



Network for Green Office Standardisation in the EU

Progress Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

Project Description

Under the Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme, NeGOSE aims to develop the elements of a European level Green Office (EGO) program; including standardization of requirements. The applicable element of the programmes are: EGO Handbook, EGO requirements, training package for office managers, ecological footprint calculation for offices, European level competition of organizations (corporates, SMEs, public institutions, NGOs etc.), EGO website etc. The timeline for the project is 36 months starting in January 2011 and ending in December 2013.

Because of the environmental burden of offices, the EU accepts that companies and non-profit organisations have to play a (pro-) active role in preventing and solving environmental problems. Worldwide, forty percent of raw materials and resources are consumed by offices. Companies often have sustainability policies, but do not have the expertise and/or resources to train office managers on how to manage their offices to make them "green." A "Green Office" is understood as an environmentally and human-friendly place to work. Currently, there are no structured EU green office trainings available for office managers. Furthermore, there are presently no established standards at the EU level for calculating ecological footprints. Since SMEs have significantly fewer resources and less motivation, they are in particular need of. VET professionals dealing with office management issues do not have the appropriate skills and training materials to conduct effective trainings.

The project aims to develop a "Trainers Workshop" training package for VET green office professionals; printed materials and toolkit to accompany trainings; European version of the Office Ecological Footprint Calculator; Green office competition in 6 countries; European Green Office Standards; and extensive dissemination to ensure sustainability of the programme.

Trainings developed in the project will provide EU companies with green office trainings, motivating them on green office management, and thus influencing them to be more environmentally-conscious; and it will allow European organisations to train their own green office trainers, thus helping them to become more sustainable.

Participants involved

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 skill has 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 training.

Major results achieved

The major results of the project by this time are a database of best practices; an English version of European Green Office Handbook; an On-line version of Office Ecological Footprint Calculator as awareness raising tool; an interactive Distance Learning System which will help users to understand the major environmental problems due to office work, and at the same time it gives information how to reduce these impacts; a result is a Training package development for vocational education of environmental or office managers.

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1. Project Objectives

Objective of the project is to create an entirely new and innovative content and methodology in order to improve the Green Office approach and quality of training systems in the EU.

The project utilizes innovative, experience based, interactive and motivating, knowledge-skill-attitude targeting training methodologies which is in line with systemic changes as the shift to learning outcomes and competence-based systems.

One of the main project results is a “Training workshop” package that aims at developing the pedagogical skills of VET professionals.

Project offers clear and tangible solutions (green office training and “Training workshop” with adequate dissemination and exploitation) for clearly described problems (need for green office tools transformation of EU companies, NGOs, public bodies; but lack of vocational trainings in this field (content and methodology). There is no unified green office training programme in Europe which is useful for VET teachers and company managers (vocational training materials, distance learning system, office footprint calculator etc.). There are some elements of similar initiatives in different European countries which deal with this topic (e.g. green procurement, training kit available on European Commission Environment), but these are available in national languages and do not cover all the green office topics (like energy, water, waste management, noise, air pollution, office equipment, green procurement, traffic and transport, ecological footprint etc.) KÖVET has been managed a registered green office education program since 2005 (and green office competition, exhibition) which is a good adaptation basis for partner countries, but first of all it should be completed with European best practices.

2. Project Approach

The environmental burden caused by offices (40% of raw materials and resources are used up by offices, worldwide) is a common problem in the EU, thus it is accepted that companies and non-profit organizations have to play a (pro)active role in preventing and solving environmental problems. Office managers of companies often have sustainability policies, but do not have the expertise and/or resources to train office managers on how to manage their office to make it “green”, and SMEs have even less resources.

VET professionals dealing with office management issues do not have the appropriate know-how for effective trainings. Previous work: Partner organizations have completed several projects establishing environmental management systems, environmental consultancy and different sustainability awareness raising programs, during which they experienced that in the 6 countries not enough emphasis is put on environmental education of the organizations (EU companies, public organizations, NGOs).

Needs analysis: As partners are active on the field of environmental management and in continuous contact with companies all over Europe, in the past years they have gathered information and input on the above mentioned issues. This is how the idea of this project emerged.

As a preparation for this proposal, partners contacted a number of professionals at companies and inquired about their situation and needs. They confirmed the need of this project, the idea was fully supported.

Target languages are the national languages of partners and English.

Related national/international priorities: EU and national Sustainable Development Strategies/The objectives and horizontal policies of the Lifelong Learning Programme, Lisbon Key Competences, Education and Training 2010 Work Programme/The project supports the implementation of other EU policies on Enterprise, Environment, Employment.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

VET professionals at consortium partners (16-20 people). 2-3 persons per partner organisation will participate in "Trainers workshop" training. Office/facility managers (circa 70) and employees (400-500) in 6 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia) will be reached through workshops to train office managers.

VET professionals at consortium partners (16-20) will be reached on internal project communication channels (personally on project meetings, phone calls, mailing list(s), website for internal use, Skype, telephone conferences).

VET trainers will organize training for trainers sessions; they will recruit organizations; train managers from different organizations; evaluate the progress of managers and offices and their feedback and at last but not least prepare case studies about involved offices and their achieved goals.

Office/facility managers (70) are identified and recruited at the beginning of project as partners in each country are responsible to find partner organisations for testing and feedback.

Office employees are employed by organizations participating in the project, and reached with help of their managers. Their involvements are the following: participate in office greening process and give feedback on greening offices and management.

Our project outcomes are the followings: Green Office Manager "Training package"; an Online Office Ecological Footprint Calculator; an Interactive Distance Learning System; a Green Office Handbook; Face-to-Face Trainings and an EU wide Green Office competition.

4. Partnerships

The Green Office Network is mainly 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 have been organized several projects in establishing environmental management systems, environmental consultancy and different sustainability awareness raising programs.

The aim of the Thematic Network is to train 16-20 VET trainers among partner organizations and approx. 70 environmental or office manager of different organizations (public institutions, companies, NGOs) in Europe to have professional knowledge in the field of green procurement and establishing green offices. KÖVET has been managing a registered unified green office vocational training program since 2005, which needs to be updated, developed and completed with European best practices and innovative elements. These updates will be developed by the help of network partners, each of whom will search for different topics of the Green office management.

The project and the partner network will highlight and disseminate green office best practices of different organizations (companies, public institutions, NGOs); organize workshops to build capacity of partner organizations and withdraw their stakeholders in the network activities.

The final goal for the network is to establish an EU wide Green Office Guidelines and standards, with useful tools for being able to build and maintain an European Green Office. To be able to measure the network will organize an European Union wide Green Office Competition. The first competition will cover just the participating countries but if the project works out well, the network will try to expand this initiative to the whole European Union.

5. Plans for the Future

The project's main goals for the future are the strong dissemination and exploitation to make sure the network will work as a network around the European Union.

Partners commit to regular use of developed trainings after project end.

As now most of the project product are not developed yet it is crucial to focus on the development phase.

In the near future till the end of 2012 partners will finish the development and will release the European Green Office Handbook with lot of tips, ideas and good examples from all around Europe or the World.

Till the end of the year the final version of the project website will be available for the visitors in 7 languages. All the materials will be translated into these 7 languages: English, French, Estonian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovenian.

The Online Office Ecological Footprint Calculator will be also released. Here any office with a short registration will be able to calculate their environmental impact.

An online Virtual Office will be released as well till the end of the year. It's purpose is to teach people where can we face environmental impacts during our office work. This tool will work as a Distance Learning System for those who has never heard about Green Office.

During one year the network will be monitoring and evaluating all the activities to be able for a further development.

In the middle of 2013 the first pilot European Green Office Competition will be organized. The first competition will be organized in the 6 partner country.

Through the awareness-raising, dissemination and exploitation activities the project will reach a wide range of corporate actors in EU (umbrella organisations, corporate managers (esp. 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.). Their number will be

between 2000-4000 (not including indirect target groups, e.g. readers of media article). To identify and reach them a detailed stakeholder list will be prepared for EU level and for 6 countries.

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 in almost all of the new EU policies. As the development of the society and economy leads us to a more service concentrated World it is important to focus on these area as well and not to forget to create useful tools for service sector.

As in the EU there is no accepted Union wide Green Office standard and there is no useful Training package for office managers it is crucial to have an accepted guideline for a more sustainable offices, which will lead us to a more sustainable business management.

European added values:

- Lack of green office trainings and need for them is a European-level problem.
- The detailed needs analysis of target group needs will be done on European level.
- The fact that in the course of the project the developed trainings will be tested in 9 languages in 8 countries in many type of corporate environments ensures European-level solutions, innovative and adaptable results.
- When developing trainings partners will dedicate special consideration for adaptability: trainings will specifically be developed and documented in a way that they are easily adaptable in all European countries.
- All project results will be translated and made available to all 6 partner languages.
- The project management language is English which is well spoken by all partners.

7. Extra Heading/Section

Not applicable

