



## NEWSLETTER

October 2020

# 4

Welcome to the last edition of our project's newsletter. Partners have been working for almost 4 years to influence various policy instruments through our action plans and their respective actions and it's time to assess the whole project and its impact!

This year has been specially challenging because of the pandemic, it has not only altered the project activities, but also the interaction with stakeholders and government priorities. But we are sure that, step by step, we will find the way to proceed with our action plans.

Although it is difficult to establish and measure the impact of certain actions until they are fully completed and a reasonable time has passed to detect their real impact on certain policy instruments that, in fact, take time to be modified, some of the planned actions can already give us an indication of how changes begin to be sensed.

For this reason, despite the project ending in December 2020, partners will continue to assess the effects of their action plans and the evolution of policy instruments in the medium and long term and maintaining the close link created with stakeholders throughout the project.

Besides the results obtained by each partner in their respective countries or regions, there has been a joint result that goes beyond the borders of the geographical scope of each of them, all of them, as a whole, have learned from each other and have also been able to react in unison to certain European policies, such as the new Circular Economy (CE) Action Plan, included in the COM (2020) 98 final.

We hope that this way of sharing knowledge and working together is here to stay.



Environment &  
resource  
efficiency



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

## ANDALUSIA



## Final results & lessons learnt

### Recognizing the efforts and commitment of EMAS-registered organizations in Andalusia

#### What actions have been already implemented in Andalusia to promote EMAS registration?

The General Directorate on Environmental Quality and Climate Change (DGCACC) from the Regional Ministry on Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Sustainable Development of Andalusia (RGA) has been working, through Action Plan approved in the framework of ENHANCE Project in December 2018, to boost the voluntary participation to the EMAS Scheme among Andalusian organizations as a way to improve competitiveness and resources efficiency and as a tool to move towards a Circular Economy model.

In this respect, since 2019 several activities on EMAS promotion have been carrying out by DGCACC to give EMAS-registered organizations a strong recognition, providing and making available to them a set of measures and tools that enhance the visibility of their efforts and commitments to achieve Environmental Excellence.

Among these activities, it is worth emphasizing on the following three actions already adopted throughout the period 2019-2020:

- Inclusion of EMAS Registration among the evaluation criteria in the [24th Edition of the Environmental Awards of Andalusia](#);
- Development and implementation of the [#ConEMASTodosGanamos](#) campaign which aims to disseminate advantages and benefits of EMAS Registration; and
- Proposals for the EMAS inclusion in the grants for the Sustainable Development of Marine Aquaculture in Andalusia.

#### What are the benefits of the implementation of these action for the EMAS-registered organizations?

Currently, 74 organizations are enrolled in the Register of Eco-audited sites in Andalusia.

On the one hand, all of them have been able to indirectly benefit from the #ConEMASTodosGanamos campaign that have been launched from the DGCACC to promote EMAS Registration through Social Media, Press Releases, EMAS Help Desk, etc. All these dissemination materials (4 videos, 2 static and dynamic infographics, 3 gifs for social media, 1 roll-up and 1 brochure about EMAS benefits and procedure in Andalusia) have been made available to all



*Extra score also for organisations in the aquaculture sector applying to sector grants.*

EMAS-registered organizations in the website of the RGA, then all organisations have been able to directly benefit and make use of this communication toolkit in their own communication media.

On the other hand, regarding the 24th Edition of Environmental Awards, all organisations are susceptible to submit their candidacy for any of the five categories established in the Regulatory Bases. EMAS registered organisations will receive a higher score, thus obtaining an extra added value compare with non EMAS candidates.

Three of these seventy-four EMAS-registered organizations in Andalusia belong to the aquaculture sector, one of our key sectors. Moreover, these 3 EMAS-registered organizations from the aquaculture sector are susceptible to benefit, if appropriate, from the inclusion of EMAS Registration in the grants for the Sustainable Development of Marine Aquaculture in Andalusia, receiving a higher score simply for the fact of having EMAS Registration for any of the lines of grants a), b), c), d) y g). Additionally, other 7 companies from the aquaculture sector are susceptible to benefit from this inclusion of EMAS, but, in this case, for the lines of grants e) and f) simply for the fact of having another Management System, such as ISO14001, Global GAP, ISO22000, etc.

## AUSTRIA



## Implementation of Measures of ENHANCE Action Plan in Austria

### Green Public Procurement – EMAS as Award criterion in the tendering process of construction, maintenance and waste management sector

After the stakeholder workshop with GPP experts from different organisations and public procurement officers in November 2018, a draft version of the Austrian GPP criteria was prepared, which includes the following new requirements:

- For the waste sector – organisations have to provide an environmental statement
- For the construction, maintenance sector–EMAS organizations are higher rated in the awarding process than ISO organizations (EMAS organizations receive 100% of the available points, ISO organizations only 80%)

An article about EMAS in the GPP newsletter was prepared, the newsletter will be sent out to 250 subscribers.

### Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and EMAS – possible links and reliefs for EMAS organisations

We learned from our Italian colleagues that there could be a possible link between EMAS and the Environmental Impact Assessment. An analysis of how to achieve a synergy of these two instruments is done by means of a master thesis. Within this thesis, there will be a survey among EMAS organisations to understand if EMAS was helpful with EIA. One output will be recommendations for implementation of specific reliefs for EMAS organisations in the EIA scheme. Results will be presented in September 2020 at the Eco Audit Working Group of the Austrian Water and Waste Management Association.

### Consideration of EMAS in the Austrian Energy Efficiency Law

Due to the elections and the new government in Austria the revision of the law was postponed, in the last draft of the Energy Efficiency Law an internal Energy Audit was no longer obligatory for EMAS companies.

### Training and information of Public Authorities about EMAS

The recognition of EMAS often depends on the competent authorities. The more the authorities trust in the EMAS system, the better the cooperation with EMAS companies will work. Therefore we put a focus on the training and information of public authorities within the ENHANCE project.

*Improved training and information on EMAS for public officers will increase the level of confidence in the Eco-management and Audit scheme.*

Originally, a training for authorities was planned for May 4, due to the corona crisis the training has to be postponed. The new date is already fixed and the training program for the seminar on December 10 was prepared.

Moreover, a leaflet, informing all competent authorities about EMAS, was sent out to 150 authorities.

In the new [government program of 2020](#), public institutions are required to introduce environmental management systems (“comprehensive introduction of environmental management systems in the state sector”), we are expecting more registrations in the public sector in future.

Since the beginning of the ENHANCE project we got 39 new EMAS organisations with 127 sites in Austria. Seven of these registrations are located in western Austria.

## CATALONIA



### Boosting competitiveness through tax reduction and funding programmes

At the beginning of 2019 the Ministry of Territory and Sustainability of Catalonia started working in a specific action in order to provide special conditions for EMAS registered organizations participating to **Circular Economy funding programs** managed by the Waste Agency of Catalonia. The process included the proposal of new criteria for the scoring system and its technical and legal assessment to finally modify the terms of reference of the affected funding programmes. The Waste Agency of Catalonia approved the proposal and it was successfully included in the following call for proposals and published in the Official Journal in may/2019. It affected four [funding programmes](#) for projects related to:

- the promotion of the circular economy
- the prevention, preparation for reuse and recycling of industrial waste
- prevention and preparation for reuse of municipal waste
- the promotion of selective collection of municipal waste.

This action aimed both at promoting the participation of SMEs in the circular economy and at strengthening the link with environmental management as the basis for sound global and competitive business management.

The following table provides information on the applications received and the share of EMAS registered organizations:

Funding programme	Prevention, preparation for reuse and recycling of industrial waste	Prevention and preparation for reuse of municipal waste	Promotion of the selective collection of municipal waste	Promotion of the circular economy
Total applications	64	103	10*	81*
Total applications from EMAS registered organisations	8	5	0	9

*(\*) the data regards those applications within the funding programme were EMAS was considered.*

In 2020 the action has influenced other two funding programmes [regarding prevention of industrial waste](#) and [circular economy](#).

It should be noted that in addition, micro, small and medium-sized companies obtain a higher score compared to large companies (5 and 3 points

*Savings in Catalonia for EMAS registered organizations due to new and improved tax reductions.*

respectively), the combination of the criterion related to the size of the company and its EMAS registration, can therefore reach to score up to 8 points.

Another action aimed at improved competitiveness of enterprises was related to **tax and administrative fees reduction**. This action required a study to analyse the administrative fees that could be potentially reduced with a view to modify the law on fiscal, administrative, financial and public sector measures. Finally, [law 5/2020, of April 29<sup>th</sup>](#), was published integrating the following package of measures for EMAS organizations:

Taxes related to procedures for the environmental authorization	- 75%
Fees for conducting on-site inspections and preparing the report for activities with a high potential environmental impact, and covered by the environmental impact assessment and environmental authorization regime	- 75%
Fees for greenhouse gas emission authorization applications under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme	- 50%

## CZECH REPUBLIC



*The Environment and Czech Environmental Inspectorate extends frequency of inspections for EMAS registered organisations.*

### Achievements despite the coronavirus crisis

Situation in Czech Republic is getting a bit complicated, since the corona crisis appeared. The works on the implementation of the action plan had slow down and the agency is experiencing a lack of time.

Anyway, we succeeded to implement action 1 – **Reduced inspection frequencies** – in this action, we achieved the agreement with the Ministry of the Environment and Czech Environmental Inspectorate (CEI), to update the part of the Internal matrix (Internal Risk Assessment Framework), which CEI uses as a guide for the inspections, and specifically the part which includes the inspection frequencies is the one that has been modified. Newly frequency of CEI inspections are extended by one year for EMAS registered companies, if there isn't any high-risk potential. CEI is now using the updated version of the matrix, which is friendlier to EMAS registered companies. This matrix is a document which sets the exact rules inspectors must follow during inspections within the implementation of the national Act. No. 76/2002. Thus, this new matrix influences the application of that specific law.

The action 4 – **EMAS Funding support** - is also currently in progress. This action is under the competence of the Ministry of Industry and Trade as they manage a program to support the energy savings in organisations (*EFEKT Program, for the Support of Energy Savings for the Period 2017-2021*). Within this program, there's a part which includes support, among other things, for the introduction of a form of energy management system, which also applies to the EMAS system. The subsidy specifically concerns the creation of documents, the organization (definition of processes, responsibilities, flows, information, etc.), the preparation of systems for monitoring and evaluation of energy consumption. The funding support does not apply to the verification or the certification process, but it is assumed that once the system is implemented, it will meet the requirements set by ČSN EN 50001 or the EMAS environmental management and audit system. In this call, applications can be submitted until September 30<sup>th</sup>/2020. The information is being disseminated via social media and the website of the CENIA.

There are also ongoing works for education **programs for the public authorities**. An NGO with which CENIA is collaborating, has created the textbook which is oriented very wide spread through all basic environmental topics. In the near future, the methodology sheet, which is geared towards GPP, specifically how to apply EMAS in green public procurement should be developed. Moreover, a set of the brochures with basic fact sheet will be issued. Hopefully the works will be finished by the end of the year and the action will start generating positive impacts in the way public authorities work.



## ESTONIA



### Economic incentives and regulatory relief to increase competitiveness and resource efficiency of Estonian companies

The action plan prepared in the framework of the project in cooperation with the Estonian Ministry of the Environment and other relevant stakeholders, provided for a total of six policy measures that directly or indirectly support or motivate companies to implement an environmental management system in accordance with the EMAS regulation.

In general, the six proposed measures fall into two groups:

#### Economic actions for the promotion of EMAS:

- Reduction of financial guarantees for EMAS registered companies
- Exemption of environmental charges/taxes

#### Measures that provide administrative relief to companies that have implemented EMAS:

- Relief on energy audit requirement
- Simplification of the environmental permit application
- Reduced reporting requirement
- Reduced inspection requirement

The experience of other project partners and countries in implementing similar measures played an important role in the design and implementation of these policy measures. However, the implementation of the measures had to be based primarily on the situation in Estonia and the specifics of the local legislation. The COVID-19 restrictions also played a role, delaying the implementation of several of the proposed measures.

Of the planned policies, two have been fully implemented to date.

The first measure implemented was to exempt EMAS-registered companies from carrying out energy audits of large companies under the EU's Energy Efficiency Directive. This measure has received positive feedback from quite a number of companies and thus can be expected to be an additional incentive for enterprises to implement EMAS. For example, one of the largest hospitals in Estonia (Tartu University Hospital) mentioned that this measure was one of the incentives that supported their decision to implement EMAS.

As a second measure, an amendment to the [Waste Act](#) (§ 98<sup>3</sup>) has exempted EMAS registered companies from a warranty or financial guarantee related to waste depositing since the beginning of this year. This measure has given a

*Seven companies out of ten major waste management companies in Estonia have started to implement EMAS thanks to a regulatory relief included with an amendment to the Waste Act.*

very strong impetus to the implementation of EMAS, especially in the sector related to waste management and the circular economy. Today, most of the major waste management companies in Estonia (7 companies out of 10 major waste management companies) have started to implement EMAS. As a result, it can be expected that the number of EMAS registrations among business organisations will increase this year in Estonia more than 5 times.

The measure that provides reduced environmental reporting for EMAS-registered companies has been prepared for implementation, focusing in particular on the simplification of packaging reporting and self-monitoring of producers and producer responsibility organisations. Also, the development of checklists to harmonize compliance control and inspections of permit conditions with EMAS audits is under development. The measure supporting the simplification of the application for an environmental permit, together with the measure related to the exemption of environmental charges, still needs to be clarified and coordinated with the relevant authorities.

All in all, the proposed measures have also contributed to the promotion of the circular economy through a sharp increase in the implementation of EMAS by companies. This has been particularly due to companies in the waste management sector, but also through resource and energy efficiency requirements and EMAS integration. Thus, the measures of the action plan have already contributed to the achievement of a specific policy instrument (*Specific objective: solutions that increase resource productivity of enterprises*) in Estonia.

Therefore, the activities of the ENHANCE project in Estonia have had a direct policy impact and have given a clear impetus for the “renaissance” of EMAS and thus for the promotion of resource efficiency in Estonia.

## ITALY



### GPP as a business opportunity for enterprises

Last year of ENHANCE started with the participation of SSSA to an event organized by the Liguria Region on January 28<sup>th</sup>, named “Green Public Procurement: Business Opportunities for Ligurian Enterprises”, therefore dedicate to companies and industrial and trade associations. This event aimed at favour and spread the knowledge of companies and private market on GPP and this was the occasion for SSSA to give a short speech to companies about the nature of Environmental Certifications, both for product and for process, including EMAS and the role of ENHANCE in pushing this registration.

SSSA and Liguria Region, that are working closely in ENHANCE since the beginning, had planned to develop several activities addressed to private companies this year but, unfortunately, due to the lockdown, both had to change their plans. Nevertheless, an important recognition came from the Public Authority to the



project, that has officially mentioned and recognized the important added value from the ENHANCE output of the Action n.3 “Developing of guidelines and Communication campaign” of the Towards EMAS Action Plan in its deliberation [n.341/2020 of 24/04/2020](#). In the same document, Liguria Region has also stated the will to continue to develop synergies coming from ENHANCE with SSSA for the future activities – that means an influence also on the next Three-years GPP Plan that will be developed at the end of 2020. These are some of the results obtained with the implementation of actions n.1 and 2, aimed at Greening public tenders by EMAS, ISO 14001 and Eco-labelling certifications.

Regarding Action n.4, a dedicated event will be organized – probably online – to train public officers. That will be the occasion also to have a follow-up in respect to the analysis done with the initial survey and the interviews carried out during 2018 with them, where need for training emerged especially in relation to Environmental Certifications and their use in public tenders.

## Project indicators (until October 2020)



**13**

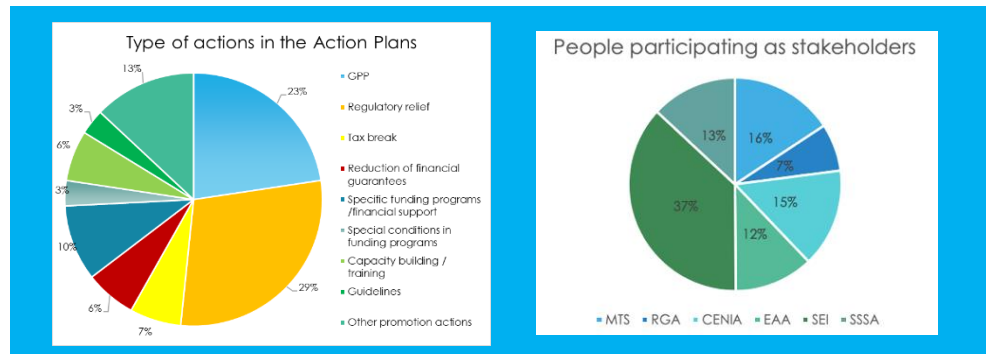
**Implemented actions**

**4**

**Policy changes**

**375**

**Stakeholders involved**



## Final dissemination event - September 2020

The ENHANCE High-level Dissemination Event in its Plenary Session was intended to be of a strategic nature, it gave a view on the projection actions may have both, at the level of administrations and organizations. In this sense, the event has been an opportunity to understand how EMAS is being positioned in the framework of European policies in the field of the circular economy.

Due to the pandemic, our final dissemination event has been split into different country and thematic sessions in different days and a wrap up session. More information [here](#).

**WRAP UP SESSION:**  
September 17<sup>th</sup>

**ITALY:**  
September 15<sup>th</sup>

**CATALONIA & ANDALUSIA:**  
September 15<sup>th</sup>



**ESTONIA:**  
September 11<sup>th</sup>

**CZECH REPUBLIC:**  
September 15<sup>th</sup>

**AUSTRIA:**  
September 15<sup>th</sup>

### Project Partners

