

Energy Efficient Cities Initiative

GOOD PRACTICES IN CITY ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Vienna, Austria (European Union) – Municipal Eco-Purchasing

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Project title	<i>ÖkoKauf Wien</i> (EcoBuy Vienna)
Sector	City-wide
Type of project	Municipal Procurement
City and country	Vienna, Austria
City population	1.71 million (2008)
Annual budget	€300,000 (US\$420,000)
Annual % energy reduction	Not available
Project status	Active (Began in 1999)

Project Summary

Now in its thirteenth year, the City of Vienna's *ÖkoKauf Wien* (EcoBuy Vienna) Program has developed an internationally recognized model for sustainable municipal procurement. The Program has established a comprehensive list of more than 100 ecological criteria, including energy efficiency (EE), recycled content, organic production, reduced toxic chemicals, low carbon production, etc., for purchasing goods and services in 23 categories, including paper, vehicles, lighting, building services, office supplies, cleaning agents, textiles, and many others. Vienna has achieved impressive results, with annual cost savings of about €17 million (US\$23.8 million)¹ and 30,000 tons of CO₂ emissions reductions. By the end of 2010, this translated into total cost savings of €204 million (US\$285.6 million) and emissions reductions of 360,000 tons of CO₂.

ÖkoKauf is based on the Vienna's Climate Protection Program (*Klimaschutzprogramm, "KliP"*) and constitutes a substantial contribution towards reaching the *KliP* emission reduction targets. Established in 1999, *ÖkoKauf* is a collaborative program among the various departments and services within the Vienna City Administration. Approximately 200 internal and external staff participate in the Program's Steering Group, working groups and consultative committees to develop and update its ecological procurement criteria. Suppliers interested in providing goods and services to the City must demonstrate through third-party testing and certification that their products and services adhere to these standards. Initially, the ecological procurement criteria were only voluntary and recommended as a best practice. In 2003, however, through decree of the Chief Executive Director of Vienna, the *ÖkoKauf* criteria were made mandatory for all municipal procurement and contracting. The *ÖkoKauf* Program also includes substantial public relations and outreach to publicize the methods, objectives, and results to the business community and local population. It regularly updates its ecological procurement criteria lists based on project results, the latest technological innovations, and market readiness.

The Program attributes its success to careful planning, continued political support, and close collaboration with the private sector and surrounding community. In addition to direct EE, cost savings, and environmental improvements, *ÖkoKauf* has heightened awareness about the ecological footprints and life-cycle costs of many consumer products, fostered increased demand and supply for environmentally-friendly goods and services, helped to green supply chains, and improved the health and well-being of Vienna citizens. It has also combated

¹ €1.0 = 1.4 US\$ (Jan-Jun 2011 average).

misperceptions that eco-friendly goods are more expensive. As a result, *ÖkoKauf Wien* has received international awards and recognition, media coverage, and inquiries from other national and local governments interested in replicating the Program's success.

1. Introduction

Vienna is the capital city of the Republic of Austria and one of nine states. With a total population of 1.71 million (2008), (2.4 million within the Metropolitan Area), it is the largest city in Austria, as well as the cultural, economic, and political center. Spread over a total land area of 415 square kilometers (160 square miles), Vienna is the 10th most populous city in the European Union and the largest in Austria. It has a gross domestic product (GDP) of €68,743 million (US\$96,240 million, 2006), with the services sector contributing more than 83 percent of the economy. Vienna boasts of an economy that is amongst the best in Europe, and is the driving force behind the Austrian economy. More than one-quarter of Austrian business enterprises are located in Vienna and it contributes approximately 27 percent to the Austrian economy.

For many years, Vienna has been a leader in environmentally sustainable initiatives within the European Union (EU), as demonstrated by its low greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions footprint. In 2006, the GHG balance for Vienna showed that although 20 percent of Austria's population lived in Vienna, the city's share of Austrian GHG emissions was only 10 percent. Consequently, its CO₂e emissions per capita were only 5.5 tons/person compared to Austria's average of 11 tons/person.

In 1998, Vienna prepared the 1st Vienna *Climate Protection Program* (*Klimaschutzprogramm*, or "*KliP*"), which informed the basic framework for the *ÖkoKauf* Program. When *KliP* was finally launched in 1999, it was the most ambitious and comprehensive environmental project ever launched by the City. The main aim of *KliP* was to avoid 2.6 million tons of CO₂ between 1999 and 2010, improve the quality of life in Vienna, and strengthen the economy through the creation and protection of jobs. One of the major objectives of this project was to design and implement ecologically-sound procurement practices. Today, the Climate Protection Project has 37 projects that include 385 individual measures in the areas of energy supply and use, mobility and town-structure, procurement, waste management, agriculture, forestry, nature conservation and public relations.

Apart from Vienna's environmental stewardship, there was another factor that motivated Vienna to establish municipal procurement guidelines. Vienna wanted its own public procurement guidelines that were in compliance with national and European Union (EU) procurement laws. The city needed consistent procurement guidelines, which would establish free and fair access for companies from all EU countries and ensure that procurement money is spent to the maximum benefit of its citizens. Although, the EU procurement directive does not stipulate how to address ecological impacts directly, it called on member countries to address those concerns. Instead of duplicating efforts, Vienna's Chief Executive Director decided to focus on the development of procurement guidelines which could be compliant with EU's procurement laws and aligned with its own environmental and sustainability priorities.

2. Project Description and Design

Public procurement is the purchase of goods, services and public works by governments and public authorities. In the EU, such purchases are significant, accounting for approximately

16 percent (€1,500 billion) of the EU's GDP in 2008, equivalent to half the GDP of Germany. By using its purchasing power, a government can lead by example and help shift markets. Green public purchasing (GPP) and eco-procurement are terms used to reflect the use of this influence for environmentally-friendly goods and services. In this way, public authorities can provide industry with real incentives and more predictable demand for developing and selling green products. Many governments also recognize that if life-cycle and externality costs are factored in, GPP can actually save them money, while encouraging more sustainable patterns of behavior.

The *ÖkoKauf* Program, initiated in 1999, represents a model for GPP and a natural extension of the city's environmental leadership. Vienna annually procures a variety of products, goods and services worth more than €5 billion (US\$7.0 billion). This includes textiles, detergents, office materials, furniture, construction materials and building contracts to a full range of janitors' services. This corresponds to about five times the total amount spent by private households on corresponding goods and services. As a major purchaser and bulk buyer, the city can maximize its share of environmentally-friendly products and send powerful signals to suppliers. By setting standards, it is also far better able to control the quality and nature of products than typical retail customers.

ÖkoKauf was established by special request of Vienna's Chief Executive Director who commissioned the Director General for Urban Planning to establish ecological procurement guidelines for the city. Project management was assigned to a Project Coordination Office at the Planning Bureau where the Program was developed and put into practice with major support from "Municipal Department 22 – Environmental Protection" - and the "Vienna Ombuds Office for Environmental Protection." On November 5, 1999, the Vienna City Council adopted the City's Climate Protection Program, *KLiP* as a framework project for *ÖkoKauf*. Under *KLiP*, an eco-purchasing group was set up to coordinate and plan the establishment of environmentally friendly procurement by the Vienna City Administration. The Program received strong commitment and support from the Executive City Councilor for Environmental Protection and the Mayor. Initially, the procurement criteria were optional and recommended as best practice only. However, in August 2003, an internal decree was issued which made *ÖkoKauf* criteria binding for all procurement activities undertaken by the city. The required environmental criteria defined by the working groups join other mandatory considerations for municipal procurement, i.e., financial prudence, quality, employee safety, and practical usability.

Institutional arrangements. *ÖkoKauf* is established as a cooperation project between various departments of the Vienna City Administration (Figure 1). The project is headed by a project leader and a Steering Group, composed of experts from the Chief Executive Office of the City Administration and all the relevant municipal departments. Members include the office of the Administrative Group for Environmental Affairs, Vienna Press and Information Services, Vienna Coordination Office for Climate Protection, Vienna Office for Environmental Protection, Vienna Hospital Association, Vienna Public Utilities and Wiener Wohnen (Housing in Vienna). Under the Steering Group, there are 23 specialized working groups that are responsible for developing, evaluating and regularly updating all relevant ecological criteria for the purchase of goods and services by the City. These working groups are supported by consulting committees that have been established for public relations and legal issues. Altogether approximately 200 government and private sector representatives serve as staff on the different project groups and consulting committees.

Figure 1: ÖkoKauf Wien Administrative Structure

Source: Vienna City Administration. *ÖkoKauf Wien. Think Green-Buy Green.*

To promote eco-friendly methods in public procurement and tendering, lists of environmental criteria are drawn up for the various goods, products and services needed by the Vienna City Administration and its affiliated organizations. These criteria provide practical decision-making support for all city staff involved in public contracting – a convenient tool that helps them assess the environmental compatibility of their decisions without causing substantial extra work. To date, the working groups have developed criteria for ecological procurement for goods and services in 23 categories (Table 1). Similar procurement criteria for three additional categories that includes kindergartens, green and open spaces, and horticultural products are also currently under preparation. The recommended criteria lists developed by the working groups are submitted to the Steering Group for approval before they are accepted as the official procurement and contractual requirements. The working groups regularly meet to keep the ecological procurement guidelines up to date and relevant based on project results, markets, and the latest technological innovations.

Table 1. Working Groups for 23 Categories of Goods and Services

Lighting	Reduced use of resources	Food
Disinfection	Planning	Cleaning agent
Fleet	Events	Civil engineering
Building Services	Paints and varnish	Water
Building Construction	Fire extinguishing agents	Disposal Services
Interior	Furniture	Nanotechnology
Winter Service	Textiles	
Printing, stationery and office supplies		
Electrical office equipment and household appliances		
Construction sites and environmental logistics		

Source: Vienna City Administration. "ÖkoKauf Vienna" - Overview of working groups.

The currently active 23 thematically-structured working groups have produced more than 100 guidelines for ecological municipal procurement of services and products. Selected examples of procurement guidelines from the individual working groups include the following:

- *Lighting group.* Criteria includes change to energy-efficient office and household appliances and lighting technologies that have a long time, low pollutant content,

- high light yield, electronic ballasts, low idle current share and use of minimal and recycled packaging materials.
- *Disinfectant group.* Helped create the disinfectant database “WIDES”, which was produced in cooperation with “AUVA” (Austrian Social Insurance for Occupational Risks) and the Austrian Society for Hygiene, Microbiology and Preventative Medicine. The database² includes information about the environmental and health risk potential of different disinfectants and provides a guide to the selection and use of the safest products.
 - *Printing, stationary and office supplies group.* Lists products and vendors that meet the criteria related to use of recycled paper, guidelines on printing inks and toners, waste reduction and the reuse of waste materials.
 - *Electrical office and household devices group.* Developed performance criteria for 20 household devices that include faxes, washing machines, dishwashers, printers, dryers, computers and laptops, handheld devices and pocket computers, televisions, stoves and others. Criteria include EE, water use efficiency (if applicable), repair-friendliness, life span and material and packaging specifications among other things.
 - *Fleet group.* Established criteria for use of alkylate petrol³, and emissions and fuel efficiency criteria for passenger cars, trucks, construction vehicles, tractors and mowers and other small vehicles for municipal use.
 - *Building Services group.* Developed criteria for hot water under-floor heating, water efficiency in sanitary fittings and plumbing fixtures, boilers, chillers, air conditioners and water pumps.
 - *Food group.* Works to achieve increase in the budgetary share of organic food in municipal facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes, schools and daycare centers.
 - *Cleaning agent group.* Developed criteria for ecological washing and cleaning detergents and use of microfiber cloths and mops.
 - *Events group.* Created criteria for making public events more ecological through waste reduction, recycling and other efforts.
 - *Waste Disposal group.* Promotes the ecological treatment of waste from municipal sites.

Public outreach. A key aim of the *ÖkoKauf* Program is to inform the general public about the importance of “buying green.” Intensive public relations make the results of *ÖkoKauf* available to all interested parties, through print media, the internet and the city’s intranet, radio and television, conferences, press releases, articles, brochures, films, and meetings. In 2006-07, for example, there were around 120 media reports and 90,000 visitors to the *ÖkoKauf* website. Working materials and games for daycare centers and schools have also been produced to inform the younger generation about the environmental impacts of their consumption patterns and how the *ÖkoKauf* Program helps to reduce those negative impacts.

3. Cost, Financing, Benefits, and Results

The project is implemented at the administrative and organizational level by using existing human and technical resources. Since most of the staff members involved in the Program are city employees and perform their *ÖkoKauf* tasks in addition to their other duties, the

² The database can be accessed at: <http://www.wien.gv.at/umweltschutz/oekokauf/desinfektionsmittel/>.

³ Alkylate petrol is free from aromatic hydrocarbons and olefins. This means that the emissions of carcinogenic, persistent and toxic polyaromatic hydrocarbons are up to 90 percent lower than with conventional fuel. Furthermore, alkylate petrol has a lower emission of nitrogen oxides and a smaller contribution to the creation of ground-level ozone.

incremental administrative costs are negligible. As the Program deals with procurement of new items, the city does not incur any capital investment obligations. External experts on consultative committees also contribute towards the Program on a voluntary basis. Staff members' motivation to participate in the project is solely based on the opportunity to contribute their expert knowledge to the project, which is used to develop applicable regulations that are used by all procurers in their everyday work.

The Program does have cost implications for private sector companies that wish to participate. To be considered as a qualified provider of goods and services for the city, companies have to demonstrate that their business processes and products meet the ecological criteria set forth by the *ÖkoKauf* Program. Costs incurred by vendors for additional tests and studies are primarily covered by the city's annual operational budget of €300,000.

The life cycle costs of the Program are generally lower, as the city incurs savings as a result of lower operating costs, lesser environmental damage and lower disposal costs in nearly all categories of procurement. Even though the Program does not maintain any detailed cost-benefit metrics, reported cost savings estimates show a sustained annual fiscal return of approximately 0.5 percent. The rate of return might seem insignificant overall, but the indirect benefits to help remove the barriers of market development of ecological goods and services and addresses misperceptions that they are associated with a price premium.

Direct benefits. Studies to quantify the energy, cost and emission savings as a direct result of the *ÖkoKauf* Program, as well as market transformation effects, are costly and, thus, have not been commissioned to date. Nevertheless, some documented direct benefits are summarized below:

- The project publishes a database of products and vendors that meet the guidelines set for the paper industry. The desire for private companies to be included in that list is so strong that, over time, the entire European paper industry has adopted Vienna's paper production criteria. As a result, the use of waste paper for the production of office storage systems and sanitary papers has helped to save resources and significantly reduce the environmental burden through reductions in wastewater and energy consumption.
- In the food category, the *ÖkoKauf* guidelines have resulted in considerable increase in the consumption of organic food. Organic food now accounts for 51 percent of all meals in Vienna's daycare centers, 38 percent in hospitals within the Vienna Hospital Association, 18 percent in Vienna's schools, and 25 percent in senior citizen homes. Because the production of organic food releases less CO₂ than conventional agricultural practices, the Program has enabled the city to avoid about 20,000 tons of GHG emissions each year.
- For buildings, water flow controls have become a regular feature in public administrative buildings, public schools and daycare centers. Approximately 8,320 wash-hand basins and 1,324 showers have been equipped with these fixtures, resulting in enormous amounts of water, energy and relevant cost savings, translating into an estimated €1.5 million (US\$2.1 million) in cost savings and 1,723 tons of CO₂ emissions each year.
- The introduction of improved dispensing systems has been able to cut down the amount of necessary detergents, and the application of microfiber cloths has eliminated the use of chemicals altogether. These changes have not only helped to relieve harmful environmental impacts due to chemicals in cleaning agents, but also

- help to lower costs. The Vienna Hospital Association alone is now able to save 89 tons (23 percent) of detergents annually, corresponding to €63,226 per year.
- Overall, the *ÖkoKauf* Program saves the city approximately €17 million (US\$23.8 million) annually, out of its total procurement volume of €5 billion (US\$7 billion), and emission reductions of 30,000 tons of CO₂ per year. Over the Program's twelve years (1999-2010), this has translated into an estimated €204 million (US\$285.6 million) in cost savings and 360,000 tons of CO₂ emission reductions. The Program has helped Vienna meet its reduction target of 2.6 million tons of CO₂ by 2010 under *KliP*, which was achieved in 2006.
 - The direct benefit of the Program has been the “greening” of virtually all supply chains in the market. The business sector has responded positively and, over time, adjusted its production conditions, product qualities and service performance standards to meet the requirements. Products and services which did not meet the Program's standards have virtually disappeared from the market.

Indirect Benefits. The Program was able to send powerful signals to the market and to citizens about the importance of sustainable living and bring about the availability of more ecologically-friendly products to the market. Over time, tenders received have demonstrated that, in most cases, the prices of qualifying products and services have declined and become within the range of the typical ones before the Program was initiated.

The Program's broad participatory approach has led to an overall increased awareness about the life cycle costs of procuring products and services. City officials became more aware about the long-term impacts of their procurement activities, while the private sector gained insights into the ecological impacts of their business activities, products and services, and made the necessary changes to make them more ecologically sustainable. This has thus made them more competitive in other markets adopting similar programs. Public outreach efforts have also been successful in educating the community about the direct and indirect environmental implications of procurement activities. The high volume of purchasing by the city has also helped to bring down the costs of such products, making them more available and affordable for others. In addition, the educational projects in schools and daycare centers have attempted to instill environmental awareness in future generations.

4. Project Innovation

Since its first initiation in 1999, *ÖkoKauf Wien* has been a unique program. Its wide-reach and detailed criteria for 23 categories of goods and services allowed it to influence a majority of the city's procurements. The political commitment to make the criteria mandatory and to continuously update them has helped the Program to pull the market further towards sustainability. The collaborative implementation platform involving more than 200 experts, through which the Program is implemented, is unique and helps ensure continued support from all divisions within the municipal government. The long-term commitment to Vienna's Climate Protection Plan, environmental stewardship, and eventually *ÖkoKauf Wien*, have collectively demonstrated commitment to city vendors and predictability in the Program criteria to allow the private sector to invest in improvements and testing without the risks of wondering if the criteria would be softened in future years. Lastly, the Program has served as an excellent demonstration of how to reorganize and utilize existing human resources and capital to implement new, innovative, and often challenging procedural changes within the public sector.

5. Lessons Learned

The *ÖkoKauf* Program is now in its 13th year. Its successful implementation can be attributed to careful planning and continued support at the political level and from the community. It was initiated at the top level with strong commitment and direction from the city's Chief Executive Director. The continued success of the Program highlights the need for political and management support and involvement in order to influence the city staff and administrative functions, including procurement. Another important lesson was about the need for a participatory structure from the beginning, to address a potential lack of cooperation and coordination between the various departments.

The Program did face some initial implementation barriers including opposition from industry participants, but most differences were eventually resolved through dialogue and continued public relations and outreach efforts. Initially, it took a lot of persuasion to ensure the provision of human resources from the individual departments and external stakeholders. However, the growing sense of responsibility for the climate, establishment of *KliP*, EU's guidelines for public procurement, and the fact that the Program was backed at the political level, all significantly helped to overcome these initial obstacles. Some concerns were also raised early on by Vienna's procurement officials that the Steering Group and consulting committees would interfere in their work and implementation of the guidelines. However, a step-by-step implementation approach during the Program's first years helped eliminate such doubts and the Program now receives widespread support of the government, industry and the community.

There also persisted, and still persists, the common perception that ecological and organic products and services are always more expensive than conventional ones. The Program demonstrated that, while some did have higher upfront costs, the life cycle costs were in most cases lower. Further, as the Program became more mainstreamed, tenders showed that prices did steadily decline to the typical range for the relevant products and services. The Program's commitment to continuous refinement and updating of the procurement guidelines and expansion of their coverage also ensured that the concerns of all stakeholders were addressed. The lack of quantitative metrics to report on the Program's results and impacts is still an area for improvement. Additional efforts to quantify the energy, environmental and incremental costs, market transformation effects, price impacts, etc. would all provide better information for further adjustments to the Program as needed.

6. Financial Sustainability, Transferability, and Scalability

The demonstrated results, successes, continued support from all departments in the city, top government officials and the community will help ensure the long-term sustainability of *ÖkoKauf Wien*. Based on Vienna's experience, the Austrian Federal Ministry for the Environment is now planning to establish similar programs for municipalities nationwide. The work of *ÖkoKauf Wien* has also strengthened the City's international reputation as an environmental leader. The Program has received national and international attention, and its successes have been widely publicized. Some examples of its international accolades include:

- In 2006, *ÖkoKauf Wien* was listed among the best practices for the second time at the "Dubai International Award for Best Practices 2006," a UN-HABITAT initiative, from a total of 650 sustainability projects submitted from around the world.

- *ÖkoKauf Wien* was awarded the “PMI Austria Excellence Award 2006” for extraordinary projects and project management services in November 2006 as part of the “Project & Portfolio Management Symposium 2006” that took place at the Reed Trade Fair, Vienna.
- *ÖkoKauf Wien* was invited to the International EcoProcura Conference (Barcelona, 2006) and to a conference for experts from administration, science and NGOs (Madrid, November 2007).
- The Program has been a longstanding member of the EUROCITIES network’s Responsible Procurement Working Group, where it continues to receive solicitations for advice and information about its Program and experiences.
- The EU commissioned a video on *ÖkoKauf Wien* as a best practice model for all EU members in the field of eco-friendly procurement. The video emphasizes Vienna’s leading role in the field of eco-friendly procurement in the EU, and features a statement by EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström stressing that encourages other EU member states to follow Vienna’s lead and make ecological criteria mandatory for all government procurement and contracting activities.

The continuous requests for information received by the Program show that other public procurers, large industrial enterprises and individual private companies are keenly interested in replicating the city’s results. Some of the countries that have expressed interest in replicating *ÖkoKauf Wien*’s successes include Belgium, France, Switzerland, the Baltic States, and, more recently, China. However, in spite of all the attention and the accolades, it is unclear to what extent the Program has actually been replicated outside of Austria. Cities interested in establishing ecological procurement guidelines for their own municipal activities can learn from *ÖkoKauf Wien*’s experiences, such as the importance of gaining political will and support, municipality-wide participation and inclusion of representatives and environmental experts, a slow and steady implementation approach, and public outreach, to ensure similar successes.

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ANNEX: CITY AND PROJECT PROFILE**CITY PROFILE**

1. Name of the City	Vienna, Austria
2. Area	415 square kilometers (160 square miles)
3. Population	1.7 million in 2008 (2.4 million in the metro area)
4. Population Growth Rate	0.1% (2007-2008)
5. GDP of the City	€68,743 million (US\$96,240 million) (2006)
6. GDP Growth Rate	4.3% (2005-2006)
7. GDP per Capita	€41,500 (US\$58,100) (2006)

PROJECT PROFILE

1. Project Title	ÖkoKauf Wien (EcoBuy Vienna)
2. Sector	City-wide
3. Project Type	Municipal Procurement
4. Total Project Capital Cost	Not applicable
5. Energy or energy cost savings	€68,743 million (US\$96,240 million) (2006)
6. Internal Rate of Return	4.3% (2005-2006)
7. Project Start Date	November 5, 1999
8. Project End Date	Ongoing
9. % of Project Completed	NA

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