

Project Fact Sheet

Project Title	<u>Waste Prevention and Minimisation</u>
Project Period	1994-2004
Project Objectives	Over the past two decades, OECD governments, the private sector and others have spent considerable resources on environmental protection and waste reduction. Yet, waste generation is still on the rise. To help OECD governments address the increase of waste and associated pollution, new policy ideas and concepts have been investigated and developed that could result in longer-term solutions and increase resource efficiency. Waste minimisation policy is one broad approach, among others, being examined by OECD. The policy guidance and information provided under the waste minimisation programme give governments an additional tool to help them tackle key environmental challenges such as waste and pollution.

Content of the Project

The OECD work programme on waste minimisation began in 1994. The initial step was to compile information on existing policies and tools for waste minimisation in OECD countries. In 1995, the U.S. Government co-hosted with Canada and Mexico OECD's first waste minimisation workshop in Washington D.C.

The second phase of the OECD Waste Minimisation Programme focused on the development of a common understanding of waste minimisation and its components (strict prevention, reduction at source, product re-use, recycling, and, when appropriate, energy recovery). The German government hosted this workshop in 1996.

The two phases of work resulted in a series of OECD publications covering specific waste streams, tools and policy approaches. A general waste minimisation evaluation, as well as national waste minimisation profiles of OECD countries, was published in 1998.

During the third and final phase of the project, the OECD focused its efforts more squarely on the **prevention** component of waste minimisation. Since wastes are generated throughout the life of economic activities, this phase of work added a resource flow perspective to the initial waste minimisation approach and will comprise waste prevention policy design, target setting, implementation and evaluation. The overall aim of this phase was to develop a Reference Manual on Strategic Waste Prevention (published in 2000).

The last OECD workshop on Waste Minimisation was held in Paris, 4-7 May 1999. It was a joint event focussing on waste prevention and extended producer responsibility. The event was kindly hosted by the Ministry of Health and Welfare of Japan. The workshop documentation, an overall summary outcome, the workshop agenda, and the list of participants, were published in 2000. The papers and presentations dealing with EPR (Part 1) were issued in a separate document [ENV/EPOC/PPC(99)11/FINAL/PART1].

Following the publication of the *OECD Reference Manual on Strategic Waste Prevention*, it was clearly recognised that there is a lack of internationally accepted waste prevention indicators. To address this fundamental problem, member countries endorsed in 2000 a multi-year project devoted to examining and developing waste prevention performance indicators. The project was carried out jointly by the Working Group on Waste Prevention and Recycling (WGWPR) and the Working Group on Environmental Information and Outlooks (WGEIO). To launch this project, the OECD held a first international workshop on waste prevention performance indicators in Paris on 8-10 October 2001. The workshop documentation and outcome were published in 2002. Based on the workshop recommendations, work was initiated on drivers for waste generation with the aim to develop pressure indicators for waste prevention. Also work has been undertaken on response indicators and on material flow accounts aiming towards the development of indirect pressure and response indicators for waste prevention. The outcomes of these three projects were published in 2004, and the programme was handed over to the WGEIO.

Major Achievements

Although the concept of waste prevention was broadly accepted, it became evident during this project to all involved parties that ever-growing waste amounts, waste diversity, and associated risks, are heightening the need for governments to vigorously pursue waste prevention as an essential component of strategy for a sustainable future. Also the associated financial and environmental benefits were broadly recognised, such as reduced investments to waste management, reduced air and water pollution and most notably the reduced emission of greenhouse gases. Also it was demonstrated that measurement of waste prevention is possible and feasible.

Publications and Other Outputs

OECD (1996), *Washington Waste Minimisation Workshop*, Volume I and II, OECD, Paris.

OECD (1996), *Building the Basis for a Common Understanding on Waste Minimisation*, Outcome of the International Workshop, Berlin, Germany, 16-18 October 1996, OECD, Paris.

OECD (1998), *Waste Minimisation in OECD Member Countries*, ENV/EPOC/PPC(97)15/REV2, OECD, Paris.

OECD (1998), *Waste minimisation Profiles of OECD Member Countries*, ENV/EPOC/PPC(97)16/REV2, OECD, Paris.

OECD (1998), Considerations for Evaluating Waste Minimisation in OECD Member Countries, ENV/EPOC/PPC(97)17/REV2, OECD, Paris.

OECD (2000), Joint Workshop on EPR and Waste Minimisation Policy in Support of Environmental Sustainability, Part 2, Waste Minimisation through Prevention, ENV/EPOC/PPC(99)11/FINAL/PART2, OECD, Paris.

OECD (2000), OECD Reference Manual on Strategic Waste Prevention, ENV/EPOC/PPC(2000)5/FINAL, OECD, Paris.

OECD (2002), OECD Workshop on Waste Prevention: Toward Performance Indicators, ENV/EPOC/WGWPR/SE(2002)1/FINAL, OECD, Paris.

OECD (2004), Towards Waste Prevention Performance Indicators, Part 1, 2 and 3, ENV/EPOC/WGWPR/SE(2004)1/FINAL, OECD, Paris.

OECD (2004), Waste Contract Design and Management for Enhanced Waste Minimisation, ENV/EPOC/WGWPR(2004)3/FINAL, OECD, Paris.

Useful Websites

<http://www.oecd.org/env/waste>