



NEWSLETTER

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Learn more about our
Project from our
Estonian partner.

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video!



Evelin, Helen and Harri
from the Stockholm
Environment Institute
Tallinn Centre (Estonia)

Welcome to the first edition of our project's newsletter. In this issue, we will explain you about the objectives and main activities of our project, and we will report on the first conclusions and lessons learnt in this first year of activities.

The ENHANCE project

SMEs and large organisations are increasingly aware of the benefits of closing loops by improving resource efficiency. Circular Economy is not only a way to save costs, but also to create competitive advantages and new markets.

The Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a driver of the Circular Economy as it encourages organisations to systematically make better use of resources in the production phase and retain physical goods longer and more efficiently in productive use.

The main objective of ENHANCE is to improve the implementation of regional policy instruments oriented at increasing resource efficiency through EMAS. The project supports the exchange of experiences and practices among Public Authorities for the promotion of EMAS in their regions and countries as an opportunity to deploy circular economy.

Six partners from different EU countries are involved: Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy and two Spanish Regions, Andalusia and Catalonia.

The ENHANCE project will last four years and is structured in two parts, the first one is the **learning process** while the second one will be dedicated to the implementation of the Action Plan.

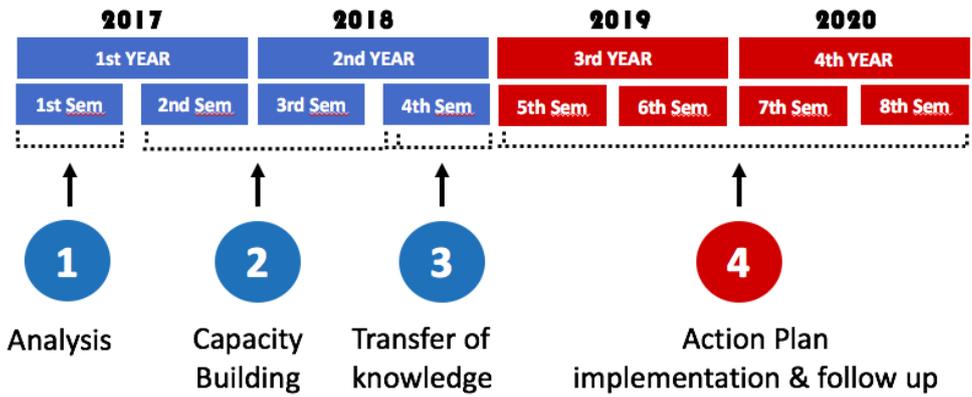


Environment &
resource
efficiency



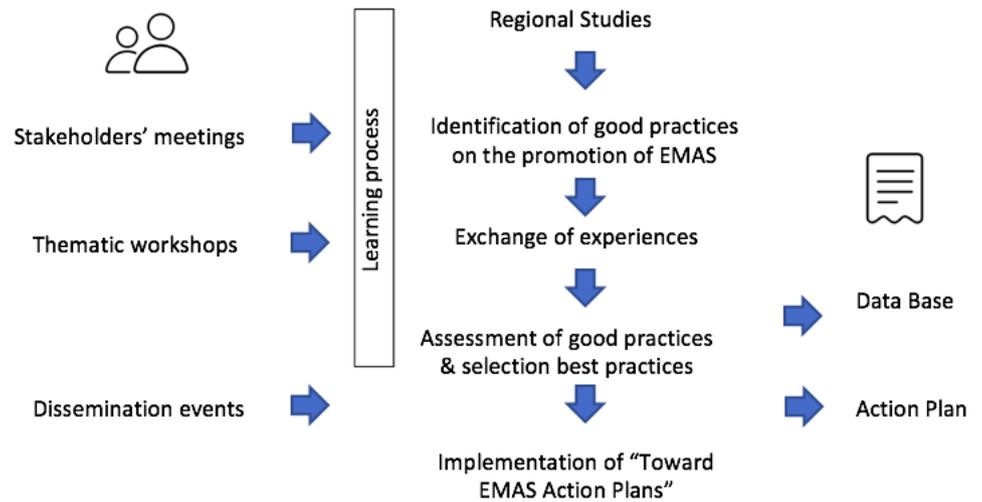
European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

“ENHANCE is providing us the possibility to reflect on existing and potential incentives for EMAS and lively exchange with stakeholders at national level as well as getting in contact with representatives at the European level”



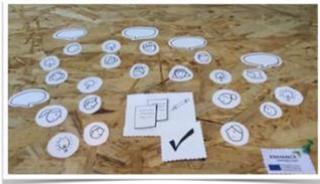
Monika, Anneliese and Manuela from the Project team of the Environment Agency Austria

Within the learning process, partners also involve stakeholders, such as public administrations at different levels, enforcement authorities, other administrations involved in the definition of regulations, EMAS registered organizations, EMAS verifiers, enterprises associations, and sectoral associations among others. The learning process requires partners to prepare a Regional study that provides an overview of the current situation in their countries or regions. All partners have identified good practices on regulatory relief and incentives for the promotion of EMAS and later, with the contribution of stakeholders, they have selected those that are considered to be the best practices to be potentially implemented in their regions and countries.



Regulatory reliefs and promotional incentives include a wide variety of categories related mainly with the reduction of administrative or economical charges, such as fast-track permits/simplification in the application, extension of validity of permits/authorizations, reduced reporting and monitoring requirements, reduced inspections frequencies, self-declarations for permits' extension, achieving a new permit or modifying the scope of it, Green Public

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Procurement, credit access and funding support, tax breaks, reduction of administrative fees or financial guarantees.

The good practices have been assessed through a complex methodology taking into account different criteria such as the potential replicability of the measure, its legal, technical and economic feasibility, the policy priorities, the results achieved by the good practice, and its environmental benefits.

The selected best practices comprise the Data Base that will be soon available for consultation by other administrations and EMAS Competent Bodies at the ENHANCE – INTERREG website’s [library](#).

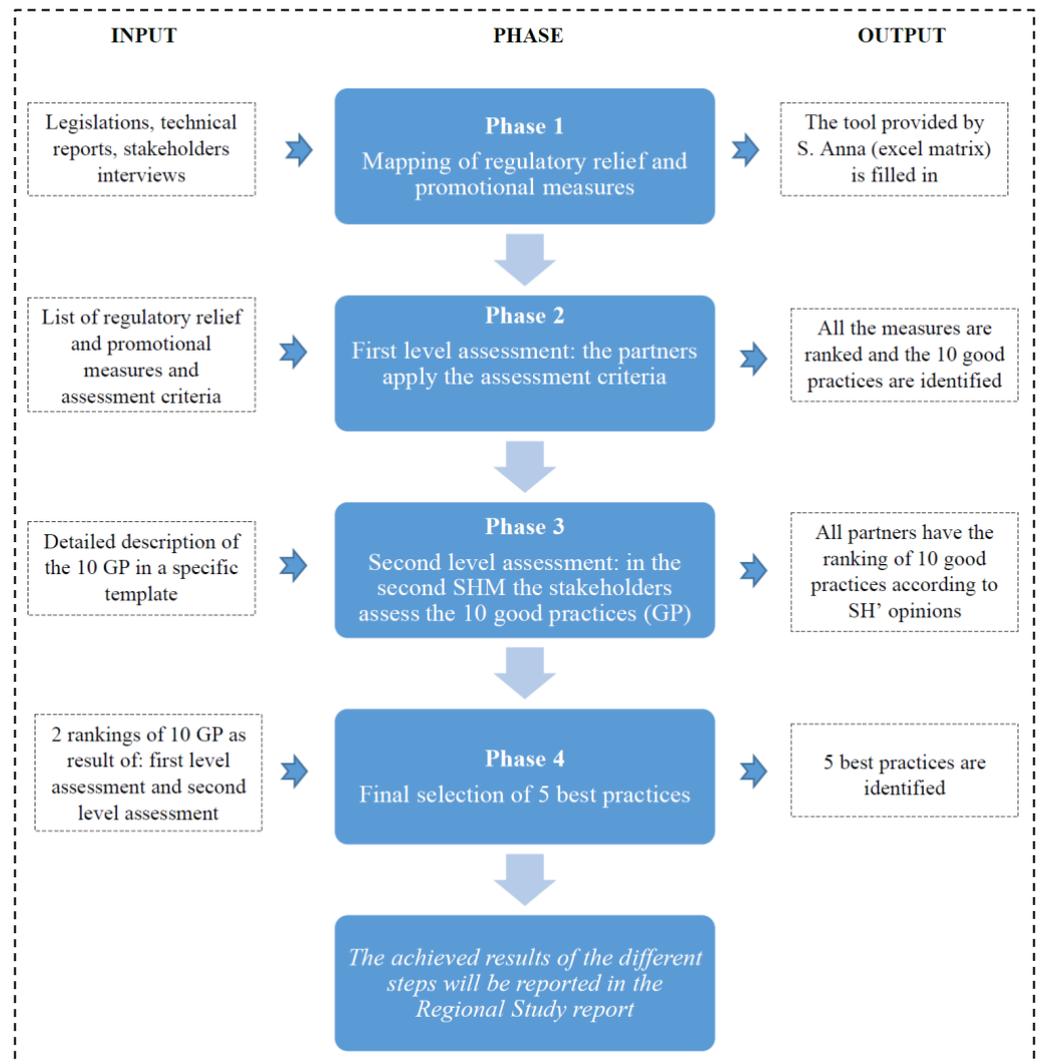
Because of the assessment phase, this first year has been very intensive in terms of meetings with the stakeholders. Each partner has carried out two stakeholders’ meetings and all project partners have selected and invited specific stakeholders to the thematic workshops held in Barcelona and Pisa and to the interregional meeting.

The following scheme describes the whole process:

“As we delve deeper into the project, we learn more about our own legal framework through those of other regions. Now we can start working on how to overcome our constraints, and to assess the potential replicability of solutions adopted by others.”



Virginia, Josep and Ma. José from the Ministry of Territory and Sustainability in Catalonia



Public Administrations and policy makers are one of the most relevant target groups due to their direct influence in regional policies and their managerial capacity with regard to policy instruments. Involving this target group is essential in order to guarantee the future feasibility of the best practices included in the Action Plan as the enforcement and managing authorities, public institutions and agencies at local, regional or national level are those generally bearing the implementation of such actions.

First results of ENHANCE project

A successful participation of the priority sectors for Andalusia in ENHANCE project

ANDALUSIA



“Involving stakeholders from key sectors along the project will allow to take into account their needs and expectations when defining the action plan.”

The participation of CMAOT in the project will allow it to take actions to increase the participation of Andalusian organizations - both private and public - in EMAS and thus to improve their competitiveness, particularly in the case of SMEs. Involving stakeholders from different sectors such as Healthcare, Industry, Tourism, Waste, Natural Parks, Ports and Public Administration, among others throughout the whole project will develop a close collaboration and therefore to ensure that the **needs and expectations of priority sectors will be covered by the CMAOT action plan.**

In the first phase, CMAOT has identified 10 best practices related regulatory measures and promotional incentives for EMAS organizations. Examples of these practices are the simplification of administrative procedures or the replacement of regulatory controls applied to certain activities, some of them included within the priority sectors of economic activity for CMAOT. Subsequently, with the direct contribution of stakeholders, the best five practices have been selected following the methodology criteria.

Besides these best practices, it's important to also take into account the financial support actions derived from the ERDF and EAFRD funds (EMAS funding). This financial support aims at providing technical assistance to SMEs for the implementation of voluntary instruments, among which is EMAS.

Let's ENHANCE – a successful start of the ENHANCE project in Austria

AUSTRIA



In the first year of the ENHANCE project in Austria stakeholder workshops were organized in order to collect all Austrian regulatory reliefs, gather feedback on those regulatory reliefs, simplify the administrative process and to set the priorities.

The Environment Agency Austria invited experts from ministries, companies, authorities and environmental consultants to regional stakeholder workshops. The stakeholders exchanged experiences about the chances and obstacles

“The ENHANCE project gave us the possibility to collect and analyses all of our own regulatory reliefs, thus gaining in depth knowledge of the current situation in Austria.”

during the implementation of EMAS. They delivered different approaches from various domains and offered an in-depth look into the actual situation. The regional stakeholder workshops offered the possibility to invite all relevant stakeholders of EMAS. This has brought together a lot of different stakeholders for the first time and has triggered fruitful discussions and the exchange of experiences. **The joint approach for the realization of regulatory reliefs was welcomed by the stakeholders as their needs are included.**

The ENHANCE project gave us the possibility to collect and analyses all of our own regulatory reliefs, thus gaining in depth knowledge of the current situation in Austria. The availability of time and resources started an improvement processes. Inputs from other partners about their approaches and regulatory reliefs have led us to reflect on our own approaches and reliefs. During the stakeholder workshops and the project implementation of ENHANCE already new possible regulatory reliefs were brought up.

It was very clear for the stakeholders that the communication around EMAS should be consolidated. The tasks are therefore, on the one hand to convince more companies of the advantages of EMAS and to aim for more recognition on the market, and on the other hand to support the already established EMAS organizations with regulatory reliefs and other means.

Activating the network of stakeholders in Catalonia

CATALONIA



“Thanks to the interaction with stakeholders, particularly with the waste enforcement authority, some potential actions have been already identified and discussed.”

The project has allowed the Catalan Ministry of Environment and its stakeholders to detect potential obstacles to the implementation of Circular Economy within the current legal framework as well as to identify barriers related to the credibility that EMAS should have among the enforcement authorities. Thanks to the interaction with stakeholders, particularly with the waste enforcement authority, some potential actions have been already identified and discussed. One action aims at collecting and analysing detailed information about inspected organizations and Environmental Management Systems (EMS) in order to obtain evidence on how EMAS and non EMAS organizations perform on waste management. **The check list used for waste inspections by the Catalan Waste Agency, will be modified** in order to specifically identify whether the inspected organization has an EMS and specifically which one EMAS, ISO 14001 or others. The data obtained will allow the EMAS Competent Body and the Waste Agency to establish the level of performance accordingly to each type of EMS. Data will probably confirm the comments on the positive performance of EMAS registered organizations reported in the circular economy workshop by one of the waste inspectors and based on her experience.

Another potential action learnt from the Italian partner is **to modify the current criteria to establish the financial guarantee required to organizations operating in the waste & mining sector**. Currently it's based mainly on the capacity/size of the facility and the type of waste/mining activity, but considering EMAS and how the organization carries out its activity contributing to the cycles of Circular Economy accordingly to the [butterfly diagram](#) could be a great opportunity to reward those organizations that adopt a system approach and have a greater positive impact in the "value circle".

CZECH REPUBLIC



"The most interesting was to hear what reasons and forces are crucial to enhance EMAS in each participating country and which industrial sectors are most involved and interested in EMAS or in the environmental voluntary tools generally."

Interaction at interregional level, a key aspect in the learning process

CENIA, Czech Environmental Information Agency, as a project partner from Czech Republic has identified 9 regulatory reliefs and incentives in total. Two stakeholder workshops were held in Czech Republic to introduce the main goals and issues of a project and the platform for discussion has been set. After the evaluation phase, where 29 representatives of stakeholder group have been participating, the top 5 regulatory reliefs have been identified. The best rated practice of regulatory relief has been the Funding programme of the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Industry and Trade supporting financially the organization obtaining EMAS registration. The other best practices are focused on financial issues and benefits, including administrative fees reduction, green public procurement and another supporting programmes.

The most useful project activity from Czech Republic's point of view were an interregional stakeholder workshops and meetings where many different opinions could be heard and where the practical views and experiences could be seen and reflected. Also, the visit to Spanish and Italian EMAS registered companies and getting information about the industrial and local government symbiosis was very useful. The most interesting was to hear **what reasons and forces are crucial to enhance EMAS in each participating country and which industrial sectors are most involved** and interested in EMAS or in the environmental voluntary tools generally.

ESTONIA



SEI Tallinn, ENHANCE project partner from Estonia

The first year of the ENHANCE project has provided a **good opportunity to strengthen the cooperation between the Estonian Ministry of the Environment and other stakeholders** working on environmental management issues (including the EMAS scheme). Several meetings have been held with various stakeholders to discuss the regulatory relief and other incentives of EMAS implementation in Estonia. The meetings have been constructive and the incentivizing of the EMAS scheme has been analyzed from various aspects. Mainly, there has been discussions on how to enhance the implementation of

“EMAS can be a good driver of circular economy as it stimulates organizations to systematically make better and more efficient use of resources and prolong the use of physical goods.”

external incentives for greater use of the EMAS scheme. Furthermore, good practices implemented in other projects countries have been analyzed in order to select the potentially most effective ones to take as an example for Estonia.

The concept of circular economy has been quite unknown in Estonia until recently. During the first year of the project, SEI Tallinn has contributed significantly to raising awareness about circular economy among the stakeholders. EMAS can be a good driver of circular economy as it stimulates organizations to systematically make better and more efficient use of resources and prolong the use of physical goods. SEI Tallinn also contributed to organizing a comprehensive circular economy seminar in Estonia, the first of its kind to be held in the country which among other things outlined the importance and the need for environmental management systems (and EMAS) in applying the principles of circular economy.

ITALY



“Since Italy is one of the European countries where EMAS registration is more widespread, it would be useful to transfer the most effective incentives to the other countries where the uptake of the EMAS is less widespread such as Czech Republic and Estonia.”

The relevance of regulatory reliefs and promotional incentives in the promotion of EMAS

Regulatory reliefs and promotional incentives are important tools to support EMAS organisations. The attention towards this kind of instrument is increasing both at the EU and national level. Within the ENHANCE project, the Scuola Superiore di Studi Universitari e di Perfezionamento Sant’Anna (SSSUP) carried out a mapping and an assessment of regulatory reliefs and promotional incentives for EMAS organisations in Italy, taking into account both national and regional measures. **The results of this study seemed to be particularly important in light of the recent extensive evaluation (Fitness Check) of the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)** reported from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council.

During the workshop organized by SSSUP in Pisa regarding EMAS enhancement future, together with ENHANCE partners and stakeholders, were involved representatives of other two on-going projects on regulatory relief: BRAVER, a Life project led by University Bocconi-Italy and RAVE a tender led by adelphi-Germany. In fact, SSSUP is also partner of these two projects, and the workshop represented the opportunity to share and open a discussion on the activities and results of all three projects. At the workshop took part also Ms. Marianne Muller the new EMAS officer in charge as an occasion to join ENHANCE community.

Interesting sharing opportunities emerged regarding the frequency of inspections and in the waste sectors. Since Italy is one of the European countries where EMAS registration is more widespread, which could be due to the high number of administrative/regulatory rewards and promotional incentives adopted by the public authorities, it would be useful to transfer the most effective ones to the other countries where the uptake of the EMAS is less widespread such as Czech Republic and Estonia.

Project indicators

Do you want to learn more about EMAS & the ENHANCE project?

Click here to see the video prepared by the Junta de Andalucía



6

Regional studies

12

Stakeholders' meetings

30

Good practices identified



Marcos, Inmaculada and Andrés from the Regional Government of Andalusia

Project events carried out in 2017

- 2 Stakeholders' meetings
- 1 interregional meeting
- 1 thematic workshop in Barcelona
- 2 Stakeholders' meetings in Seville
- 2 Stakeholders' meetings in Prague



- 2 Stakeholders' meetings in Tallinn
- 2 Stakeholders' meetings in Genoa
- 1 thematic workshop in Pisa
- 2 Stakeholders' meetings in Vienna

Planned Events for the 1st semester of 2018

- Tallinn:** February 13th and 14th - Workshop on Green Public Procurement
- Seville:** May 3rd and 4th (Workshop topic to be defined soon)
- Vienna:** June 19th and 20th - Workshop on the Environmental inspections and role of EMAS verifiers

Project Partners

