obligatory. This seems to be the most crucial issue of the European eco-counselling community, solving this would settle most of the problems in this field.

Half of the countries address the question of measuring the satisfaction of the eco-counselling offices' clients with different tools. This characteristic is hard to measure directly with regard to the strict European and national regulation of data protection. As this is (or should be) the highest priority of eco-counsellors, a common European recommendation or guideline could be useful for the colleagues regarding how client satisfaction can be measured. This would be interesting even for the sake of comparison.

Many further tools are used to ensure the quality of eco-counselling in the countries of Europe. These range from publications, trainings, guidelines, standards, working groups, experience exchanges, internal and external project evaluations.

Quality management systems exist in Europe in the field of eco-counselling, but they are very diverse and different. To improve this situation the job profile should be cleared, eco-counselling offices should use a unified list of basic requirements. Eco-counselling should be officially registered at European and national levels as soon as possible, and a common European guideline should be elaborated to measure the clients' satisfaction.

# **METHODS IN EXAMPLES**

## ***Introduction***

The ongoing chapter presents an overview about different methods and also working examples of Eco-Counselling. Eco-Counsellors give advice to a wide range of different customer groups and they are work in various thematic fields. To reach their target groups and satisfy their needs, it is necessary that an Eco-Counsellor has competence in methods and applies different methodologies in his/her daily work too.

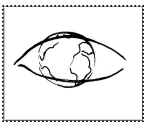
The fields of work range from water, air, waste, noise, energy, eco-consumption, nature preservation, agriculture, forests and clean technologies transport, to ISO, EMAS and other environmental management systems, spatial planning and citizen partnership.

Like the thematic working areas, the target groups of Eco-Counsellors and Eco-Counselling organisations are also very different. Private consumers and households are one of the customer groups, as well as communities, local decision-maker, local, regional and national authorities, governments, public institutions or enterprises. It is important that an Eco-Counsellor uses the most suitable tools or methods for his/her target group. There is a wide range of existing consulting tools, e.g. telephone service or face-to-face consulting service.

What are the main methods carried out by Eco-Counsellors?

Based on the above-mentioned facts – various thematic working fields and different target groups – a great number of methodologies are available. We have selected seven different methodologies to illustrate the work of Eco-Counsellors. These mentioned methods are certainly not exclusive and there are many more existing methods, which Eco-Counsellors have to consider on their job.

### ***Integration of environment in all sectors:***



Eco-counsellors are committed to sustainable development, therefore a general overview concerning environmental problems and possible solutions are necessary. Consideration of these facts promotes the integration of the environment in all sectors of life and it is important for the majority of thematic fields an Eco-Counsellor is working for.

### ***Respect of legal aspects***



Legal aspects and laws have to be respected and it is important to note this fact first of all by technical requests, e.g. energy, noise, ecological building or urban planning.

### ***Participative citizenship:***



To promote participative citizenship and support the participation process helps to implement environmental protection aspects. Eco-Counsellors are working rather in the field than behind the desk, and solve environmental problems together with affected citizens. Participative and also meditative methods assist their work and make contribution to sustainable development.

### **General environmental skills:**



Eco-Counsellors act in every domain of the environment. Therefore they need general environmental skills and an overview of environmental topics and also actual problems to promote precautionary initiatives. Project management and process evaluation also count as general skills.

### **Change of behaviour / management:**



Eco-Counsellors promote the change of behaviour or management in every decision. Via awareness raising – mainly ecological awareness – the social responsibility of producers and consumers can be increased.

### **Self training:**



Eco-Counsellors need to be aware constantly of the evolution of environmental themes and of the different actors. To fulfil these objectives, Eco-Counsellors have to maintain a high level of professional skills. They have to inform themselves in different ways, like personal research, and of course take part in advanced vocational trainings. Besides this, contacts with other Eco-Counsellors through active and passive networking are very useful to improve knowledge.

### **Communication skills:**



Communication skills (interpersonal / media) tailored to the different target groups and thematic fields are very important. In all working fields communication plays a major role and the use of modern information and communication technologies and methods always have to be considered.

As you can clearly see, some methodologies have to be considered for each thematic work and each target group, e.g. communication. Others are important for specific customer groups or working fields.

On the following pages you will find a listing of different thematic examples Eco-Counsellors and Eco-Counselling organisations have carried out recently, and they also refer to the above-mentioned methods. The described projects contain various topics like climate protection, ecological building, noise, waste, eco-consumption, agriculture, transport, urban planning, energy, river contract, eco-management and environmental management systems.

## Austria

### Climate protection on a community level



Climate protection is one of the main environmental topics and it's also very important for the conservation of our natural resources. Climate change is a fact nowadays, and to stop it, we have to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in our daily lives. The big problem is our consumption of oil, gas and coal. Cutting down CO<sub>2</sub> emissions can work only if we all work together.

There is a lot of potential ways that a community can reduce carbon dioxide in its own sphere of action. In the fields of e.g. traffic, mobility, energy, building and living, farming or procurement communities can implement and realise measures.



How can a municipality change to green procurement? Which measures are necessary to support biological and regional farming? How much CO<sub>2</sub> does a change in behaviour save? Is it possible to reach the goal of reducing emission without loss of life quality?

Through lectures and workshops the target group, communities and local decision-makers, get information about climate change, climate protection and climate alliance.

Furthermore, we present best-practise examples, awareness raising measures and possible steps for climate protection within a community, and how communities can use networks (national and international networks) for their work in the field of climate protection.

Another working area from our side within climate protection in communities is to give support with the installation of working-groups in the community. For successful implementation of measures, individual working groups should be installed. Each community has its own preconditions and actual facts and therefore different alternatives to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and support climate protection exist.

**Topics:** climate protection, awareness raising

**Target groups:** communities and local decision-makers

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## Ecological Building



In the last years, there has been ongoing development in the field of

ecological building. Due to technical innovations, environmentally friendly materials and new techniques like energy-saving windows and new heating systems are used increasingly nowadays, and low-energy houses and passive-houses are state of the art. The energy consumption in such buildings is so low, that conventional heating systems are no longer required.

The main target groups are private customers and private households and via seminars, lectures and consulting services, topics like energy-saving building, environmentally friendly building materials and also healthy living are communicated.

Most of the seminars are tailored to the needs of the target group of on-going house builders, like the seminar “Building with the sun”. The participants learn interesting facts about building biology, solar energy, energy consumption in general and environmentally friendly building materials. After six days of theoretical input, the customers can also take part in a field trip to visit best practise examples.

Other workshops deal with building materials like clay, which is an old-fashioned but very ecological material, or wood, which is a renewable resource and ideal for constructing buildings.

The lectures, presentations and workshops offered are of different lengths of time – from 3 or 4 hours to a couple of days. Apart from the theoretical input, which is the main part of the seminars, there are also practise components, such as excursions.

In addition to the various seminars and workshops, consultation on the phone (Hotline) and face-to-face consulting services in the office or at the client's home are offered.

**Topics:** ecological building

**Target groups:** private customers, private households

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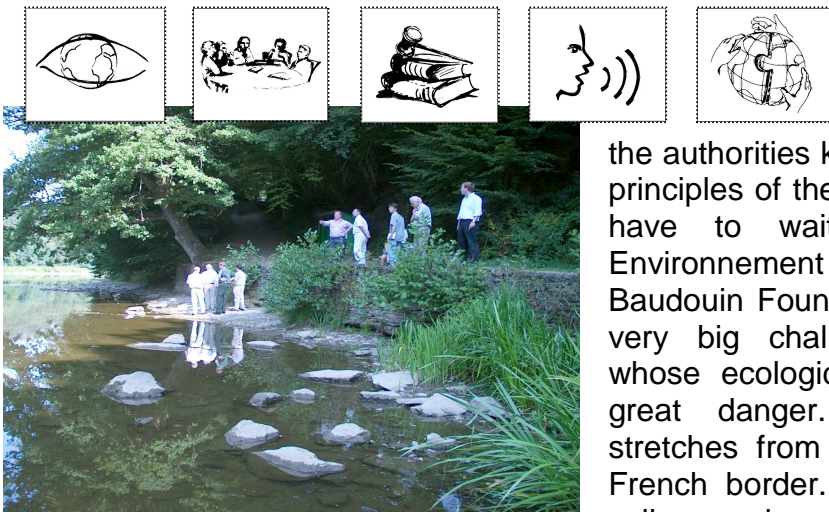
Website : [www.umweltberatung.at](http://www.umweltberatung.at)





## Belgium

### The river contracts, a participative instrument for the water policy.



In Belgium, at the beginning of the 1990s,

the authorities knew very little about the key principles of the river contract. They did not have to wait long. In 1991, Inter-Environnement Wallonie and the Roi Baudouin Foundation decided to take on a very big challenge: the Haute Meuse, whose ecological balance they feel is in great danger. The projected contract stretches from the town of Namur to the French border. It covers the sides of the valleys and over 40 km of this international

river. The two associations, joined in 1992 by the provincial and local authorities formed a river committee. During the entire procedure, its 68 members are assisted and encouraged by a standing secretariat including an eco-counsellor, who was the ecology consultant of the Namur provincial government.

In this project, citizens, local associations and public authorities began a long process of intense debate and negotiation which finally led to the creation of a catalogue of proposals.

In 1994, the different partners came to an agreement. The official document took the name "Haute Meuse Charter". It specifies, under three hundred proposals, practices to be used systematically during interventions or decision-making that concern the river or the valley. The recreational, economic, ecological and social functions of the Haute Meuse are taken into account.

The standing secretariat worked to transform these theoretical targets into realistic measures and after submitting these plans to the river committee, the "River Contract" was approved.

This experience was overseen by an eco-counsellor (Anne Pochet).

Actually, the river contracts are really recognized and used by the Wallonia Region as instruments of water management. Firstly, they are part of the regional law of environment since 2004 (code of water in code of environment). Secondly, they are also identified to contribute to reaching the objectives of participation of the public of the framework Directive in the fields of water policy (2000/60/EC).

There are actually 17 river contracts in Wallonia, which are often managed by eco-counsellors.

**Topics:** Water management, mediation, participation

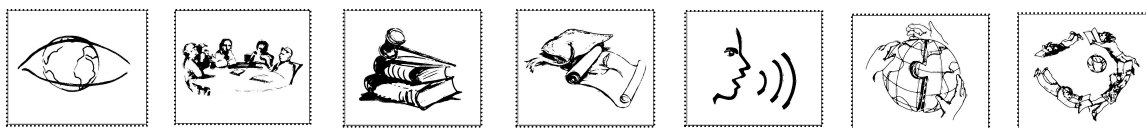
**Target groups:** public, authorities.

**Contacts:**

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Fax: +32 (0) 81 73.99.74 - Website : [www.eco-conseil.be](http://www.eco-conseil.be)

## Eco-counsellors and environmental management systems – agents of innovation



With the raising of environmental awareness in the public and private sector, more and more Eco-counsellors are confronted with environmental management in their organisations.

Environmental management systems exist at regional, European and international levels. EMAS, the European label of excellence in environmental management, is complying with most eco-counsellor values and ways of working. EMAS requires an organisation to implement an environmental management system and to focus on specific requirements (which are thoroughly implemented by eco-counsellors):

- Employee participation
- Environmental performance improvement
- Legal compliance

Validated environmental communication

### EMS and local authorities

In the Brussels region, eco-counsellors working in local authorities have implemented the Brussels ecolabel « éco-dynamiques » in their administration. More than 5 local authorities and the Brussels public transport company have already received their certificates. The ecolabel itself is managed by a team of eco-counsellors working at the Brussels Ministry of Environment.

### EMAS and small and medium sized companies

Belgian eco-counsellors from Eco-Counselling Enterprise scrl have been working on lowering the internal and external barriers to the adoption of EMS in small and medium sized companies.

For several years, they have developed, promoted and implemented innovative tools like ecomapping. This innovative approach with visual based EMS systems and ultra light documentation systems has been certified against EMAS and ISO 14001 in Belgium in December 2003 within 2 companies (Retrival and Cedevar) of the Social Economy Network « Ressources asbl ». This was the first European experience of implementing EMAS in companies of the social economy sector.

Today, the methodology allows small SMEs to participate in market based EMS standards like ISO 14001 and EMAS in a smart and cost-effective way.

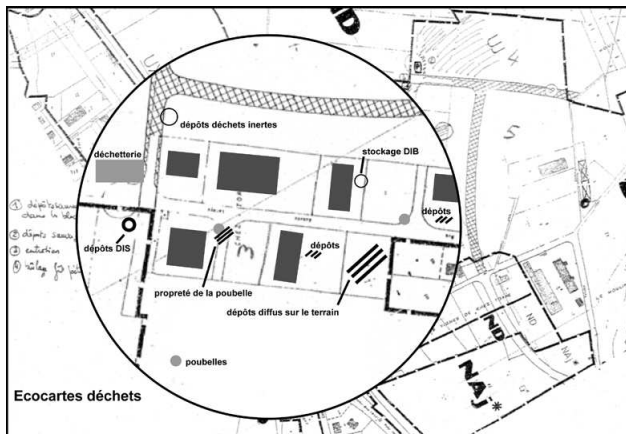
The barriers to the successful introduction of EMS for small SMEs have been mainly the burdensome procedures and paperwork, external costs and inherent requirements to ISO 14001. They have been recently decreased by dematerializing the EMS through innovative approaches with simple visual based Ecomapping. Practical methodologies and tools have been developed in the EMAS toolkit for SMEs on the EMAS helpdesk server.

The ecomapping methodology meets the requirements of EMAS and ISO 14001 and is now called EMAS Easy. It has been recognised by the European Commission, which is now working on the translation of a publication in all member states' languages and its promotion.

## EMAS and public administrations

Eco-Counsellors from the Eco-Counselling Training Institute have also worked on the implementation of EMAS in the Wallonian Ministry of Environment. They were asked to support the environmental manager in getting all employees involved in the process and to assure the external communication of EMAS.

And last but not least, in July, the Belgian Federal Council of Ministers approved the measure to implement a systematic environmental management system in every



public federal service. This follows a decision of the federal government dating from 2000. The federal state can now fully play its role as a leading example for Belgian organizations and other public authorities in Europe.

Every service should systematically and coherently care for and respect the environment. Thus, every public service will be registered with EMAS by 2007. The Secretary of State for Sustainable Development and Social Economy, Mrs Els Van Weert, deems this step very

important for the credibility of public decisions in the field of sustainable development. The Secretary of State itself has reached EMAS certification in November 2005 with the help of 2 eco-counsellors.

Taking into account that several services already monitor their impact on the environment voluntarily, the EMAS registration will be implemented in three steps. A first group comprising the chancellery of the Prime Minister, the public service of sustainable development, the federal planning office, and the federal service for scientific policy and technical cooperation is seeking external verification and hopes to complete its registration at the beginning of 2006. The second group, involving other departments such as the Ministries of transport, economy, and public health, will follow later in 2006. The third group, encompassing larger administrative services such as the public services of Finance and Interior will be given more time to prepare. They aim to receive EMAS registration in 2007.

### Links

- Brussels ecolabel « éco-dynamiques » <http://www.ibgebim.be>
- EMAS toolkit for SMEs : <http://www.inem.org/emas-toolkit>
- EMAS : <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/emas>
- Social Economy Network Ressources asbl : <http://www.res-sources.be>
- Eco-Counselling Enterprise : <http://www.eco-counselling.com>
- EMAS statement of the wallonian ministry of environment : <http://mrw.wallonie.be/dgrne/emas/emas2005.pdf>
- EMAS statement of RETRIVAL : <http://www.retrival.be>

**Topics:** Environmental Management Systems

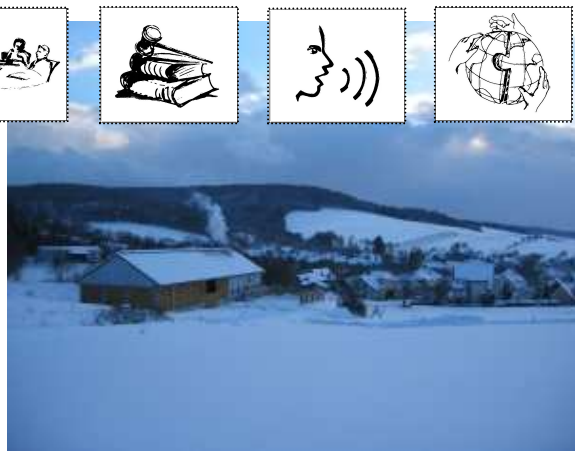
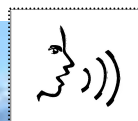
**Target groups:** SMEs and public authorities

**Contact:** Marcel van Meesche, ABECE. Website : [www.ecoconseil-entreprise.be](http://www.ecoconseil-entreprise.be)

## Czech Republic

### Centre for Sustainable Rural Development

The environment has been a priority for the local government of Hostětín since its establishment in the early 1990s. The first task for the new village government was to lift a construction ban for the village which was imposed following the construction of a water reservoir below the village at the beginning of the 1970s. The municipality decided to build a biological, reed-bed sewage treatment plant to treat the community's sewage. The decision was supported by ČSOP Veronica, which organized the seminar "Water and the Landscape" in 1993, initiating a long and fruitful cooperation between the village and non-profit organisations. In 1997, environmental groups supported local inhabitants in installing a number of do-it-yourself solar collectors on area homes and buildings as well as repairing one of the village's traditional wooden fruit drying kilns. Since then, cooperation between the local government, ČSOP Veronica and other civic associations has also led to the establishment, in 2000, of a small juicing plant, which produces high quality juice made from apples gathered from local orchards, as well as a biomass heating plant fuelled by wood chips from area forests and sawmills.



Thanks to these and other activities, the village of Hostětín is becoming a model sustainable rural community. A wide number of similar initiatives, developed by civic organisations, local authorities, as well as private farmers and entrepreneurs, have been developed in the surrounding area of the White Carpathians, ranging from public to private efforts to preserve land and manage meadow ecosystems for the development and marketing of local products.

These and other projects and activities provide the basis for the establishment **Centre for Sustainable Rural Development** - a place for interested people to learn, gain experience from and inspiration on how to promote environmentally friendly alternatives in their villages or households. Construction of the Centre, which will be housed in an innovative, low-energy building adjacent to the juicing plant in Hostětín, will begin in spring of 2005.

The village of Hostětín and its surroundings form an ideal "laboratory" for environmental education and awareness raising on sustainable rural development, demonstrating the potential to promote socio-economic development while preserving and even promoting natural and cultural heritage in remote rural areas.

#### Topics:

Sustainable rural development: Hostětín - Sustainable Rural Community | Traditions of the White Carpathians - regional fruit varieties for local development and landscape protection | Promotion of sustainable organic agriculture



Renewable energy: „Sun for the White Carpathians” installation of simple do-it-yourself solar collectors | Consultations and education on ecological building and renovation and renewable energy

Nature protection: Landscape conservation and sustainable development in South Moravia | Flood protection, river keeping

**Target groups:** *Public/energy consumers, Municipalities, Politicians, Farmers, Foresters, Landowners, Energy production companies, Craftsmen.*

**Contact:** The Centre for Sustainable Rural Development in Hostětín - Hostětín 4 - 687 71 Bojkovice - Tel. 572 641 855 e-mail: [hostetin@veronica.cz](mailto:hostetin@veronica.cz), Website: [www.hostetin.org](http://www.hostetin.org)

## Green offices



Also, in the Czech Republic, public institutions have started to become interested in the environments with which they provide their employees, visitors, and clients, in their operating conditions, their environmental impacts, and also in how they are perceived in these matters.

The aim of the project was to introduce this approach to the Czech Republic, to provide methodological support for eco-counsellors and offices starting with green public procurement activities and to strengthen their interest. To fulfil this objective we prepared:

- methodological handbook – which contains basic information about GPP, possible criteria and measures, experiences and examples of implementation from the CR and other countries
- workshop – mainly for eco-counsellors
- quick national survey on GPP practices and presentation of its results – we asked 35 institutions at national and regional levels to show their measures in the fields, like the use of environmentally friendly products, waste management, education for employees, internal directives, ...
- list of contact persons for GPP in different offices
- web pages



**Supplier and Partners:** Ministry of environment, STEP members

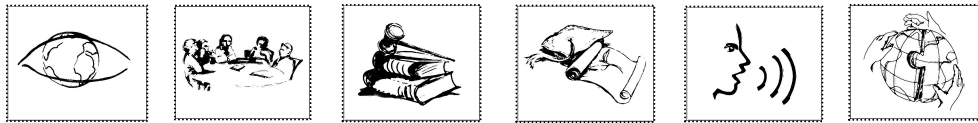
**Topic:** Green public procurement

**Target groups:** public administration at national and regional level, eco-counsellors

**Project manager and contacts:** Kamila Kanichová, STEP, e-mail: [step@ecn.cz](mailto:step@ecn.cz); phone: +420 603 449 385, Website: [www.ekoporadna.cz/zelene\\_uradovani.php](http://www.ekoporadna.cz/zelene_uradovani.php).

## France

### Environmental management in industrial zoning



Since the end of the Second World War, local authorities are developing industrial estates to attract and to establish companies. Now there are more than 25,000 industrial zones in France. Most of them are just no man's land: badly managed, with a lot of environmental impact, no synergies between companies, etc.

The poor quality of these areas didn't encourage companies to take care of environment.

This situation had a strong impact not only on the quality of life of workers, but also on the neighbourhood.

In a way, to facilitate rehabilitation and to increase the quality of these territories, a new methodology has been developed. This methodology supports environmental management systems (such as ISO 14001 and EMAS) and collective approaches for SMEs.

This new way to manage industrial zoning is a "win-win" approach. Local authorities are improving the environmental quality of the public areas of industrial zones, and firms are searching together for solutions to their environmental impacts. It's also a good way to help SMEs to implement environmental management systems and to cut the costs of some environmental solutions. For example, some firms are working together to elaborate a collective waste management system, some others are sharing eco-counsellors, etc.

Today, several local authorities use this methodology as a way to develop this new partnership on the industrial estates of their territories.

Some eco-counsellors implement this methodology. They mainly work as organizers of the methodology, and they also develop contacts between all the actors involved.

The methodology and the Ecomapping tool for industrial estates™ have been developed by e-parc and Association Orée with the help of Eco-conseil Entreprise. Several local actors have participated in the elaboration of these tools.

**Topics:** environmental management of industrial estates, collective environmental management for SMEs.

**Target groups:** estates managers, local authorities, firms managers.

**Contact:** e-parc -10 rue de la Distillerie 44000 Nantes France

Tel: 33 2 40 89 47 66 Website: [www.e-parc.com](http://www.e-parc.com)

Association Orée - 42, rue du Faubourg Poissonnière 75010 Paris

Tél: (33)01.48.24.04.00 Fax: (33)01.48.24.08.63

## Germany

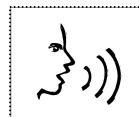
### Planning from eco-communication in the German city of Dresden

#### Action days “Noisy Noise”

##### Situation and problem:

Up to four of five citizens of Dresden feel disturbed by noise. They feel very

much stressed by noise. This stress can cause illness in the long run. The main cause is the noise of traffic and transport. The theme “noise” is very difficult to communicate, because it is very complex in its origin and has a variable structure of actors. Signs of the environmental problem “noise” are the different kinds of acceptance and estimation.



**Aims and targets:** The theme noise and the minimization of noise in the city are mainly addressed by the environmental office of the city government. Information about the situation of noise in Dresden is part of a preventive program to care for health.

The action days “noisy noise” have the following aims:

- showing the work and the competence of the environmental office in the field of noise,
- the qualification of specialized target groups so that they are informed about the topic “noise” in its whole complexity and relevance,
- to offer possibilities for acting but also to show the main cause of noise;
- giving motivation for initiatives in the city, how they can help to reduce noise emissions
- getting feedback from engaged citizens for the environmental office and maintaining public relations

The action days of Dresden are part of the “International day of noise,” on 28 April. These days are organised by the environmental office of the government of Dresden and the Foundation of the German Hygienic Museum, which is an established educational and museum institution with a good central and infrastructural location.

#### Target group specific aims and possibilities for action through “Noisy Noise”

Target groups	targets	Possibilities for acting
Interested citizens, people who have too much noise in their region	See and use the possibilities of the action days, giving information	Reduce the traffic partially, changing own actions by mobility, respect for quiet hours, use of conflict consultancy (Mediation)
Newspapers, TV, Radio of Dresden	Show the different aspects of noise	Publishing information,, fostering sensitivity for this problem, preparing the main messages related to this theme
Political public relations	Participation of the main decision maker in	Cooperative planning for noise reduction targets



	discussions and seminars	
Experts in the field of noise	Hearing about strategies, methods and instruments for a good and sustainable noise reduction	Developing from aims for region'wide noise reduction.
Teacher	Development of exemplary projects and courses	Student events, effect for multipliers
Student	Seeing the effects and the difficulties of noise	Individual care for noise and being careful with each other, school event.

**The strategy of communication was a mix of different activities with different actors and partners:**

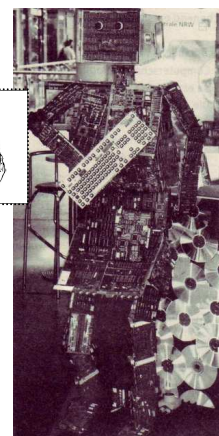
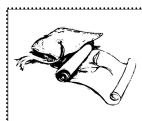
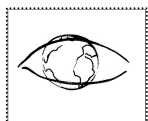
- Testing ears for free
- Mediation and moderation by noise-conflicts
- Online-information "Building-Noise-Check"
- Developing surveys of own noise-situation
- Internet discussion forum "noisy noise"
- Student event
- Seminars and courses
- Events for families
- Exhibitions and showing films about noise

**Results:** Successful actions have to be oriented toward the normal daily situation and the problems of the target groups. They should see the use on their own. Information and consultancy offers must be offered continuously for a long time and regularly.

Special actions should be limited by time and need very good and intensive marketing, so that they receive the undivided interest and support of the public media. It would be designate a day, which could also be used by cooperative partners.

**Contact:** Landeshauptstadt Dresden, Amt für Umweltschutz, Abteilung Umweltvorsorge, Mr. Tom Hey, Grunaer Straße 2, D-01069 Dresden.

### „Action computer waste“ from a consumer organisation in the German region Nordrhein-Westfalen



**Situation and problems:** The eco-counselling in this consumer organisation is still working in different groups. The head "group environment" develops working packages for the 50 eco-counselling-offices in Nordrhein-Westfalen (Northrhine-Westfalia). The "group environment" planned an action with computer waste and printer cartridges. Nearly two million personal computers and more than 30,000 tons old CD-ROMs are wasted per year. There is no law to bring

this waste back to the trade. This will change in 2006. From then on, trade offices and recycling stations put them back for free or for a low cost.

**Targets and target groups:** The targets for the action:

- Information to the consumers and making sense of the recycling of computer waste
- Information to the consumers about eco-labelling in the field of computers
- Showing that this topic is a theme of eco-counselling in a consumer organisation and trying to establish this kind of work

Computers are used by people of the ages between 16 and 50 years. In this action the target group from people between 25 and 55 years was defined. The eco-counsellors tried to reach those users and persons who handle waste management in private households, who are often homemakers.

**Instruments:** The consumer organisation built a figure of computer waste in the size of an adult person. This big figure shows the way to the information centre. They also developed a computer game with multiple-choice-questions around the theme "computer waste". Another part of the action was a contest where you could win a digital camera. And, last but not least, one could bring old CDs to a special waste container. The consumer organisation published information flyers to be distributed to households. They publicized the event through TV news, on the radio and in local newspapers. The location of this action was a big shopping centre.

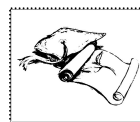
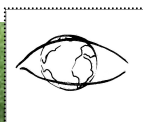
**Results:** It was very good to organize this action in a shopping centre. It was the right way to reach the desired target group. The computer game was mainly used by the youth. The figure of computer waste was an eye catcher, and provoked interest, but it was also good for public relations photos.

It was a good idea for one organization, the "group environment," to have prepared this action, so that 50 eco-counselling-offices could do this action in their own towns and cities. In this way financial and personal resources were saved.

**Contact:** Verbraucher-Zentrale NRW, Gruppe Umwelt (group environment), Friederike Farsen, Petra Niesbach, Barbara Neukirchen, Mintropstr. 27, D-40215 Düsseldorf.

## Hungary

### Heavy riders - campaign against unidentified motorcycles, quads in nature reserves and inhabited areas



The Hungarian Network of Eco-counselling Offices launched a campaign in August 2005 against unidentified motorcycles and quads in nature reserves and inhabited areas. The core of the problem is that authorities in Hungary did not have any means to deal with cross-motorists, that is to say the legal background was not really clear, as they do not have to have a number plate on their

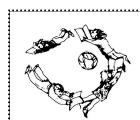
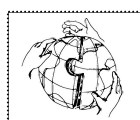
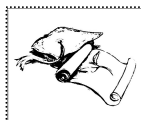
cycles. The other side of the problem was that motorists disturb communities with their awful noise and speed in urban areas too. So a national weekend to count the motorists riding in protected areas illegally was organized. Then a national signature collection was announced and the campaign ended with a press conference. Within two months some 10,000 signatures were collected for better legal regulation and the press covered the issue to a great extent. A partial result of the campaign is that the police and the forest rangers deal with the problem now. But to change legislation takes longer.

**Topics:** transport

**Target groups:** motorists, press, general public

**Contact:** Környezeti Tanácsadó Irodák Hálózata (Hungarian Network of Eco-counselling Offices), Trombitás Gábor - H-8200 Veszprém, Zrínyi u. 3/1., phone/fax: +36-88/427-792, email: [trombi@zpok.hu](mailto:trombi@zpok.hu), Websites: [www.kothalo.hu](http://www.kothalo.hu).

### Promoting environmentally friendly products in the eco-counselling offices



Hungarian eco-counselling offices face the issue of environmentally friendly products in their everyday work. Clients drop by the offices asking about detergents, diapers, light bulbs, recycled paper products etc. Some of these articles are hard to find in regular shops, or can not be found at all, although they are available at special, green shops or hidden retailers. The offices are familiar with these places, but to help clients choose the appropriate products that suit their needs best all the 19 offices of the network decided to establish a demonstration corner of environmentally friendly products to make the clients able to see, touch, smell these goods and to have all the necessary background information about them and about

where, when and how to buy them, what is their price etc. The products usually cannot be purchased in the offices because of regulation reasons, but samples are displayed and thus the clients are motivated to buy such articles in the special shops.

**Topics:** eco-consumption

**Target groups:** clients of the eco-counselling offices

**Contact :** Környezeti Tanácsadó Irodák Hálózata (Hungarian Network of Eco-counselling Offices), Trombitás Gábor - H-8200 Veszprém, Zrínyi u. 3/1., phone/fax: +36-88/427-792, e-mail: [trombi@zpok.hu](mailto:trombi@zpok.hu), Website: [www.kothalo.hu](http://www.kothalo.hu).

## Italy

### Recycling of electronic and electric waste



Since the introduction of European directives 2002/96 and 2003/108 about electronic and electric waste in Italy, a Napolitan social cooperative took the chance to seriously face the problem of the recuperation and the recycling of these products in the whole process. In order to reach this goal it has been necessary to involve the community of the entire city of Naples by organizing special

events such as the daily installation of gazebos, moving collection points in different roads and squares where citizens could bring their own discarded electronic and electric apparatus so they won't end up in the regular rubbish process. Besides, by doing this it has been possible to show to the public administration that social cooperation could also take part in such an important issue and sort out the problems and have the following results:

- to activate an urban hygiene service, at present not activated, guaranteeing citizens an efficient quality service;
- to favour a public welfare tool, to create jobs for the unemployed in the long term. In this way it's possible to help local decision makers favouring citizenship well-being.



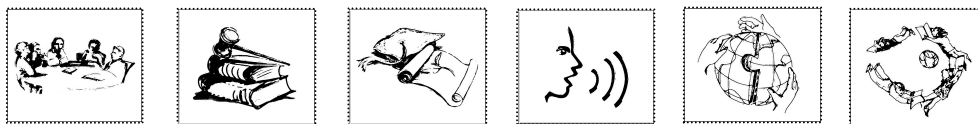
**Topics:** Communication; Waste management.

**Target groups:** Citizenship; public municipality.

**Contact:** Cooperativa Sociale San Marco Service Soc. Coop. a r.l. di Tipo B  
Via G. Porzio,4 Centro Direzionale Isola F/4 80143 Napoli, Italia.



## Stakeholder's round table to devise territory development



The local development in Mazara del Vallo's territory shows many potential resources unexpressed, in relation to different fields (tourism, agriculture, natural resources, etc).

In order to accomplish projects that support and amplify sustainable development, it's necessary to increase meetings of discussion with all the stakeholders involved.

Cooperation among the other local subjects is very important: enterprises, local administrations, public institutions, associations, citizens, schools, etc.

How can we create the possibility for meetings, debates, and discussions among the subjects concerned? Through the accomplishment of a permanent stakeholder's table that meets periodically on the territory, with



the aim of discussing and debating all the topics that concern everyone, namely the development of the territory.

The main elements of this table are: the facilitators' and generalists' contributions, territory integration in each section of the discussion, direct involvement of the citizens, respecting legal principles, and self training. Communication methods are vital for the final outcome. The needed result is to change each's point of view in order to finalize the creation and the planning of concrete intervention due do the territory's development.

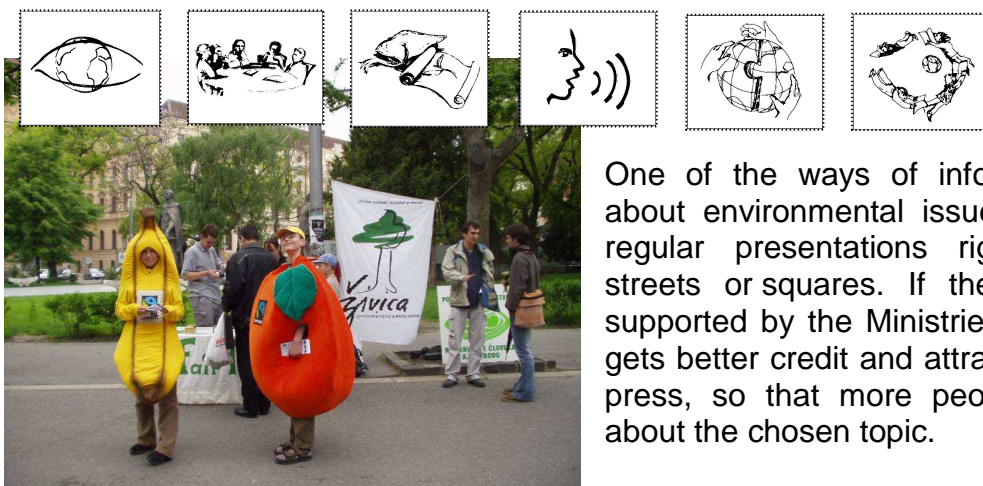
**Topics:** Sustainable Development; Communication; Cooperation and Integration.

**Target groups:** Citizenship; public administrations, enterprises.

**Contact:** CNR Mazara del Vallo - Via Luigi Vaccari, 61 - Mazara del Vallo (Trapani) Sicily Italy.

## Slovakia

### Experience of a public presentation about eco-labelling in partnership with the Ministry of Environment or the Ministry of Agriculture



One of the ways of informing the public about environmental issues is to organize regular presentations right on crowded streets or squares. If the presentation is supported by the Ministries, it automatically gets better credit and attracts the interest of press, so that more people are informed about the chosen topic.

This method can be used for different actual environmental topics, in our case for the presentation of national eco-labelling systems and its products. It is necessary to provide leaflets or other visual and relevant information to a group of interested people right on the street. Cooperation with Ministries, which usually have enough information materials to provide, is very useful. Very important is also to provide the possibility of further information sources like relevant web sites of Ministries or eco-counselling organizations (even more important if some potential producer is interested in joining the eco-labelling system and changing the old technology to an environmentally friendly one). Life music, traditional dancing or other relevant effects could be helpful in attracting more diverse groups of people.

Another successful way of gaining the attention of the public about the topic is to provide samples of promotional products (bio-apples, bio-bread, bio-snacks, samples of ecological cleaning products etc.). People can experience the differences in taste or quality of healthier products with minimal negative impact to our environment.

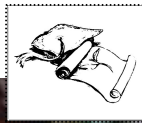
In this case, products are not reclaimed as a usual commodity, but as an alternative to common utility products and as a kind of information source about the possibilities of supporting cleaner, healthier and more responsible production.

**Topic:** Eco-consumption/ eco-labelling

**Target group:** Public

**Contact:** CEEV Zivica, Vysoka 18, 811 06 Bratislava, Slovak republic, Tel. 00421 – 2 – 52 96 29 29 – Websites: [www.zivica.sk](http://www.zivica.sk), [www.ekoporadna.sk](http://www.ekoporadna.sk)

## Experience of seminar for teachers with special tool “Saving Energy Trunk” in partnership with Ministry of Education



Specialised seminars for teachers are a very effective way of disseminating information about different environmental topics to a great number of public representatives – teachers, students, and pupils. Teachers also play the role of mediators and have great opportunities to raise environmental awareness of the public, especially of young people, a group which is very sensitive towards environmental problems and their solutions. Seminars help not just to deepen the knowledge of teachers in the field of environmental protection, but also to motivate them to include these topics in

their daily educational plan.

Visual teaching tools are very popular not only with teachers but also students. In our case we use a special tool called the “Saving Energy Trunk,” which is suitable for imparting practical knowledge about saving energy and alternative energy sources. The trunk was made for “Zivica” by the organization “Rio 21 Centrum,” and was awarded 1st prize in a competition called “Creative teacher”, organised by the Slovak Agency for Environment in 2001. The trunk consists of a few parts showing the practical possibilities of using solar and wind energy, other devices for different physical experiments such as a voltmeter, ampere-meter, thermometer, parabolas, and also a panel for comparing the efficiency of normal and saving energy bulb.

With this kind of multifunctional tool, students or pupils can personally explore the possibilities of saving energy and also confirm their knowledge from the natural sciences, chemistry, etc.

Seminars have to be led in a way that is interesting for teachers, and at a high professional level. If the Ministry of Education is involved, it can provide financial help to spread more tools for more schools or help to organize more seminars for more teachers.

**Topic:** Energy saving

**Target group:** Students, pupils, teachers

**Contact:** CEEV Zivica, Vysoka 18, 811 06 Bratislava, Slovak republic

Tel. 00421 – 2 – 52 96 29 29 – Websites: [www.zivica.sk](http://www.zivica.sk), [www.ekoporadna.sk](http://www.ekoporadna.sk).



# **VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND LEGAL RECOGNITION**

In this chapter we present an abstract of the different aspects of the training in the different countries of the partners of the Eco Stands For project.

The ILO and UNESCO define vocational training as a related job or occupation and mainly non academic training. It is a very wide concept with no specifications of methods or organisations involved.

As could be expected, the training offer is quite different from one country to another. Some countries actually have specialized trainings in eco-counselling (Austria, Belgium, France, Hungary). Some other countries had systematic trainings in the past but not anymore (Germany and Czech Republic) and some countries don't have this kind of training (Italy and Slovakia) at all.

## **Overview of trainings on the national level**

### **Trainers**

The organizers of the trainings are issued from the academic, NGO or private sectors.

In general, all countries have academic trainings.

The NGO trainings are present in Austria, Belgium and Hungary, Czech Republic.

The private trainings are present also in Austria, Czech Republic, France, Italy and Slovakia.

In some countries, the academic sector is most active in terms of the trainings offered, compared to those offered by the NGO and private sectors (Belgium, France, Hungary, Slovakia).

### **Legal recognition**

With regard to the legal recognition of the trainings, it is mainly the academic sector that delivers official diplomas with a generally high level of recognition (university degrees, international degrees...). In some countries, the private sector also delivers recognized diplomas (Austria and Slovakia). There is actually no recognized certification delivered by NGOs.

### **Minimum requirements**

- The academic trainings (results from Belgium, France, Hungary and Italy)  
Some trainings are designated for high school graduates, while others are intended for persons who already have graduate diplomas or university degrees. In France, basic diplomas and professional experience are sometimes required.
- The NGO trainings : (results from Austria, Belgium and Hungary)

These trainings are designated for eco-counsellors or for people interested in specializing in eco-counselling. In this second option, people have to present at least a graduate diploma (Belgium), or sometimes any interested person may qualify (Austria).

- The private trainings (results from Austria, Italy and Slovakia) :  
These trainings require a graduate degree (Slovakia) and/or other requirements which can be practical experience (Austria, Italy).

## **Content of the training**

- The academic trainings : (results from Belgium, France, Hungary and Italy)

The content of the academic trainings is mainly oriented toward environmental topics.

- 30 - 80 % environment / 0 - 20 % communication / 0 - 20 % methodology and tools / 5- 60 % practice (Belgium)
- Around 50 % environment / 10 - 20 % communication / 0 - 20 % methodology and tools / around 20 % practice (France)
- 50-90% environment in trainings of environmental sciences, 50-80% communication in trainings of communication (Hungary)
- In Italy trainings are for specialists, and general consultants are not common. So the course content is very specialized and deals with the subjects of the training without having a global vision of the Environmental matter at hand. Only few Italian training courses offer the possibility to deal with communication and conflict management

- The NGO trainings : (results from Belgium and Hungary)

- 25 - 50 % environment / 10 - 20 % communication / 0 - 15 % methodology and tools / around 50 % practice (Belgium)
- 70% environment, 15% communication, 15% others (Hungary)

- The private trainings: no information (except the specialized character of the Italian trainings).

## **Methods of the training**

- The academic trainings : (results from Austria, Belgium, France, Hungary and Italy)

These trainings present a wide diversity of methods (lectures seminars, case studies, etc.) with different levels of practice (mainly final project work or stage).

- The NGO trainings : (results from Austria, Belgium and Hungary)

These trainings are oriented toward a participative approach and the case-study. In Belgium, the practice is increased by the realization of stage.

- The private trainings : (results from Austria and Italy)

In Austria, the chosen method is an extra occupational online course (with distant learning modules). In Italy, the course is rarely oriented to practice.

## Duration

- The academic trainings : (results from Austria, Belgium, France, Hungary and Slovakia)

The duration of these trainings varies according to the function of the participants: from weekly modules to part-time programs for the complementary diplomas around one year full-time with half theory and a half practice (France) around 3 to 5 years for university degrees.

- The NGO trainings : (results from Austria, Belgium and Hungary)  
The duration of these trainings can be short modules of 15 to 40 days to be done in 1 or 2 years (Austria and Hungary) or more intensive formulas like 6 months to 1 year full-time (Belgium).
- The private trainings : (results from Austria and Slovakia)  
The duration of these trainings is from 6 months to 1 year.

## Number of certified persons

- The academic trainings : (results from Belgium, France and Hungary)  
Belgium: 930 certified persons and around 60 persons certified/year.  
France: 1100 certified persons and around 160 persons certified/year.  
Hungary: around 27000 certified persons and around 820-920 persons certified/year.
- The NGO trainings : (results from Belgium and Hungary)  
Belgium: 540 certified persons and around 60 persons certified/year.  
Hungary: 60 certified persons and around 20-25 persons certified/year.
- The private trainings: no information.

## Training curricula

Many countries have vocational training, generally organized by NGOs, with the exception of Italy and France (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Hungary and Italy).

These trainings are generally not compulsory but are highly recommended to keep a high skill level.

The topics are generally diversified: environmental, communication, project management issues, etc.

The duration of these trainings are generally from ½ to 4 days. In Hungary, they are free of charge for the participants (including the travel costs).

## Recognition criteria (results from Czech Republic, Germany and Italy)

In the different countries, there aren't any recognition criteria regarding the eco-counsellors' trainings.

## Common concept for vocational training

National experience and mutual discussions lead to common concepts of the training focused especially on people coming out of neighbouring fields who want to become eco-counsellors, and on people who already are eco-counsellors and want to improve their skills. The course should contain two principal parts: environmental knowledge (environmental, technical, legal, etc.) and communication skills (in a wider sense) with the ratio between these two around 50:50% (with a range between 40 to 60 % depending on the initial qualification of the trainee). Practical experience and exercises are presumed to be gained in the daily work in the current occupation of the trainee (otherwise it should also be part of the training).

More detailed structure and main fields where eco-counsellors should be trained are as follows:

- introductory course
- basic environmental and sectoral knowledge (e.g. waste, soil, health etc.)
- cross-sectoral topics (e.g. global energyv. issues, communities, companies, etc.)
- communication skills

The minimum extent of such training is suggested at 200 hours (minimum of 170 hours plus 30 hours must-do optional courses). Some of the above-mentioned topics are considered obligatory: Introduction, Basic environmental topics, Sectoral topics, Communication skills, general overview of Cross sectoral topics. Others can be optional. The range of topics within the whole training is shown in the following table:

Theme	Range (%)	Range (hours)
Introduction	5	10
Basic environmental topics	15 - 30	30 - 60
Sectoral topics	15 - 30	30 - 60
Cross sectoral topics	15 - 20	30 - 40
Communication skills	35 - 45	70 - 90

Parallel to the quality standards developed, a **set of principles** was identified. It can be applied both to the quality of eco-counselling work and therefore implicitly also to the quality of the vocational training programme, the modules and the trainers involved.

Approaches that necessarily have to be applied in order to meet the expected quality standards are as follows:

- gender mainstreaming aspects
- legal aspects  
What are the relevant legal regulations from the European down to the local level?
- economic aspects  
What are the individual and aggregate costs/benefits/implications of any actual or changed environmental behaviour or policy?

- behavioral change aspects  
How and by which arguments or options can a change of behaviour be promoted?
- demonstration aspects  
What are the related best-practice examples? How will they work?
- landscape and urban planning aspects  
Which planning strategies will promote or endanger any attempt to protect the environment?
- scientific aspects  
Are we still on the ground of scientific findings? Is our advice always based on serious information?
- vision aspects  
Is the information given congruent with our general vision of how society will cope with environmental challenges in the future?

As can easily be seen many of the postulated aspects are necessarily interlinked.

## ***List of partners:***

<b>Country</b>	<b>Organization</b>		<b>Website</b>
Austria	"die umweltberatung"	Verband österreichischer Umweltberatungsstellen	<a href="http://www.umweltberatung.at">www.umweltberatung.at</a>
Austria	BFI	Berufsförderungsinstitut Oberösterreich	<a href="http://www.bfi-ooe.at">www.bfi-ooe.at</a>
	ECE	Eco Counselling Europe	<a href="http://www.ecocounselling-europe.org">www.ecocounselling-europe.org</a>
Austria	Knoll & Szalai OEG	Technisches Büro für Landschaftsplanung und Unternehmensberatung	<a href="http://www.knollszalai.at">www.knollszalai.at</a>
Belgium	ABECE	Belgian Association of Ecocounsellors	<a href="http://www.abece.be">www.abece.be</a>
Belgium	Institut Eco-Conseil		<a href="http://www.eco-conseil.be">www.eco-conseil.be</a>
Czech Republic	Faculty of Social Studies	Masaryk University	<a href="http://www.fss.muni.cz">www.fss.muni.cz</a>
Czech Republic	STEP	Sit ekologických poraden/The Czech Ecocounselling Network	<a href="http://www.ekoporadna.cz">www.ekoporadna.cz</a>
Germany	bfub	Bundesverband für Umweltberatung Deutschland	<a href="http://www.umweltberatung.org">www.umweltberatung.org</a>
France	ASFEC	Association Francaise des Eco-Conseillers	<a href="http://www.asfec.net">www.asfec.net</a>
Hungary	KÖT	Környezeti Tanácsadók Egyesülete/Hungarian EcoCounselling Association	<a href="http://www.kothalo.hu">www.kothalo.hu</a>
Italy	Tek Form	Consorzio Tek Form	

Italy	Unica	Unione Italiana Consulenti Ambientali (Union of Italian EcoCounsellors)	<a href="http://www.consulentiambientali.it">www.consulentiambientali.it</a>
Slovakia	ZIVICA	Centrum environmentalnej a etickej výchovy ZIVICA (Centre of environmental and ethical education ZIVICA)	<a href="http://www.zivica.sk">www.zivica.sk</a> or <a href="http://www.ekoporadna.sk">www.ekoporadna.sk</a>

## ***Sources of information***

Hofbauer D. (1996): Veränderte Zeiten, Umweltberatung in Österreich. Verlag: Verband Wiener Volksbildung. Wien

Bundesverband für Umweltberatung e.V. et al (2000): Qualitätsmanagement in der Umweltberatung. Eigenverlag. Bremen

Analysis of Eco-counselling networks, job profiles and vocational trainings in Europe, "EcoStands For" project partners, December 2005



# ANNEXES

## ***I. The examples of Ethical Codes from different European countries***

Some European eco-counselling organizations have their own Ethical Codex, some still do not have an official one. There are many similarities in Ethical codes, for example from German, Belgian, French or Hungarian eco-counselling organizations, but there are also some differences according to the backgrounds and trends of the organizations.

Here you can find the Ethical codes from different European eco-counselling organizations as well as the history of these documents.

### **1. Directive of quality of Eco-counselling services - organization BFUB (Der Bundesverband für Umweltberatung e.V.), Germany**

#### **History**

In 1993, bfub discussed the following questions with 100 eco-counsellors: “What is an eco-counsellor?”, “What kind of qualification does he/she need?” “How can one become an eco-counsellor?” The result of this discussion was the present ethical code. It has been in existence already for 16 years. Every member of the bfub has the duty to fulfil the ethical code. Till today there have been no problems of misuse of this code.

*(Full version)*

#### **Criteria**

*The Bundesverband für Umweltberatung e.V. (bfub) /Federal Association for Eco-counselling/ represents the environmental and professional/political interests of eco-counselling. Eco-counselling is targeted to protect and care for our natural existential security. It works for prevention and goes further than law requirements. Its role is to urge for voluntary ecological awareness and change societal behaviour, politics and economy. The Bundesverband für Umweltberatung (bfub) e.V. sees a necessity to determine dynamic criteria for first-rate quality eco-counselling. A defined marking of goods create lucidity between the counsellor and customers. The Association works in the process as contractor, controller and arbitrator.*

*Under the terms of recognition of quality energy-counsellors must respect an ethical code:*

#### **Ethical code of Eco-counselling**

*Eco-counselling needs obligatory principles in order to gain the necessary recognition by society as a competent, neutral and trustworthy institution. Because of that, the Eco-counsellors ratified, under the terms of recognition of the quality of eco-*

*counselling services, the following ethical code. This ethical code is valid for all eco-counsellors independently of their professional or methodological specialisation.*

*The eco-counsellor commits himself/herself:*

- ✓ to a prepared, independent, objective and integrated delineation of their work connected with the environment*
- ✓ to follow no interests, which contradict the preservation of our environment, or possibly sustainable development*
- ✓ to impartial, but not apolitical work*
- ✓ to confidential treatment of the content of counselling with respect to third parties*
- ✓ to a broad basis of german counselling, which will be constantly revised through continual further education*
- ✓ to contribute to the credibility of eco-counselling through his/her own behaviour*
- ✓ to be mutually solidaristic, which demonstrates trustworthy cooperation and mutual support*

*Basic duties for accredited counsellors are to submit to impartiality, conscientiousness and a duty to personal processing of orders. Further conditions are stated transparently below.*

*Hints for applicant, who would like to obtain recognition of quality for eco-counselling services*

*(Please, do not send any originals!)*

*Contracts can be sent to the board of directors of bfub informally. For the simplification of recognition, the following requirements should be respected:*

*To precondition 1*

*"University or FH-Abschluss or comparable professional education in one of practice of profession eco-counsellor awarding branches, also potentially evidence of environmentally oriented studies or comparable professional education."*

*It should be clear, from the submitted documents, that the person had not only completed a specific specialization (for example chemistry or biology) or a specific education, but that those studies or education were directly oriented toward the*

*protection of the environment. This may be the case for almost all specialisations and professions. However, it is important, that it they were about the impacts of subjects on current connections, potentially about interconnected thinking and taking action.*

*To precondition 2*

*"Additional education in eco-counselling (at least 300 hours, if an occupational praxis in duration of one year was proved, otherwise 400 hours"*

*Here the number of tuition hours from each of the submitted confirmations should be clearly noted, showing that the required number of 300 hours was reached, and that the further education shows an internal consistency, which can represent methodically and in content an eco-counselling education.*

*To precondition 3*

*"Documented project work in eco-counselling according the criteria of DIN 69901*

- targeted with fixed timetable and budget*
- one-off (no routine)*
- complex (requires division of labour)*
- teamwork*
- plan with own organisation*
- with special importance".*

*Here it should be proved that the project meets the requirements of DIN 69901. It defines a project as "Intention that is strictly speaking characterized by uniqueness of conditions in their complex, as for example target pattern, time, financial, personal or other delimitations, delimitations with respect to other intentions, project specific organisation".*

*To precondition 4:*

*"Professional praxis in eco-counselling, at least one year continuously."*

*This does not require the submission of a certificate. Evidence of duration and concrete contents of employment are sufficient.*

***All documents for submission must have informative value.***

### ***Recognition of advancement***

<i>According to § 5 of the recognition of the quality of eco-counselling services, the certified eco-counsellor is obliged to pursue a constant professionally accompanied postgraduate and further education. To this belongs at least 5 days of further education annually, in the process s/he, as a professional, must also complete methodological arrangements.</i>
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### ***Hints for the proposal of the order of recognition of quality for eco-counselling services***

*A proposal for the recognition of advancement can be submitted informally after the fulfilment of a 3-month long period of expiration of duration of recognition to a board of directors of the Bundesverband für Umweltberatung.*

The following annexes have to be included in the memorandum:

1. Brief formulation of activities (projects, actions etc.) of last 2 years
2. Complete overview of necessary 10 days of further education
3. Copy of the program of visited movements, required also is confirmation of attendance of a holder of further education, as substitute also written confirmation of attendance with your signature.

## **2. Ethical standards of Hungarian Network of Eco-counselling Offices (Kötháló), Hungary**

### **History**

The Code of the Hungarian Network of Eco-counselling Offices (Kötháló) was taken over from the Hungarian environmental NGO - The Waste Working Alliance (Humusz). Smaller modifications were made and then the Code was officially accepted after a short discussion on 18th May 2005 by the General Assembly.

*(Full version)*

*The present guidelines regulate the rules of cooperation of financial character between the Hungarian Network of Eco-counselling Offices (in what follows: Network) and the economic sector.*

### **Explanatory instructions:**

*“Co-operation” means equally the bilateral (contractual) relations established on the basis of the Civil Code, and the relations established by accepting donations offered unilaterally from the economic sector (in the case of different regulation we have a special disposition).*

*“Agreement” means equally the actual contract and the other agreement based on consensus.*

### **I. Basic principles:**

- 1) *The actual co-operation with the economic sector can be established only for a rational purpose and only if it*
  - a) *may contribute to the ecologically oriented transformation of the economy (sustainable development),*
  - b) *does not hurt the consumption and environmental policy aims comprised in a resolution of the annual general assembly of the environmental movement,*
  - c) *does not endanger the organizational/political independence of the Network,*
  - d) *is in harmony with the tasks described in the Statutes of the Network.*
- 2) *The co-operation must not limit the critical action of the Network against the economic organization.*
- 3) *The logo of the Network is not an article – it can be printed only on the goods, promotional materials, and publications circulated by the Network.*

### **II. General conditions of co-operation and excluding reasons:**

- 1) *The co-operating economic organizations have to meet the general conditions below:*

- a) *their internal structure, range of products, technology, and marketing policy should meet the general environmental and economic policy expectations of the green movement,*
  - b) *their statutes should include environmental protection and nature conservation as a strategic aim,*
  - c) *in the internal and external work of the firm's management the responsibility toward the environment should consistently prevail (product and technology change, continuous decrease of emitting hazardous materials, sincere advertising).*
- 2) *The Network excludes co-operation with the following economic organizations on principle:*
- *war industry and its subcontractors,*
  - *nuclear power plants and their subcontractors,*
  - *chemical mammoth factories reaching the lower threshold value of the disaster prevention ranking,*
  - *factories manufacturing and assembling parts of motor vehicles,*
  - *tobacco factories,*
  - *organizations dealing with genetic engineering and the large-scale users of genetically engineered products.*
- 3) *The cooperation should usually be related to an actual (possibly short-term) project. Exceptionally general (operational) support can also be accepted, but in deciding about it and in writing down the agreement special care should be taken.*

### **III. Other (procedural) rules:**

- 1) *In the preparation phase of co-operation the Network Council (NC) collects and considers the basic information related to the economic organization (sustainability indicators: organizational structure, range of products, technologies applied, authority measures affecting the economic organization, environmental data, environmental licences).*
- 2) *In the case of contracts based on the Civil Code (e.g. contractor-subcontractor, counselling activity) for the values of the services provided by the Network the market prices are authoritative.*
- 3) *For the single decision on the co-operation and on the conditions to be enforced it is necessary to have:*
  - a) *in the case of contracts belonging under the Civil Code the simple majority of the NC,*
  - b) *in the case of accepting unilateral offers (donation, sponsorship) the unanimous decision of the NC.*
- 4) *Deviation from point II/2 is permitted only if the Forum of the Network agrees to it with a unanimous resolution (exclusive sphere of authority).*
- 5) *The agreement should be signed separately for each project, indicating precisely the reason, content, conditions, frames and duration of the co-operation. The conditions of avoidance (e.g. serious, nature or environment damaging behaviour violating the Penal Code) to be enforced by the Network should be articulated with special care.*
- 6) *The signing party in the case of the Network is the president, while from the economic organization the party entitled to sign (except for the unilateral donation, where it is the supreme management of the firm).*

- 7) *The agreements are public; the Network informs its member organizations about signing them in each case. The Network forbids the partner economic organization the use of co-operation for promotional aim, but not the reference to it.*

#### **IV. Other**

- 1) *The guideline above was accepted by the Network's Forum as an internal regulation on 18 May 2005, its instructions should be applied from 19 May 2005.*
- 2) *To comply with the rules articulated in the guideline the Network Council in power holds responsibility. The individual member organizations decide about their co-operation with the economic organizations in their own name, independently.*

### **3. Code of Ethics - Belgian association of eco-counsellors / environmental counsellors**

#### **Professional Code of Ethics**

Definitive document, approved by the Administration Board on December 23rd, 1995, mandated by the General Assembly.

This text shall be enforced upon publication.

#### **Foreword**

#### **Motivation**

*It is considered that the profession of environmental counselling goes beyond the fulfilment of merchant interests, be they those of the worker, those of his/her client, or those of his/her employee. Indeed, the prime vocation of this profession is to ensure as much as possible that environmental protection and biodiversity be preserved, and that human activities be integrated within the perspective of sustainable development. In that sense, the profession of environmental counselling has as its priority fulfilling the higher interests of the human collective and environment in general.*

*This shall not be detrimental to the legitimacy of the worker's interests, of his/her client's or employer's interests, but shall be secondary, that is to say, shall respect the interests of the human collective and environment in general.*

*It becomes therefore necessary that any environmental counsellor submit him/herself, in his/her professional practice, to a professional code of ethics or deontology, which shall govern the means the environmental counsellor shall use for the hierarchy of interests hereby defined.*

#### **Commitments**

*Environmental counsellors, members of the association, commit, by their adhesion, to enforce the present code of ethics as an integrated part of the concept of the environmental counselling profession.*

*Thus, environmental counsellors, members of the association, must agree to submit their practice to peer evaluation, following proceedings defined by the association, during which they shall be heard. The association (or its chosen representative or representatives) is free to assess all professional deeds, within their specific context,*

*and to determine infringements in the light of the general principles listed below or any other principle that shall be determined necessary to the just exercise of the profession. The member owes his or her peers the entire truth; professional secrecy shall not be invoked in relation to them. The proceedings shall not be public. The disciplinary brief shall not, in any case, be divulged to third parties, but may be evoked at a members' assembly.*

*Environmental counsellors, members of the association, shall also accept to be sanctioned, if necessary, at the end of this evaluation. Sanctions shall be, according to the gravity of the infringement of the present code as assessed by the association, blame, reprimand, suspension or statutory exclusion.*

### **Legal scope**

*The present code of ethics is only agreed upon between peers, who are the sole judges of its enforcement. It warrants the quality of practice, both for the environmental counsellor member of the association and the whole profession.*

*It applies only to professional practice, with respect to and within the limits of the work or services contract.*

*It cannot be opposed to third parties in civil matters, and those third parties may not invoke it within the context of civil proceedings. Third parties may file a complaint to the association for breach of professional ethics, but they shall not know its outcome.*

*On the other hand, the association is committed to protect those members finding themselves subjected to notorious pressure from their client, their employer or third parties, whose manifest objective is to oppose the enforcement of the present professional code of ethics.*

*It is committed to defend and support those members who find themselves victims of unjustified attacks, implicating the respect of deontological rules.*

*It is committed to promote the respect of a member's statute and decent wage, allowing its members to exercise their profession within the deontological constraints implied.*

### **Article 1. - Basic principles**

*When exercising their profession, members of the association shall always give priority to the respect and protection of the environment in its broadest sense.*

*Furthermore, they commit to:*

- encouraging the integration of environmental considerations in landscape architecture, industrial and technological development, economic and commercial activities, as well as non-commercial, cultural and social activities;*
- overseeing the enforcement of laws and rules enacted by public authority, be they international, European, federal, regional, provincial or communal;*
- promoting participative citizenship.*

*The function of the environmental counsellor is incompatible with the exercise of activities and professions hindering the deontological rules of the present code of*

*ethics. The environmental counsellor will take care to exercise his or her profession in a non-partisan way, recognizing that it is incompatible to exercise a political mandate within the territory where one exercises one's activity of environmental counsellor.*

## **Article 2. - Commitments to the profession**

*1. The environmental counsellor's vocation is to intervene in all domains pertaining to the environment. This general authority of intervention does not exclude the exercise of an intervention in a specialized domain.*

*2. It is not the prime function of the environmental counsellor to judge or make an arbitration decision in a given situation. This role shall be assigned to his/her client, or to the relevant public authority. Nevertheless, he/she may be mandated to perform this role, and thus exercise his or her mandate.*

*3. The environmental counsellor shall actively care about protecting the environment in his or her practice, and carry out his/her activity in such a way so that the desirable behavioural or management changes shall be clearly considered in any decision.*

*4. The environmental counsellor shall consistently demonstrate honesty, integrity, objectivity, and impartiality in his/her professional work, regardless of his/her statutory dependency. S/He shall not favour any individual interest detrimental to the higher interest of the human collective and the environment in general.*

*5. The environmental counsellor shall consistently seek scientific rigor. S/He shall not deliver any assessment in a field s/he does not master, without relying on the analysis of a competent person.*

*6. The environmental counsellor shall strive to maintain the highest level of professional skill. S/He shall consistently refresh his/her knowledge, shall keep him-/herself informed of any new development necessary to the exercise of his/her profession, through an in-depth continuous training and by the means offered by the association.*

## **Article 3. - Commitments to third parties.**

*1. To never give priority to any economic or private interest, manifestly opposed to the protection of the environment and to the higher interest of the human collective.*

*2. To abstain from intervening, in the interest of remaining neutral (with the rare exception), in any situation implicating the advantageous placement of a relative, an ally, a subordinate or any person with whom the environmental counsellor has common interests.*

*3. To take on in a just and balanced manner the obligations of transparency and confidentiality.*

*4. To accept as a priority obligations concerning the rights of disclosure in environmental matters, and the interest of transparency in the decision-making process*



*in environmental matters. Nevertheless, to keep any private, commercial, economic or technological information from the public, provided that this information has no incidence on environmental protection and the decision-making process, i.e. that its disclosure is irrelevant. Brand names or other commercial information may be mentioned, only as examples, provided that this results in an improved consideration of environmental protection.*

*5. To state professional secrecy, when necessary, to third parties, except when removed through agreement by the concerned parties. (This is to be applied even after the cessation of function, hiring or work contract.)*

*6. To refuse any discrimination based on nationality, language, religion, etc.*

*7. To favour the conditions of free exchange of information and ideas, based on the mutual respect of interests and persons, as well as on the respect of the higher interests of the human collective and environment in general.*

*8. To not maintain in ignorance of relevant information any third party manifestly implied in the decision-making process in which one intervenes.*

*9. To inform all parties of the limitations of transparency and confidentiality, notably in matters where the enforced legislation makes it compulsory to lift professional secrecy constraints or to comply with the right to disclosure.*

*10. The mode of payment or compensation shall be determined independently of the results of the intervention required. The intervention may be billed or free of charge.*

*11. The environmental counsellor shall have the right to refuse any intervention in virtue of a clause of consciousness, depending on his or her own judgment, and on the principles of the present deontology.*

#### **Article 4. - Commitments towards peers and other professionals.**

*To demonstrate a particular confraternal solidarity, consisting of mutual aid, cooperation and mutual support.*

#### **Article 5. - Commitments towards the association.**

*Not to harm the reputation of the profession and its professional association, be it by the practice of the profession, words or writings.*

*Not to participate in activities that harm the association, the profession, or a colleague member of the association.*

*To participate in the collective promotion of environmental counselling, defined as a profession.*

*To develop the recognition of the profession.*

## ***II. Data sheets for monitoring of Hungarian eco-counselling offices***

### **1. Basic requirements**

The organization running the office:

Address of the office:

Name of counsellors:

The present qualification of the office:

<b>I.</b>	<b><u>Infrastructure</u></b>	<b><u>A</u></b>	<b><u>B</u></b>	<b><u>fact</u></b>	<b><u>evaluation</u></b>	<b><u>points</u></b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Place of the office</b> City centre, walking street or easily accessible by public transportation (stop within 300 meters) Ground floor, direct entry from the street Ground floor, entry form corridor or yard + plate Office upstairs + table	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>			<b>0-10</b> <b>+15</b> <b>+8</b> <b>+4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Duration of office hours (hours/week)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>The size of the counselling office (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Separate phone line</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Phone</b> Number of phones: + 2 points /phone	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Computer</b>	<b>pentium</b>	<b>486</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Legal software (operation system, word processor, table manager)</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Internet access</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Copy machine</b>	<b>A4</b> <b>(own)</b>	<b>A4</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Answering machine or voicemail</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Fax machine</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Printer</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Scanner</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>-</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Office hours displayed at the entrance</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Using the logo of the network on mailing papers (3 points) and in its own publications (3 points)</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>			<b>0-6</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Placing the unified plate of the network at the street entrance of the office</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>The information about the clients' rights, the services to be provided for them is displayed</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>			<b>0-10</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b><u>Administration</u></b>					
<b>18</b>	<b>Registration of the cases: excel table or case-sheet, or thematic datasheet</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>+</b>			<b>0-10</b>

19	The qualifications, degrees of the counsellor	high level	secondary level			0-10
20	Submitting the documents required by the board within the deadline 2 points/document	+	+			0-20
21	The office announced the changes of basic data in 10 days	+	+			-20-0
III.	<b>Local communication</b>					
22	The regular advertising of the service, or publishing it in a non-paid article (in radio or television programme) (2 points/month)	monthly	quarterly			0-24
IV.	<b>Cooperation with the network</b>					
23	Frequency of downloading, reading the emails of the network's list	every two days	weekly			0-10
24	Information on the network's list, frequency of sending news in 1 info/month = 2 points	monthly	-			0-24
25	Participating at the internal trainings of the network (10 points/training)	+	-			0-40
26	Own webpage displaying eco-counselling	+	-			0-10

Date:

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## **2. Suggested equipments, tasks**

I.	<b><u>Infrastructure</u></b>	<b><u>fact</u></b>	<b><u>evaluation</u></b>	<b><u>points</u></b>
1	Digital camera, CD-writer, radio-, television-set, projector (2 points/equipment)			0-10
2	Green or blue phone number			0-15
3	Access of disabled, blind deaf people			0-10
4	Separate waiting or conference room			0-10
II.	<b><u>Administration</u></b>			
5	Documenting visits to the scene			0-5
6	Library (lending)			0-10
7	Only the counsellor(s) has/have access to the case registration and the documents			0-5
8	In the case of several counsellors the division of work is cleared			0-3
9	The counsellor's employment contract contains exact determination of tasks, share of responsibilities			0-3
10	Number of external trainings attended last year 5 points/training/person			0-20
11	Respecting the office hours (control: six times a year)			0-24
12	Continuous registration of the requests (control at random)			0-5
13	During the test calls the counsellor introduced him/herself, mentioned the name of the eco-counselling office (1 point/occasion)			0-6
14	The written answer of the counsellor was polite and of appropriate styled (1 point/occasion)			0-6
15	During the test calls the counsellor spoke understandably and was helpful (1 point/occasion)			0-6
16	The advice received seems to be appropriate and sufficient to solve			0-6

	the problem(1 point/occasion)			
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Local communication</b>			
17	Local media activity (5 publications/year) (2 points/occasion)			0-10
18	Publishing own new publications available for the network 5 points/publication			0-20
19	Counselling table in events (10 points/event)			0-40
20	Delivering lectures (5 points/lecture)			0-30
21	Number of clients turning to the office Evaluation: in ratio of the county population			0-20
22	Number of clients found by the office (lecture, table etc.)?			0-20
<b>V.</b>	<b>Cooperation with the network</b>			
23	Oral experience exchange as mentor (1 point/occasion)			0-5
24	Offering legal aid service (1 point/occasion)			0-10
25	Preparing a brochure, publication for the network Text (10 point/publication) Editing-making-up (10 points/publication)			0-30 0-30
26	Received the counsellor of another office for experience exchange and it was reported to the network (10 points/person/day)			0-40
27	Visited another office for experience exchange and it was reported to the network (10 points/person/day)			0-40
28	Participation in focused examinations (10 points/examination)			0-40
29	Coordinating focused examinations professional coordination (10 points/examination) evaluation (10 points/examination)			0-40
30	Organizing a training for the network (20 points/examination)			0-80
31	Lobbying for the network (3 points/lobbying days)			0-21
32	Preparation of potential members for the membership in the network (10 points/member)			0-40
33	Providing free of charge location for the trainings (20 points/training)			0-40
34	Counselling on informatics for another office (1 point/advice)			0-20
35	Grant watch (2 point/appropriate grant found)			0-20
36	Carrying out tasks related to the board-membership of the network (1 point/hour)			0-10
37	Preparing data base with access on the webpage (3 points/database)			0-15

Date:

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