



# GOOD PRACTICE STYRIA: MUNICIPAL WASTE CONSULTANCY

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## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE GOOD PRACTICE (GP)

### 1.1 General information

Region	Styria
Country	Austria
Short name of the good practice	Municipal Waste Consultancy
Geographical level of implementation (country, region, municipality...)	Countrywide implementation
Target group	Private households, schools, kindergardens, enterprises
Date of implementation/duration	1984/85 Concept development 1986 start of qualification measures 1986 – 2000 nationwide implementation, partly funded by the labour agency 2000 – ongoing nationwide implementation, no more labour agency funding needed
Waste stream (and subcategory)	All, mostly MSW
Legal framework	Styrian Waste Management Act, § 14, Art. 8
Main local instruments involved	Training Session, Sorting ambassador/consultant
Scale (pilot/partially roll out /roll out)	Roll out
Initiator/coordinator	ARGE – association for Waste Prevention Today: VABÖ – Verband Abfallberatung Österreich
Demography	
Population	8,5 M
Number of households	3,7 M

Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	84.000
Population density (number of inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup> )	101
General waste data (Not necessarily related to the GP but to give some background information. Data about the GP should be included under 3.1)	
Year of the following waste data	2012
Sum of all waste streams excl. residual & bulky waste (kg/inhabitant/year) (Use indicator 1 or 2 from the R4R Online Tool)	269,3
Residual waste (including sorting residues) (kg/inhabitant/year) (Use indicator 8 or 9 from the R4R Online Tool)	128,9
Total waste (add up the previous two)	398,2
Sum of all waste streams excl. residual & bulky waste to DREC (kg/inhabitant/year) (Use indicator 3 of the R4R Online Tool)	269,3

## 1.2 Context

In the 1980s Austria was faced with severe waste problems: rising waste amounts and rapidly shrinking landfill capacities. To overcome these problems and to find new solutions, a small NGO (ARGE – Association for Waste Prevention) developed a new concept – the training concept of municipal waste consultants. Besides the positive effects for the environment, the training concept also guaranteed new job possibilities in the environmental sector.

## 1.3 Short description

As an innovative solution to severe waste problems of the 1980s a small NGO (ARGE) developed the concept of “municipal environment & waste consultant” and implemented it within the next years all over Austria with labour agency funding. Today 340 consultants are the backbone of public waste management, raising separate collection rates from around zero (1980) up to over 70% in some regions, saving costs, generating thousands of new follow-up jobs - one of the biggest success stories of labour agency funding projects in Austria.

## 1.4 Objective

The concept of municipal waste consultants was developed in order to focus on the strategy of waste prevention instead of “end of pipe” technology. The idea is to use human capital instead of industrial investments to solve environmental problems and to reduce public expenses. It is better to educate people in order to foster waste prevention and separate waste collection instead of letting them pay for expensive technical solutions.

The general objectives of municipal waste consultants:

- Reduction of waste for treatment
- Optimization of the amount of waste for recycling
- Stabilization or reduction of the overall amount of waste
- Establishment of regional collection systems that are customer-friendly and cost-saving
- Creation of public acceptance for necessary steps in waste management (treatment plants, higher fees, less convenience, ...)

## 1.5 Method used to identify the good practice

Please indicate the method used to identify the GP (evolution, benchmark, expert judgement) and explain.

The method to identify this good practice is evolution, as after the introduction of municipal waste consultants the separate waste collection rate raised from near zero to over 70% within 15 years in many regions (for example in Styria!).

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION

### 2.1 Preparation phase

ARGE – Association for Waste Prevention developed a first concept for the training of municipal waste consultants in the early 80s. The development of the concept was supported by the National Labour Agency. In 1986 the first trainings started, partly funded by the National Labour Agency. From 2000 on Austria is in the steady state of 340 waste consultants nationwide.

### 2.2 Technical implementation

Waste consultants are trained by several providers (ÖWAV, WIFI) and are employed nowadays in

- Municipalities / local authorities
- Townships with more than 3000 inhabitants
- Cities

- Association of towns / districts
- Provincial authorities
- Associations (under public contract)
- Waste management entities on a municipal level

A municipal environment & waste consultant is a public employee and is mainly active in the field of municipal waste management.

Everyday-work of Waste Consultants:

- Public awareness for environmental protection, PR activities, promotion of collection systems
- Service-hotlines, environment magazines, Newsletters
- On-site advising (e.g. home-composting)
- Conception, planning, organization of collection systems
- Supervision and support for collection centres
- Consultation of public decision-makers
- Organization of events
- Educational work (schools, kindergarden)
- Consultation of small and medium sized enterprises
- Development of waste management concepts for cities, SME's, schools, etc.
- Energy / water and waste-water consultation
- Development of innovative strategies and concepts in the field of sustainable development
- Waste controls and analysis
- Documentation, statistics and evaluation of waste data
- Controlling of waste management finances
- ....

The waste consultants today are financed via the public waste fee of the municipality (in Styria: ~ 50 – 70%), co-financed by the private packaging collection system (ARA) (in Styria: ~30-50%), and by the Styrian Provincial Government (~ 10 – 30%).

### 2.3 Communicative implementation

The municipal waste consultants active in the municipalities themselves are an awareness campaign. According to a survey of Austria's packaging collection system (ARA), the local authority is the most important source of information about waste separation for citizens.

### 2.4 Organisations involved

ARGE – Association of Waste Prevention (NGO) developed the first training concept of Municipal Waste Consultants. The National Ministry of Environment, the National Labour Market Authority and the Styrian Provincial Government provided the initial funding of the concept. Today the

Waste Consultants are trained by the ÖWAV (Austrian Water and Waste Management Association) and employed by the municipalities. All municipal waste consultants are member of VABÖ, the Austrian Association of Waste Consultants in order to foster the exchange of experience between the Waste Consultants.

## 2.5 Key success factors

- Using human resources prior to legal restrictions and industrial investments to minimise environmental problems and reduce public expenses (“prevention” instead of “end-of-pipe-treatment”)
- Simple message: “educate the population to prevent and separate waste instead of paying for expensive technical solutions”
- Waste consultants are the key tool to create public acceptance for “unpopular” measures - but only if the measures are wise and reasonable.
- Waste consultants transfer public discontent (i.e. with the waste management company) into positive individual reaction (e.g. separation of waste, home composting, more ecological consumer patterns)
- Waste consultants are the key interface between waste management authority and the public – there has to be a “two-way-communication”.
- Waste consulting is the cheapest and most effective measure of waste management and should stand at the beginning of any waste management concept

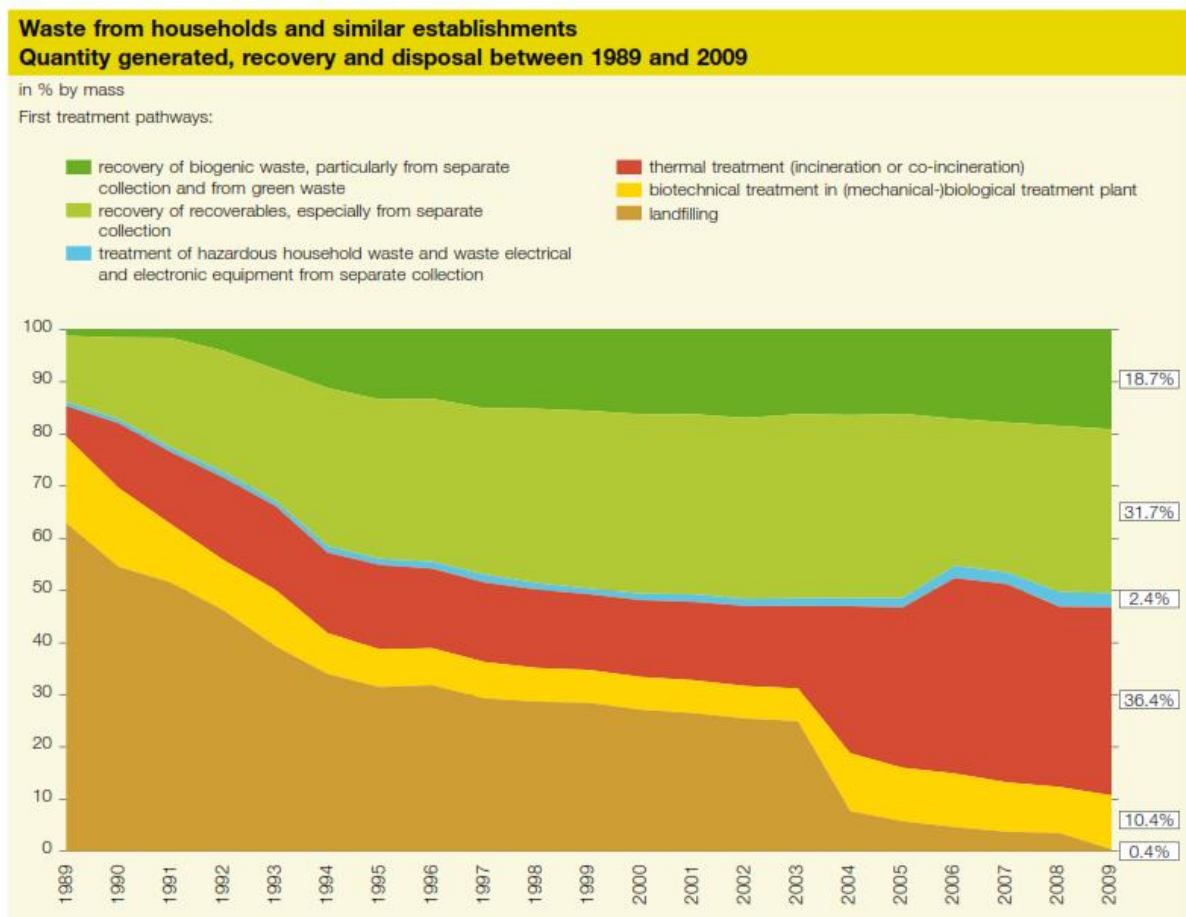
## 2.6 Resources

Please describe how the GP is financed. Does it require an initial investment only or is there a functioning cost too? What is the investment cost, the running cost and (if any) the savings?

- 1984 – 1986 Concept & qualification measures: funded by national Labour agency, Ministry of environment and Province of Styria
- 1986 – 2000 Implementation of the first ~ 200 consultants funded by the National Labour Agency
- 2000 – ongoing: Municipal Waste Consultants are financed by the municipalities
- In Styria about 50-70% of the costs for municipal waste consultants are financed via the public waste fee, 30 – 50% is co-financed by the private packaging-collection system ARA and 10 – 30% is co-financed by the Province of Styria (funding).

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Monitoring of the progress of the GP



Source: Federal Waste Management Plan 2011

### 3.2 Other results

- today ~ 340 permanent consultants in Austria
- ~ 1 waste consultant per 25.000 inhabitants



- Separatwaste collection rate raised from near zero to over 70% within 15 years in many regions (for example in Styria!)
- Recovery rate (including energy recovery): 70%
- Disposal rate: less than 3%
- Recovery income reduces costs for municipalities and waste fees for households
- 30.000 jobs in Austria waste management (public and private) = 20.000 more compared to countries with very low separate collection
- 1 job in waste management per 270 inhabitants
- 1 municipal waste consultant per 88 employees in waste management
- 1,5% of Gross National Product = Waste Management
- Roughly estimated : initial labour market investment (1984 – 2000) of ~ 15M Euro created a yearly wage tax income of ~ 60M Euro through 20.000 new jobs

## 4. LESSONS LEARNED

### 4.1 Negative effects

As the profile of a waste consultant is very broad, waste consultants are often overloaded with work – in a very few cases the administrative burden is very high, which means that there is less time for the real “consulting” work

### 4.2 Challenges

Waste consultants need some important qualifications:

- High motivation to serve the “common welfare”
- Intelligent and responsible work
- Experience in any profession (“not fresh from university”)
- Talent for communication
- Organizing talent
- Wholistic thinking in cross-linked systems
- Positive attitude towards ecology and sustainability

## 5. PICTURES AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION

[www.vaboe.at](http://www.vaboe.at)



Waste Consultants at work



Waste Consultants at work



Waste Consultants at work

## 6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Organisation	Office of the Federal State Government of Styria – Division Waste Management and Sustainability
Address	Bürgergasse 5a
Contact person	Wilhelm Himmel
Phone	+43 316 877 4323
E-mail address	wilhelm.himmel@stmk.gv.at
Website	abfallwirtschaft.steiermark.at
Others	Verein VABÖ: Matthias Neitsch <a href="http://www.vaboe.at">www.vaboe.at</a> neitsch@arge.at

## 7. OTHER REGIONS WITH SIMILAR GOOD PRACTICES

The following partners of the R4R-project have a good practice similar to the good practice described in this factsheet:

Organisation	Southern Regional Waste Management Office
Address	Limerick City & County Council, Lissanalta House, Dooradoyle, County Limerick IRELAND
Region	Limerick/Clare/Kerry Region (now part of the larger Southern Region)
Country	Ireland
Contact person:	Philippa King/Carol Sweetnam
Phone	00353 61 496842/00353 61 496841
E-mail address	philippa.king@limerick.ie carol.sweetnam@srwmo.ie
Website	www.srwmo.ie
Others	
Short description of the main differences.	The region currently employs a Regional Industrial Waste Minimisation Officer (RIWMO) who works specifically with the business sector across the region in order to raise environmental awareness among employees and assist company's in their waste reduction programme. Environmental Awareness Officers (EAOs), based in each of the local authorities within the region, also work with the business sector in pursuit of best environmental practice, and work closely with the RIWMO. The RIWMO has set up a number of Networks and issues a newsletter 2-3 times per year

	<p>The region also currently employs a Waste Prevention Officer who has responsibility for implementing the EPA funded Local Authority Prevention Network (LAPN) program which works on the delivery of specific prevention initiatives. The EAOs based in each of the local authorities within the region, also work with the program. The Region is also funding a number of prevention and reuse programmes and repair and reuse cafes are the theme for 2014</p>
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# REGIONS FOR RECYCLING

