

## ***International partnership of the local self-administration authorities in the area of the environment***

### ***Regional Energy Management Agency, Slovakia***

#### **Summary**

The mission of the activity was to contribute to the environmental awareness of the Slovak community through elimination of the existing barriers in people's thinking.

Two identical seminars titled "**International Partnership of the Local Self-Administration in the Area of the Environment**" were organized by REMA in close co-operation with DTSW e.V., Germany, and Biomasa Association Slovakia. The undertakings were dedicated to the introduction of activities of the German and Austrian organizations (DTSW and Klima Bundnis e.V) in the field of environmental protection, and they addressed mainly representatives of the local self-administration authorities and self-governing regions.

The co-operation with participants of both seminars and development of the gathered contacts will continue during the prepared excursion of people interested in visiting German cities, having already made specific steps in the interest of the environment through development of installations utilizing renewable sources of energy. The excursion is planned in October 2003 and will be again organized by REMA.

<b>End-user area</b>		<b>Target Audience</b>		<b>Technical</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	New buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	Citizens	<input type="checkbox"/>	Energy efficiency
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refurbishment of buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	Households	<input type="checkbox"/>	Heating
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport and mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	Property owners	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cooling
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial instruments	<input type="checkbox"/>	Schools and universities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appliances
<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision makers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lighting
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal initiatives (municipal regulations, directives, etc)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local and regional authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	CHP
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Planning issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	District Heating
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sustainable communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Utilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Solar energy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	User behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	ESCOs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Biomass
<input type="checkbox"/>	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Architects and engineers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wind
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	Geothermal
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hydro power
				<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

Photos, pictures, tables

#### **Context**

A complex of two seminars and an excursion titled „International partnership of local self-administration authorities in the area of the environment“ was prepared in the interest of addressing

a large group of the local self-administrators and representatives of all self-governing regions of Slovakia. In the direct competence of the target group, there is decision making concerning so important tasks as they are strategy making, utilization of energy, process of municipal or region planning, development of transport, agriculture, forest and water management, liquidation of wastes, etc.

The addressed representatives, in view of their status, have a great chance to disseminate the gathered knowledge and experience on the broad public. Introduction of the successfully implemented external projects was an effort of REMA within this project.

## **Objectives**

The mission of the undertaking was to contribute to the environmental protection through an effort to eliminate the existing barriers in people's thinking.

Specific targets and actions of REMA in the process of environmental protection are becoming particularly important in view of implementation of the obligations in relation to Kyoto Protocol and access of Slovakia to the developed European Community. REMA understands the path of Slovakia to the planned reducing emissions through the support of energy savings, decreasing energy demand and creating optimal conditions for utilization of renewable sources of energy.

Actions in the interest of environmental protection on the local level, contribute both to the improvement of the environment and development of the local economy through utilization of the local resources and creating new job opportunities.

## **Process**

Process of preparation and realization of the extend educational complex has been running from April 2003 and will be terminated in November 2003.

**Realization of the educational undertaking by itself is divided to five phases:**

### ***1. Communication phase***

In order of ensuring planned outputs of the seminars, constant discussion between the partners took place for the purpose of specification of the lectures topics, preparation of quality contributions, determination of the target group, preparation of the seminars premises. Great attention was paid to the preparation of promotion material, which in publication and electronic way introduced activities of the organizers in the area of the environment protection.

### ***2. Preparation phase***

The target group was addressed during the preparation phase. Through the mail, e-mail and telephone, the invitations to the educational undertakings were forwarded to approximately 1500 representatives of the local self-administration authorities (with population higher than 500) of all self-governing regions of Slovakia. Despite the extend campaign promoting the undertaking, only 84 addressed authorities showed an interest to participate in it. They were people truly concerned about the issues.

### ***3. Realization of seminars***

The seminars took place in the exclusive premises of the cities Zilina and Bratislava. Simultaneous interpretation was ensured in order to eliminate the language barriers. Complete multimedia technique was applicable to the lecturers (including notebook, multiprojector, meotar), flipchart, etc.

Interest of the individual participants in 5-day excursion to the German cities, which already had made specific steps to protect the environment, was mapped during the educational seminars.

### ***4. Excursion***

The same attention, as to the seminars preparation, is also paid to the organization of the excursion of Mayors of municipalities and cities of Slovakia, which will hold in October 2003.

Invitation cards will invite participants of the seminars and potential people interested.

## **Financial resources and partners**

The total budgetary costs for the preparation and implementation of both undertakings reached 27.000 EUR.

Resources:

REMA – 8.000 EUR

German partner - 19.000 EUR

The seminars and excursion were prepared in close co-operation of three organizations DTSW e.V. (German – Czech and German – Slovak Economic Association) from Frankfurt am Main, Germany and Biomasa, Association and Regional Energy Management Agency, Slovakia. The objective of REMA was organizational, technical and material provision of seminars realization in Slovakia, excursion performance in Germany, communication with participants of both undertakings and arranging for the transport.

The main task of the German partner was final preparation of the promotional materials and details of presentations designed for participants, excursion scheduling, and ensuring entrance permission to the installations, food and accommodation for the participants during the excursion in Germany.

Climate Alliance, Klima Bündnis, Alianza Del Clima e.V. (Association of European cities with indigenous inhabitants of rain forests) entered the undertaking as a lecturer and presented own numerous activities in the area the environment and building up international partnerships.

## **Results**

Organizational preparation of seminars and excursion is a contribution of REMA to the process of environmental education of the citizens.

The first seminar took place in Zilina on 11 June 2003 and by its activity covered the area of Zilina, Banska Bystrica and Trencin regions. The second one held in Bratislava on 12. June 2003, covering Trnava, Nitra and Bratislava regions.

The following contributions were delivered during the seminars:

- ❑ Change of the Environment as a Global Problem – scientific observations and political impacts;
- ❑ Specific environmental protection and local options of activities for cities and municipalities;
- ❑ Offer of co-operation of the local self-administration from Germany and Austria in the field of environmental protection;
- ❑ Use of biomass for heating public buildings in the municipalities of the Northwest Slovakia.

The seminar was terminated with workshop on the theme: „What could be made?“ Discussion after each presented lecture was an inseparable part of the seminar.

An offer of co-operation from the party of the German associations towards the Slovak local self-administration is also an important output of the undertakings. Some contacts were already raised during the seminars; some self-administration authorities already negotiate with the German partner about their accession to the association.

Our decision to address representatives of self-administration was proved to be correct in the end and assumed realization of the gathered knowledge and experience in practice – in the large-scale spectrum of sectors and areas of the public life.

Low turn-out of both seminars could be considered as a negative output of this undertaking (only 84 people out of 1500 addressed ones showed an interest to participate in the session), which, on the other hand allowed immediate discussion between the lecturers and the seminars participants

In connection with the incumbent of Slovakia to the European Union, the undertaking opened new possibilities for the Slovak self-administration to join environmental associations of the European cities.

### **Lessons learned and repeatability**

In general, the broad public is aware of the importance of environmental protection, although still existing collective thinking and collective responsibility feeling, remaining from the past, underestimate the importance of individual citizens and self-administration. One of the barrier could also be - misunderstood idea „Think globally, act locally“ emphasizing that the process of the global environmental protection begins with small steps of protection in the local environment.

The endeavour of the organizers was to address the broadest possible public, which may have caused that the context was too general. At present, a lot educational undertakings addressing representatives of self-administration take place, which may cause that due to the busyness of these people, they simply have to select. Despite this fact, we would recommend organizing similar sessions also in other neighboring candidate counties. Utilization of experience of European cities is considered to be essential for the process of faster integration of the candidate countries to the developed part of Europe.

We would also assume that more interest would be shown to undertakings with more specific topics, despite the smaller target group addressed (e.g. economic energy savings through conversion from fossil fuels to biomass, solving issue of communal waste, options of financing communal projects, etc). Mapping specific needs and reserves of municipalities involved, should be prior to selection of topics, forms and tools of the specific activities.

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