

# Industrial relations for a green economy

Innovative bargaining processes for a sustainable growth and a quality employment



Project VS/2014/0405 co-founded

by

DGESAI - DG EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS and INCLUSION

## **Germany Case 4: Solidarity Shopping**

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## PRESENTATION (IDENTITY CARD OF BEST PRACTICE)

- **Name of initiative/project/ intervention/agreement**
  - Solidarity Shopping and waste-avoiding office
  
- **Brief description**
  - By shopping responsibly the members of IG BAU can exercise solidarity with a proper regard for labour AND environment. When making a purchase, decisions are made regarding materials, quality, origin, standards of manufacturing and production, i.e. regarding the worldwide working and living conditions at the place of production and regarding the impact of production on climate and environment. IG BAU tries to develop a sustainable shopping behaviour and implement it in its own institutions.
  - The Shopping Solidarity project of the PECO Institute advises the IG Bauern-Agrar-Umwelt (IG BAU) on (office) supplies. With this project, the purchases of IG BAU took social and environmental criteria and preferably to fair trade products into consideration. Thus, the IG BAU shows a strong commitment for sustainable business. A manual is provided, explaining the concept of Solidarity Shopping to union branches.
  - IG BAU facilities analyse their entire work operations, complying them with environmental and social criteria. They reduce waste, save energy, use office materials economically and create a work atmosphere in which employees feel comfortable. For this, the project created the so-called "Eco-Social Office Check" and made this list available to all IG BAU facilities.
  
- **Geographic, territorial, sectorial localisation,**
  - In Germany, nine offices as pre-tests, especially in North Rhine-Westphalia, the model office in Bielefeld
  
- **Period of activity**
  - Forerunner projects since 2005, ecological building in Munich, since 2008 all offices are supplied with energy by Greenpeace Energy, since 2009 fair traded coffee; houses of PRO were energetically renovated and equipped with photovoltaics.
  - Project of Peco-Institut 10/2010 - 9/2013
  - IG BAU: since 2010 – ongoing
  
- **Players / promoters**
  - IG BAU: Decision of the board of the IG BAU to initiate and finance a project

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- Peco-Institut e.V. - Institute for Sustainable Regional Development in Berlin was founded in spring 1998 by dedicated men and women from trade unions, unions and scientific institutions. Central goal is to process, present and distribute trade union experiences of social partnership work in the rural regions of Europe. One focus of the project work lies on the acceding countries.
  
- **Players/ partners involved, their main functions**
  - The IG Bauen-Agrar-Umwelt in North Rhine-Westphalia represents about 300,000 people in the sectors of construction, building materials, landscaping, agriculture, forestry and industrial and commercial cleaning. With their district unions and their member offices, the IG BAU is located nationwide. Here, members are provided with the relevant applicable collective agreements and accurate tariff information. Colleagues in the district unions function as contact persons in all matters relating to working life and a membership in the IG BAU.
  - Peco-Institut e.V. as the central promotor of the project, working as adviser for IG BAU
  
- **Types of Beneficiaries (direct/indirect):**
  - IG BAU District Union of Westphalia-Lippe / Member Offices
  - IG BAU office Bielefeld
    - 5 administrative staff members, two trade union officials
    - public business - between 20 -30 people / week
  
- **Human resources involved in the bargaining process and their competencies**
  - IG BAU
    - with its national board, which decided to take an active role in creating an example on a membership level
    - with its board in Eastern Westphalia / Lippe, which decided to be the first to participate in the project
    - the staff of the office in Bielefeld who were keen to participate in the project and who had to be trained in a first step
  - Peco-Institute as advisors and trainers
  
- **Indicators for monitoring and evaluating activities**
  - The certificate “Solidarisch einkaufen – Wir machen mit!” (Shopping Solidarity – we join in!) is awarded to honour the progress made by IG BAU institutions in order to let these institutions act as role models.

**DESCRIPTION (please consider it a tool to describe the case, if it is impossible to follow exactly, just leave the fields blank)**

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- **Starting point of the initiative/project/intervention as related to the territorial context (societal, economic, political)**

The staff and the volunteer board of the district branch of Eastern Westphalia-Lippe (OWL) were asked by the promoters and liked the idea, especially since they had to deal with the relocation of the member office in Bielefeld. After an initial briefing, including an analysis of office procedures, office machines, the break/recreation area / kitchen etc., the current status was identified with the help of a catalogue. Following a continuous process over several weeks together, an action plan was agreed upon by all stakeholders (employees / board, monitored by Peco-Institute). By moving to new premises many ideas of the catalogue could be implemented immediately in the office rooms (lights, use of health and environmentally friendly devices such as copiers ...).

E.g. fair traded coffee was introduced regarding catering / refreshments for guests or employees. Beverages in glass bottles, preferably local and certified organic products complete the offer. Collecting boxes for toners, CDs, compost etc. were bought and marked with clear signs. Even in sanitation areas it is emphasised that resource efficiency is possible. Clearly visible signs were hung up everywhere to remind people in everyday activities to implement the plans.

- **Description of the socio-economic, territorial, corporate context in which the initiative is based.**

Since 2008, Greenpeace Energy has already been supplying clean ecologically generated electricity to offices of the IG BAU (federal board, regional and member offices), IG BAU buys fair traded coffee and uses paper with FSC certificate.

- **Is it possible to describe the “philosophy” inspiring the best practice?**

Six million union members in Germany represent a substantial consumer market. In its role as an environmental union the IG BAU (Construction, Agriculture, and Environment Union) wants to set an example at the membership level and encourage shopping around the world, which involves a proper regard for labour and the environment. Initial approaches were brought into play before the beginning of the project, but not all options were exhausted by a long shot. The action “Shopping Solidarity” therefore aims at supporting efficient, sustainable trade by the IG BAU.

- **What problems/general needs do the interventions try to address? What specific ones are there?**

One of the continuing challenges is to introduce the idea of an ecologically functioning office to places where a lot of public business takes place.

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Since procurement procedures already consider sustainable production, it is possible for office employees to buy their stationery and promotional materials according to the specifications.

- **What goals/ends does the intervention try to achieve? What bargaining dynamic had been in place?**

In the long term the aim is to achieve a waste avoiding office.

- **What activities and instruments does the intervention operate through?**

The following activities or phases of the project are planned to reach annual objectives over the entire 3-year-period of the project (with new first-time users every year):

Preparation phase: The consulting centre is located at the PECO-Institute.

Contact with the offices and preparation of working documents.

Implementation of sustainability balance sheets: a review of the current status will be compiled in the participating offices by using checklists and by creating an action plan.

A guide for sustainable procurement: a handbook is produced that describes options of shopping ranges and provides good practice examples.

Regional meetings in the test regions: these shall ensure exchange of experiences, good practices and ideas and eventually facilitate a network structure, if possible with institutions from partner projects.

Dissemination of action results.

Implementation phase with quarterly follow-up appointments: with the support of the consulting centre the implementation of the action plan is carried out.

Organisation of information flow for purchasers (info-telephone).

Dissemination of developed methods: results are presented on an annual final conference and awarded with certificates. First-time users added. The project is evaluated.

- **What are the most innovative aspects of the initiatives concerning the territorial context? And why ?**

- In Munich, the IG BAU is present for its members in an ecologically built house since 2005. The building is insulated and the materials used for the interior as well as the installations in the front yard have been selected according to ecological criteria. In 2011, IG BAU opened a “green model office” in Bielefeld, in which all office operations and purchases are sustainably conducted. Employees buy sustainably, reduce waste, save resources, and their workstations are set up in a way that makes them feel comfortable.

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- The central institutions of the IG BAU continuously add more sustainable products to the catalogue from which IG BAU facilities obtain their office materials and promotional products. In the future, the IG BAU plans to conduct employee seminars on sustainable purchasing.
- The project has recently been awarded within the “UN-Decade-Education for sustainability” as one of the projects for 2014.

Solidarity Shopping creates changes

- The project “Solidarity Shopping” initiated concrete changes in the IG BAU procurement. Whether pens, flyers or T-shirts, the IG BAU considers social and environmental criteria when purchasing action and promotional materials.

- **What are the “internal quality factors” of the initiative? (sustainability, internal efficiency, effectiveness?)**

Criteria for purchasing are, for example:

- **Social** - compliance with collective agreements, health and safety, minimum wages, and fair trade.
- **Environment** - environmental impact, resource consumption and waste disposal costs.
- **Economy** - application, storage, distribution and disposal. In addition, the IG BAU prefers buying from local companies.

- **Is it possible to transfer the initiative to another context?**

The office in Bielefeld / OWL is still a pilot office within the IG BAU. It will take some time until all the other offices in the organization will follow. By presenting the issues and project at various intra-organisational events, the IG BAU already applies broad education and convincing measures.

On a federal level the Project Manager has advised the IG BAU regarding the promotion and organisation of converting all purchasing to sustainable procurement. The project was closely accompanied by the Organisational Department – in this case by the "Procurement Department" and many of the "products" are to be procured in accordance with the specifications.

Furthermore, there is now another office in Munich and a hotel of a non-profit work recreation centre (PRO) of the IG BAU in Berlin who are testing the concept.

Since 2010, the project "Shopping Solidarity" promotes changes within the IG BAU.

In a first step, the advertising and promotion materials were purchased with minimum social and environmental standards. In collaboration with the central long-term office supplier it was then made possible to convert 80% of

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the materials to sustainable products. Thus, by central purchasing 50% of the office and campaigning materials of all facilities of the IG BAU are equipped with sustainable products.

In the course of the project more IG BAU facilities have analysed their work routines and focused these on environmental and social criteria. They reduce waste, save energy, deal with office materials in a responsible manner and provide jobs in an environment where employees feel comfortable.

The educational institution Steinbach IG BAU, a further important partner, which has offices with public access, has analysed work routines and has also implemented measures by placing signs in the event and accommodation spaces, influencing the active behaviour of seminar participants.

On a regional level dissemination events of the project have been organized in 2013-2014, which have encouraged several offices of the IG BAU to revert to more sustainability.

At the end of the project the IG BAU decided to take over Solidarity Shopping as one of its missions and to encourage all institutions and departments of the federal executive management to organise the next steps. And, last but not least, guidebooks were compiled that describe the new prospective way, the way offices and facilities have to be changed.

- **Is the initiative reproducible in different contexts?**

The project can easily be reproduced in other unions and in other organisations.

- **Do joint monitoring instruments also involve the contemplated stakeholders?**

Boards on national and regional levels are involved as well as the participating employees of the respective offices.

- **Please point out communication instruments (website, documents, booklets) concerned with the initiative.**

Project description: <http://solidarisch-einkaufen.de>

Open Day / Opening "Ökobüro"

Identification of products:

[http://solidarisch-einkaufen.de/docs/produktkennzeichnung\\_v2.pdf](http://solidarisch-einkaufen.de/docs/produktkennzeichnung_v2.pdf)

Certificate of Appreciation in the competition office and the environment by BAUM e.V.

PR article: [http://solidarisch-einkaufen.de/docs/PM\\_Gruenes\\_Buero\\_20120113.pdf](http://solidarisch-einkaufen.de/docs/PM_Gruenes_Buero_20120113.pdf)

Presentation and videos on the DGB and ITUC Congress : <http://congress2014.ituc-csi.org/shopping-solidarity?lang=de>

Award during the UN "Decade of Education for Sustainable " 2014

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- **Please write down your final considerations?**
  - At the end of the project the IG BAU decided to take over Solidarity Shopping as one of its missions and to encourage all institutions and departments of the federal executive management to organise the next steps.
  - Last but not least, the counsellors and guides are able to describe the new prospective way, the way the offices and facilities have to be changed.
  - In summary it can be said that office workers have made their way to try and implement the goals. By discussing and planning the issues, awareness for sustainability has been raised. Furthermore, office workers transfer the idea of sustainability to their private lives and put it into practice.
  - The project can be seen as an impulse and is now continued within the organisation by colleagues who take a particular interest in the matter. Conclusion of a colleague: There is no way back.