



Network for Green Office Standardisation in the EU

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

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Beneficiary organisation: KÖVET Association for Sustainable Economies

Project coordinator: Mr. Csaba Bodroghelyi
Project coordinator organisation: KÖVET Association for Sustainable Economies
Project coordinator telephone number: +3614732290
Project coordinator email address: bodroghelyi@kovet.hu

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Executive Summary

The European Green Office Network (hereunder EGO Network) aims to provide a set of tools and guidance's for office managers and green office professionals.

A "Green Office" is understood as an environmentally and human-friendly place to work. The project idea came to light due to the fact that there were no structured green office trainings available at European level for office managers. Furthermore, there were no established standards at the EU level for calculating ecological footprints or evaluating the environmental status of the office processes. Since SMEs have significantly fewer resources and less motivation, they are in particular need of professionals dealing with green office management, who may help them to reduce their environmental impact and who helps them to build not just an action base plan but a Green Office Management System.

Project objectives were to create a set of tools and guidance's for office managers in order to help in developing a human and environmentally friendly office space and guidance on how to implement sustainability in office operations.

Seven organizations have been involved from six EU countries to ensure relevant environmental, facility management, and other relevant company related and ecological expertise and skill. The required trainer's skills have been also ensured by the involved organization having experience in vocational education. Each organization involved complementary experts from the field of green office management, ecological footprint or employee awareness rising.

Our approach was to start from already existing tools used at national or sector level and build up a training package that contains all the information and knowledge which is needed for an office manager to green their office operation and space. This included researches from EU and World-wide best practices, testing on green office trainers and evaluating the opinion of the users. Training materials were set by experience based learning methodologies.

The major results are (in 7 languages):

- a European Green Office Handbook;
- an on-line Office Ecological Footprint Calculator;
- an interactive Virtual Office for awareness raising purposes;
- a Training Package for training environmental office managers;
- EGO Checklist for evaluating office operations.

13 training sessions have been delivered in 2012-2013 to nearly 200 office managers. 77 offices have been coached to apply and test the tools and methods elaborated in the framework of this project.

As part of building the European Green Office Network the 1st European Green Office Award was organised. 22 applications were submitted from 6 countries and the offices with the best performance were awarded in 8 categories.

The goal for the future is to ensure the European Green Office Network will continue to grow. There are on-going negotiations from non partner countries like Poland, Finland, France, Israel and Spain.

All the information can be found on our webpage on 7 languages:
<http://eugreenoffice.eu/en/>

Table of Contents

- 1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES..... 5
- 2. PROJECT APPROACH..... 6
- 3. PROJECT OUTCOMES & RESULTS 6
- 4. PARTNERSHIPS 8
- 5. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE..... 11
- 6. CONTRIBUTION TO EU POLICIES 14
- 7. EXTRA HEADING/SECTION..... ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

1. Project Objectives

The environmental impact of offices (a growing share of raw materials and resources is used by offices, worldwide) is a common problem in the EU, thus it is accepted that companies and non-profit organizations have to play a proactive role in preventing and solving environmental problems. Many large companies have sustainability policies, but often lack expertise and/or resources to train office managers on how to “green” their offices with SMEs having even fewer resources.

The objective of EGO Network was to satisfy this need by creating entirely new and innovative tools for office managers in order to improve the Green Office approach in companies. The European Green Office Network provides a set of tools in 7 languages which covers all the green office topics from energy to CSR. These tools are enable office managers to be trained and to train their employees in order to raise awareness. The systematic approach of EGO tools supports each step of developing a green office. They help to set teams, evaluate, set objectives and goals, develop action plans and help to implement a European Green Office approach within core business practices.

The project offers clear and tangible solutions (green office training tools and “Training workshop” with adequate dissemination and exploitation) for clearly described problems (need for EU wide green office tools for companies, NGOs, public bodies; lack of vocational trainings in this filed; recognition of Green Offices). There is no unified green office training programme in Europe which is useful for VET teachers and company managers. There are some elements of similar initiatives in various European countries dealing with this certain aspects of green offices (e.g. green procurement, training kit available on European Commission Environment), but some these are available in national languages and do not cover all the green office topics.

By using the EGO tools, office managers are be able to build and manage a European Green Office System in their companies. Their progress can be monitored either with the self-assessment tool (EGO Checklist) or using one of the Green Office tutors from network’s partner organizations.

Companies’ efforts are recognized by the Network in the European Green Office Award and their outstanding best practices are published in the European Green Office website.

2. Project Approach

A needs analysis was conducted in preparation for the project proposal. Partners contacted a number of professionals in companies and in business federations to inquire about their situation and needs for guidance in sustainability. Their need for green office tools was confirmed and the idea was fully supported by the participating companies.

Our strategy was the following:

1. research of existing green office initiatives and environmental certificates and labels (focused on national and EU level, including some world-wide initiatives);
2. evaluation of the existing best practices (set a complete list of green office topics, find best practices for each topic);
3. set up goals, and plans for development (evaluate impacts, set plans for tools, set strategy for development according to experience of partners);
4. development phase (following the strategy partners contributed with their best knowledge and experience);
5. test, phase one (training elements tested by partner organizations);
6. evaluation of the results of phase one;
7. test, phase two (test tools using office managers: hold national Green Office Managers trainings, send online tools to office managers, deliver a 6 month tutoring support);
8. evaluation of tested tools and of tutoring phase (online surveys were filled by office managers);
9. updating EGO Checklist following testing and evaluation;
10. evaluate and reward participating offices in the 1st European Green Office Award
11. set plans for the future.

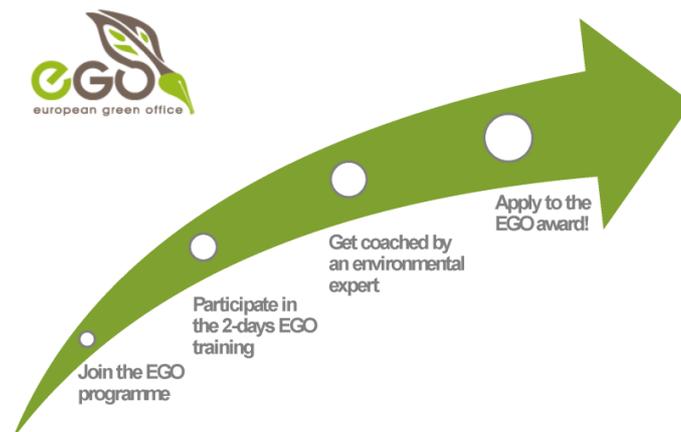
Target languages are the national languages of partners (Bulgarian, Estonian, French, Hungarian, Romanian, Slovenian) and English. The tools were first made available in English and then translated and adapted to national languages. Some tools needed to be adapted to national conditions (e.g. with local examples and best practices).

EU and national policy priorities were taken into account: EU and national Sustainable Development Strategies, objectives and horizontal policies of the Lifelong Learning Programme, Lisbon Key Competences, Education and Training 2010 Work Programme, the 2020 Climate and Energy Package, and other EU policies in the fields of Enterprise, Environment and Employment.

By strong dissemination partners did make sure the project gets to as many offices as possible, not just in partner countries but in countries from all around Europe and the World. As the common goal in the Network is to maintain the Network and continue its growing, partners were opened and initiated contacts within other

European countries. That's why the 1st European Green Office Competition's jury was from neutral countries.

3. Project Outcomes & Results



The project utilized innovative, experience based, interactive and motivating, training approaches, targeting knowledge, skills and attitude. This is in line with systemic changes as the shift to learning outcomes and competence-based systems.

Instead of a single tool for Distance Learning the network has designed a set, of 4, tools to create a **Distance Learning System** for each level of the green office experience:

- Virtual Office, for employees to raise awareness;
- Ecological Footprint calculator, for measurement purposes;
- EGO Handbook, for guidance in implementation;
- EGO Checklist, for evaluation purposes;

Apart from the tools the EGO Network have developed innovative two days Green Office Managers training. A comprehensive training package was developed, with training materials available in 7 languages on the EGO website, and a detailed Step-by-Step Trainers' Manual, available to partners in English..

Due to the big interest in some countries, 13 face-to-face Green Office Managers trainings were held instead of the planned 6.

Numbers of trained office managers by country (nearly triple the target of 70):

Country	Trained
Belgium	58
Bulgaria	17
Estonia	40
Hungary	39
Romania	23
Slovenia	18
TOTAL	195

Extra trainings were given:

- in Belgium in the form of webinars, on 3 specific topics (Waste prevention and collection, Eco-teams and sustainable procurement), targeting participants to the face to face trainings but also other interested stakeholders. An average of 15 people participated to each webinar : http://www.eugreenoffice.eu/fr/nos_webinaires
- In Slovenia in the form of three follow-up workshops for participating office managers, on selected topics: (1) exchange of good practice and mobility, (2) communication of green office and (3) sustainable procurement, with an average of 14 participants in each.
-

Offices, which interested in further greening their operations were invited to participate in a 6 month tutoring process. Tutors were European Green Office trainers from EGO Network partner organizations. Each trainer-tutor participated in the Train-the-Trainers workshop in Budapest (02/2012) and had to hold a minimum of one Green Office Managers training.

Numbers of tutored offices and number of employees reached during the tutoring phase, by country:

Country	Offices	Employees
Belgium	19	3.985
Bulgaria	12	997
Estonia	9	790
Hungary	14	3.072
Romania	15	244
Slovenia	8	7.166
TOTAL	77	16.254

After half year of tutoring, partner organizations nominated the offices that reached a significant environmental development in their workplace to represent their country in the 1st European Green Office Award competition, held by the EGO Network.

From the 77 tutored offices 22 were nominated and agreed in participating in the Award competition.

Following a 2 month evaluation procedure, an independent jury selected the offices with biggest improvements. The awards were given in 5 categories. To recognise other outstanding achievements the jury made a decision to give three special awards for Innovative Communication, Best Management System and for Outstanding Sustainable Procurement actions.

For more information please visit the website:

http://eugreenoffice.eu/green_office_competition_2013

Through the awareness-raising, dissemination and exploitation activities the project reached a wide range of corporate actors in EU (umbrella organisations, corporate managers, especially in facility, environmental, sustainability fields), office managers of SMEs, NGOs etc.) and other stakeholders (decision makers, business- targeted media workers, relevant local, national, EU institutions etc.). Only the EGO website had more than **8 858 visits** from the 1st January till 28th February 2014.

Virtual Office was visited **1162 times**
Footprint calculator was visited **1841 times**.

4. Partnerships

The Green Office Network is composed of environmental management system practitioners organized in 6 different European countries, of which 2 are so called “new member states” (Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Romania). All members of the network had previously organized several projects in establishing environmental management systems, environmental consultancy and different sustainability awareness raising programs.



The aim of the EGO Network is to train VAT trainers among partner organizations and help office managers of different organizations (public institutions, companies, NGOs) in Europe to develop a Green Office society. The goal is to have professional knowledge centre in the field of establishing green offices.

KÖVET Association has been managing a registered unified green office vocational training program since 2005, which was updated, developed and completed with European best practices and innovative elements. These updates were developed by the help of partner organizations of the EGO Network., Each of the partner organization added their own experiences, but also carried out research on topics where their organization is an expertise (ecological footprint, environmental management systems, training methodologies etc.)

The final goal for the network was to establish an EU wide Green Office Guidelines and standards, with useful tools for being able to build and maintain an European Green Office. As a measurement tool the 1st European Union wide Green Office Competition was organized. The first competition was open for partner countries only but all the efforts will be done to try to expand this initiative to the whole European Union.

During the development phase different working groups were established among the partner organizations to make sure the tool is developed by people with the most expertise to that topic.

Working together as an European Network gave a chance for each of the partner organization / professional consultant to learn from each other. Coming from different cultural and economical background helped the partners to create tools which is more an European initiative.

The offices which have been trained at national levels (in total 195 managers and 77 tutored offices) were a strong part of the Network. They were among the first one who have tried and tested the tools of EGO Network. Their feedback was collected and used on updating the set of tool.

Business support organisations and ministries were involved for recruiting offices and disseminating information (MoE, Chambers of Commerce, etc).

Also other partnerships we made during the project. Due to the 1st European Green Office Competition partner organization choose a jury from neutral countries. The jury has a strong knowledge and experience in Sustainable Development. Through the jury members the EGO Network get closer to other organizations like WWF (Green Office Program in Finland), or the EMAS Club Barcelona.

5. Plans for the Future

During the testing phase partners reached a significant number of target users which was even bigger than planned at the beginning of the project. This was a clear indication that there is a big need for such initiatives and the activities of the EGO Network have to continue even after the project ends. An Exploitation Strategy was elaborated as a plan for continuation of the network. This strategy is based on local plans on how to sustain and upgrade the project results in national level. A clear sign of continuation is that several Green Office trainings are already planned for 2014. In Bulgaria a new party joined for recruiting purposes. In Belgium 3 trainings are planned in partnership with Chambers of Commerce. In Hungary 2 trainings are planned, but also a strong communication was carried out to promote the Green Office initiative around Hungary.)

As a result of outreach and networking activities after and during the 1st European Green Office competition, several organizations have contacted the Network with possibilities in future cooperation. Negotiations will start from the beginning of 2014 with Poland, Finland, Israel, France and Spain. The ideas of the cooperation are different but the message is the same: There is a need for tools in a topic of Green Office.

Several negotiations with ministries were conducted during the project and are planned for the beginning of 2014. These negotiations are to make a strong cooperation with local decision making level in order to make Green Office initiative a strong, accepted set of tools.

The project website will be administrated by KÖVET Association. Also several actions were already made to make sure this platform of the project stays accessible for the users. The domain name was bought for the next year, the server hosting was paid.

6. Contribution to EU policies

“In recent years the EU has mainstreamed sustainable development into a broad range of its policies. In particular, the EU has taken the lead in the fight against climate change and the promotion of a low-carbon economy. At the same time, unsustainable trends persist in many areas and the efforts need to be intensified. The review takes stock of EU policy measures in the areas covered by the EU SDS and launches a reflection on the future of the EU SDS and its relation to the Lisbon strategy” (European Commission website)

As it is written above, sustainable development is integrated into almost all of the new EU policies. As the development of the society and economy leads us to a more service oriented world it is important to focus on these areas as well and not to forget to create useful tools for service sector.

Our project is totally in line with the European policy on Sustainable consumption and production from DG Environment

(http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/escp_en.htm). These policies include EMAS (the EGO tools and trainings are a good start for organisations that would like to implement EMAS and some tutored organisations in Belgium, Hungary went to EMAS with the EGO tools), the Green Public procurement policy is also totally included in the EGO tools, as well as the Thematic Strategy on Waste Prevention and Recycling. Promotion of Eco designed material and Ecolabelled products are also included in the EGO project.

Sustainable cities is another European policy supported by DG Env

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/home_en.htm. Our EGO tools support environmental management practices by and for local authorities, one of the goals of the sustainable cities.

Our project is also linked to the EU Small Business Act from DG Enterprise

(http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/small-business-act/index_en.htm), where small businesses need to become more competitive. It is a proven fact that green businesses are more competitive on the market.

The project fits to Enterprise 2020 CSR strategy. Enterprise 2020 is CSR Europe's ambitious initiative to address the local, national, European and global challenges which are increasingly bringing into question our current patterns of living, working, learning, communicating, consuming and sharing resources.

<http://www.csreurope.org/enterprise-2020-power-collaboration-0#.UzHk02J5NVo>