



NEST Project contributes to the EU Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment

The European Commission adopted the Thematic Strategy on Urban Environment on the 11th of January 2006. One of the key elements of the Thematic Strategy is to provide guidance for local governments on urban environment management plans and systems. The guidance will be divided into two parts: the first part will look into procedures – how to set up an environmental management plan and system - and the second part will concentrate on the implementation and technical aspects of environmental management.

governments, on the process of implementing environmental management systems, which include a series of guidance documents (fact sheets), which help to implement concrete actions and measures in the field of environmental improvement, and a series of best practice examples. All these outcomes give valuable information to the Guidance document that will support the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment.

The final guidance document for the Thematic Strategy should be available in electronic format from early 2007, and it will be translated into all EU languages.

More information is available at:
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/home_en.htm

ments in implementing EMAS. We hope you enjoy reading the NEST newsletter and visit our project website

www.emasnetwork.org

Inside this issue:

Learning from Hungarian experiences	2
Best practices and guidance	2-3
Ancient Olympia verified under EMAS	3
Building capacities	4
Towards EMAS verification	4
Next in NEST	5

The project coordinators met with Mr Gergely from the European Commission in June 2006 to discuss how the NEST project could contribute to the guidance in preparation. The key outcomes of the NEST project include a manual for local

NEST News

The third electronic newsletter will be available in November 2006. The next edition will include further information on the NEST tools as well as the progress made amongst the partner local govern-



Learning from Hungarian experiences

The fourth partner meeting of the NEST project took place between 24th -26th of May in Miskolc, Hungary. This was also an opportunity to learn from Hungarian experiences and to look at best practice. Study visits were organised to the local district heating company, waste management company and the Blue Bird & Szinva School Paths in the forest.

The renovation of tower blocks remains one of the big challenges in the city. In Miskolc there are more than 36,000 flats in tower blocks that were mostly constructed in between 1970 and 1979. These flats are in need of renovation and this process has started gradually during the last few years. Renovation started in 2003, when 87 flats were improved, the roofs and the walls of the buildings were insulated and the windows were fitted with double-glazing. Since then more renovations have been carried out, and in addition to insulation and window replacement, the buildings have been painted, water and sewage systems renewed, the electricity and heating systems modernised and the surrounding areas of the buildings retrofitted.



By 2005 approximately 2850 flats had been renovated, at a total cost of 9.3 million euro. A third of the budget for renovation came from of the Hungarian government, a third from the city of Miskolc and the last third from the flat owners. The local banks are committed to give cheap loans for the flat owners, so that they are able to make the necessary investments in the renovations. All renovations have been carried out under the Hungarian regeneration scheme.

For more information, please contact
Mr Zoltan Papai, City of Miskolc, Hungary
E-mail: papai@miskolcph.hu

Best practices and guidance

Best practice examples are a source of inspiration for local authorities implementing EMAS. The NEST project has identified numerous examples of best practice to assist in the development of environmental programmes amongst the participating municipalities. A series of 'Best practice' guidance documents have been produced to help local governments to implement environmental improvements.

New examples of best practice have been added to the project website, including;

- The ambitious Vienna Climate Change Programme (KliP), which shows how climate protection can be mainstreamed into local government;
- "From park waste to energy" on how the city of Stuttgart is using waste wood for heating municipal buildings.



A series of eight fact sheets are under preparation as part of the NEST project. The fact sheets give guidance for local governments on the positive environmental actions and measures that can be taken, for example in town planning, waste management and building management. The first 4 fact sheet drafts will be available soon from the NEST website and they will cover the following themes:

- Greening of offices (good housekeeping)
- Sustainable construction
- Building management
- Overcoming barriers in implementing environmental management

One of the project partners, the municipality of Serres (Greece) has produced a leaflet for the staff based on the fact sheets. This is a good example on how local governments can adapt the material produced in the NEST project to their own local circumstances.

Including best practice in environmental programmes

The municipality of Olkusz (Poland) has implemented a small grants scheme to increase the environmental performance of social housing. The grant will be given to low energy and water installations, and for the use of renewable energy sources. Information on energy efficiency measures will also be given to the tenants. The objective is to pilot new environmental technology each year and showcase how it functions. This will also serve

to train municipal staff to familiarise themselves with the new technology and help them to pass the knowledge to others.

For more information please contact
Mr Majiec Kalisz, Municipality of Olkusz, Poland
E-mail: poczta@umig.olkusz.pl

Ancient Olympia verified under EMAS

The Municipality of Ancient Olympia in Greece was successfully verified under the EMAS Regulation. It is the first Greek Municipality – and one of the very few in a European level – that have verified all its departments under EMAS. In Ancient Olympia EMAS registration has helped to increase environmental awareness of students and the visitors (which are estimated to be more than 1 million per year).

The most recent Greek training seminar was organised in April 2006 in Ancient Olympia where the Municipality presented its experience of EMAS implementation. The NEST project is a good way for Ancient Olympia to transfer its experience to the other partner cities of the project. At the same time they are now trying to expand EMAS to their Municipal Water and Sewage Company.

Local students participated actively in the implementation of the local environmental programme of the municipality. In particular, actions related to waste management were organised, for example, a drawing contest in primary schools on recycling, development of a mascot, production of leaflets and booklets with guidelines for environmental protection. In addition the Municipality is currently trying to establish a network with the neighbour municipalities in order to encourage them to participate in the national recycling scheme. The next step will include the construction of a recycling centre in

order to avoid the trips to the recycling plant in Patras, 100 km away from the town of Olympia.

The Municipality prepares an environmental assessment of their annual budget. The budget is checked against the environmental policy to ensure that all the points of the policy are reflected in the budget. The percentage of the total expenditure related to environmental policy is also calculated. For the year 2005 it was 10%, and for 2006 it was increased to 16,7%.

For more information please contact
Ms Margarita Dimitropoulou,
EPTA LTD, Environmental Consultants & Engineers
E-mail: mdimitropoulou@epta.gr



Building capacities

One of the key elements in the NEST project is to build capacities within participating municipalities to develop and implement EMAS. Training materials have been developed to support the key stages of EMAS implementation. The local government partners have been working hard to implement the steps of their environmental management systems, training has been organised during the spring and all local governments are progressing in their work towards the verification of their management systems in 2007.



The training in Spring 2006 focussed on the development of operational procedures and the adoption of management system procedures, required by the

EMAS regulations to ensure that the system is functioning correctly. As part of the NEST project a new set of simplified system procedures have been developed and will be piloted with the partners.

A set of five 'good housekeeping' procedures has been developed to cover the direct aspects of any office-based activity. These cover energy management, paper use and recycling, transport, water management and procurement.

Copies of the procedures will be available on the NEST website and will be included in the NEST toolkit. Each procedure has a list of ideas for managing the respective aspect, from 'quick wins' to more challenging and resource intensive solutions. These are presented alongside a visual image of the task. The municipality can simply pick a suitable measure from the list and deletes the non-appropriate measures, and includes the contact and responsibility details.

By providing model procedures the NEST project aims to simplify the implementation of EMAS. The partners are currently testing the procedures and will report back on the transferability of the approach.

Towards EMAS verification with the help of "Peer Reviews"

The partners now have all the elements of EMAS in place. The next step is to check that the system is complying with the requirements of the EMAS Regulations and is delivering the benefits expected.

The internal audits can only be carried out once the system and operational procedures are in place and records are being held. In the NEST project, it is anticipated that all partners will have an internal audit within the next 6 months of the project, this will help prepare them for verification in spring / summer 2007.

In order to assist with this process the NEST project is developing auditor networks within and between participating partners and member states. This will build ca-

capacity within the partners by developing auditing skills. Each partner will identify members of staff with auditing skills or experience, who will be invited to participate in locally delivered environmental audit training during autumn 2006. This will enable them to undertake internal audits of all the NEST partners before verification.

Auditor exchanges will also take place so that audit staff from one municipality may be able to audit another partner. Staff will 'shadow' the audit process and will then make a return visit to undertake an audit of the other municipality. These "peer reviews" build on the strengths of the NEST network and will increase the exchange of knowledge, learning and experience between partner organisations.



Publisher

Council of European
Municipalities and Regions
(CEMR)

Editor

Pirita Lindholm
CEMR Secretariat
pirita.lindholm@cce-cre-cemr.org

With a support of

Fiona Glover
Global to Local Ltd
fiona.glover@globaltolocal.com

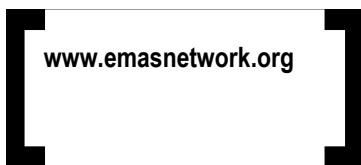
Margarita Dimitropoulou
EPTA Ltd
mdimitropoulou@epta.gr

Project coordination

Kirklees Metropolitan
Council

Global to Local Ltd

Council of European
Municipalities and Regions
(CEMR)



Next in NEST

The next NEST partner meeting will take place in Poland in the municipality of Trzebinia in October. The meeting will be crucial for the local government partners in their preparation for the EMAS verification. During the autumn training will be organised to help local government partners to carry out internal audits as well as peer reviews.



The best practice work will also come to an end this autumn and the series of 8 fact sheets and up to 20 best practice case examples will be available for the project partners, and for the other local governments in Europe that wish to take on the challenge of implementing environmental management. The material produced can also be useful for cities and towns that are implementing Local Agenda 21 or other local sustainability processes, including the Aalborg Commitments.

NEST is a 3-year project funded by the EU Life programme. It aims to streamline and simplify EMAS in order to help small local authorities to implement environmental management systems.

The project will deliver:

- A guidebook to help small and under resourced local authorities implement EMAS**
- Best practice case studies for exchanging experiences across Europe**
- Successful verification under EMAS of participating local authorities**
- A report with recommendations to increase participation in EMAS across Europe**

