Network Resource Efficiency in Germany

The case of the aluminium industry

Brussels 1.3.2011

What is the network resource efficiency?

- The network resource efficiency was established as a platform in 2007 by the Ministry for Environment and the Federal Environment Agency.
- Coordinated by the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy; 31 project partners worked on a broad range of research questions. Among the industrial partners companies like Thyssen-Krupp, Daimler and BASF acted as cofounders of the network.
- The project idea was to show the potential for resource efficiency in different technologies and branches and to start a critical dialogue in society.
- The project is part of the economic and political strategy of the German government to enable the German industry to be one of the most competitive suppliers for „green technologies“ and resource efficient production.
- The social partners supported the project platform and participated in several of the sub-projects which were also funded by the Ministry of Environment.

Partners in the resource efficiency network

Tab. 1: Projektteam des MaRess-Projekts

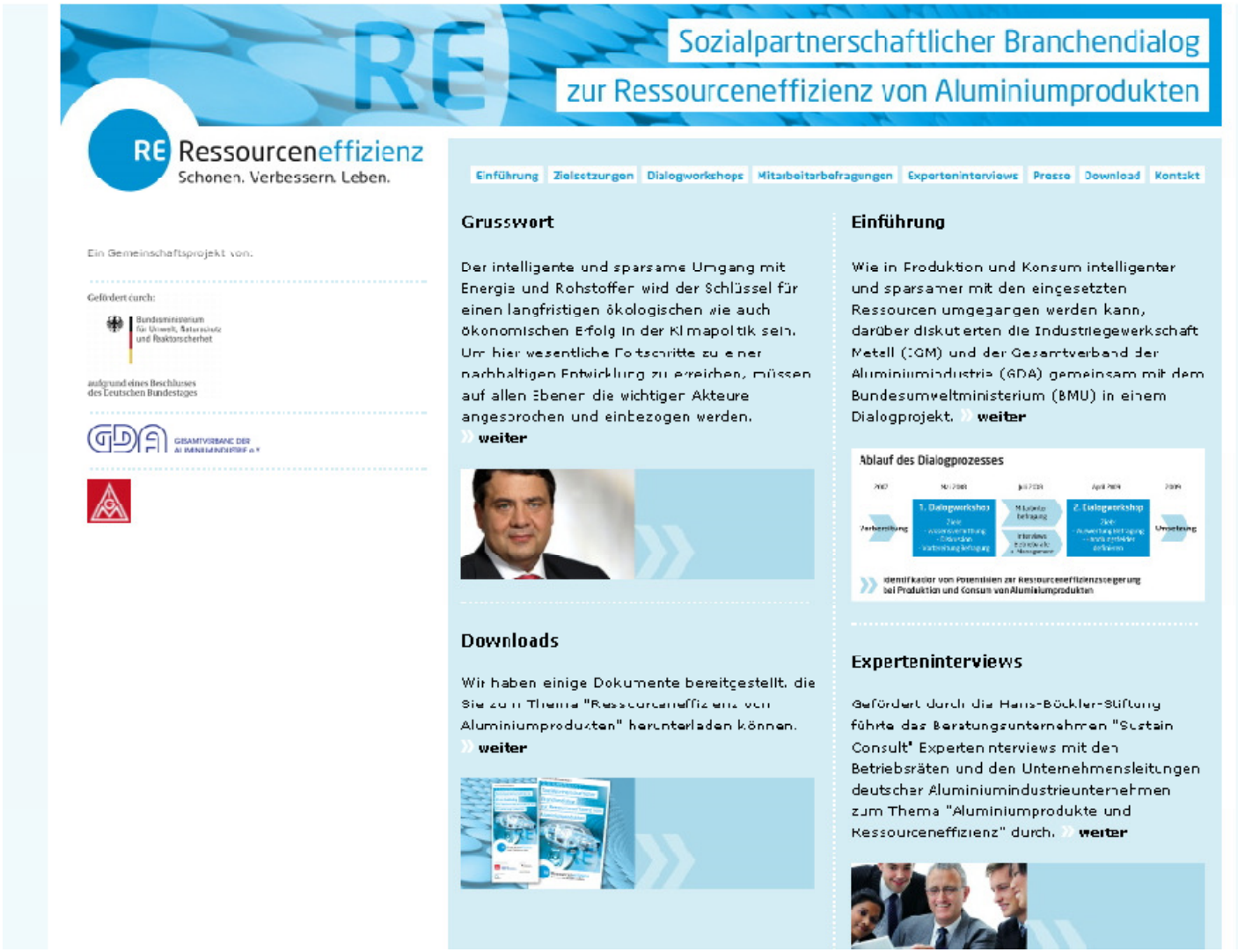
Nicht-universitäre Forschungsinstitute	
• Wuppertal Institut (Projektleitung) • Borderstep Institut • CSCP (UNEP / Wuppertal Institute Collaborating Centre) • ECN (Energy research Center of the Netherlands) • FhG IAO • FhG UMSICHT • GWS (Gesellschaft für Wirtschaftliche Strukturforschung)	• IFEU • IÖW • Institut für Verbraucherjournalismus • IZT • Ökopol • Trifolium • ZEW
Hochschulen	
• FU Berlin – FFU • Hochschule Pforzheim – IAF • RWTH Aachen – LFA • SRH Hochschule Calw • TU Berlin – IWF	• TU Darmstadt – PTW • TU Dresden – ILK • Universität Kassel – upp • Universität Lüneburg – CSM
Unternehmen	
• BASF AG – GUP/CE • Daimler AG – Forschungsgruppe „Gesellschaft und Technik“ • Thyssen Krupp Steel AG	
Beratungsinstitutionen / Intermediäre	
• demea – VDI / VDE-IT • EFA NRW • GoYa!	• MediaCompany • Stiftung Warentest

Branch projects and dialogues

- Part of the network resource efficiency is the support of dialogue projects (working package number 10 of the platform).
- Two of the most prominent branch dialogues have been:
  - Resource efficiency in the machine building industry
  - Resource efficiency in the aluminium industry
- In both dialogues a broad range of activities happened over a period of three year including company based workshops, development of concrete suggestions for improving resource efficiency and branch conferences.
- The results are very well documented under

  http://aluminium-ressourceneffizienz.de/

Dialogue on resource efficiency in the aluminium industry



Why a project in the aluminium industry?

- In the aluminum industry IG Metall and the aluminium trade association, GDA (Gesamtverband der Aluminiumindustrie), in cooperation with the BMU have initiated a series of dialogues on increasing resource efficiency in the context of producing, processing, usage and recycling of aluminum.
- The goal of the project was to support the development of innovative approaches to resource efficiency in the German aluminium industry.
- The aluminium industry is very suited for such a dialogue because the production of aluminum is energy intensive and, at the same time, aluminum can be used as a substitute material to achieve greater resource efficiency by being a durable and light material.
- Furthermore the recycling of aluminum is very useful since it only takes up a fraction of the energy used in the initial production process.
- Generally, an interest was also the safeguarding of the existence of the aluminum industry in Germany in times of rising energy costs and growing environmental requirements.
- The dialogue in the aluminum industry was organized in a very corporatist way.

How the project was organized

- A steering group was established including eight representatives of the GDA, IG Metall, the BMU.
- Preparations for the dialogue started in 2007 and the first dialogue workshop took place in May 2008.
- The importance and usefulness of resource efficiency for everyday practice, resource efficiency over the life cycle of aluminum products, and effective communication of resource efficiency were the central themes of the workshops.
- Works councillors and management from best practice companies jointly presented their experiences.
- Best practice examples presented included employee suggestion schemes, specific points for inclusion in plant-level agreements, and a training module for resource efficiency
- Officially the sectoral dialogue in the aluminum industry has been completed in 2010. However, both social partners try to continue the work and several suggestions are still under way at the company level.

New initiatives in other branches

- There are several other projects outside the original network in preparation or already on the way which also try to improve resource efficiency and the use of more environmental friendly production and consumer technologies.
- Among these new branch orientated projects are initiatives like:
  - Resource efficiency in the plastic producing industry (strongly supported by the IG BCE – Union of the chemical workers)
  - Green office computing
  - New building technologies
  - Electric cars
  - Large scale energy production projects (like DesertTec)
- In October 2010 the project platform resource efficiency organized a large conference in Berlin. Without any doubts the discussions will continue with a growing expectation towards the trade unions to take a firm position in these discussions

Continuing support for companies

THE PATH
Being part of the network

Striking new paths, saving resources and raw material: You need latest information and support for the first steps on applying resource efficiency measures? You want to contribute with useful practical tips? You want to participate in the discussion of political frameworks? Being a member of the *Network Resource Efficiency* offers even more than that:

- **Conferences which focus on Good Practice examples and network activities, but also provide opportunities for discussions, information exchange and joint development of new ideas.**
- **Newsletters including dates, interesting information from the network and Good Practice examples.**
- **A website as information platform for the topic of resource efficiency, especially for companies.**
- **Common activities and initiatives of network members, for example dialogue processes, pilot projects or offers for further qualification.**

THE CONTACT
Funding and Contact

The Network co-ordination is realised by the Wuppertal Institute (project management) in co-operation with the German Material Efficiency Agency (demea) and the Efficiency Agency NRW. The network is framed by the project "Material Efficiency and Resource Protection" which is funded by the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety as well as by the Federal Environmental Agency.

Material Efficiency & Resource Conservation

Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

Umwelt Bundes Amt

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