

“Water matters”!

Cefic launched its Sustainable Development Flagship Initiative:

“Water management in chemical production plants”

Background

Globally, the gap between global water supply and demand will be hitting 40% by 2030. Water scarcity, as well as floods, has already become a serious issue, even in Europe.

The chemical industry has many contributions to make towards these challenges. We have a dual role: as a water user, whose needs will likely increase during the coming years, and as a solution provider through our products across the value chain.

Workshop

The workshop for the launch of the Cefic Flagship Initiative “Water management in chemical production plants” took place in Brussels on 25th June 2013. The main objective was to exchange views about the initiative with policy makers and to share good practices between industry representatives on water management. According to Ann Dierckx, Environment Policy Manager at Cefic, the initiative aims to “*spread good practices and report on progress via brand-new indicators*”

William Garcia, Cefic Executive Director for Energy and Environment, opened the workshop by referring to the launch of the first [Cefic sustainability report](#), published in May 2012, and the subsequent adoption of several [flagship initiatives](#), including one on water, by the Cefic Board.



Peter Gammeltoft, Head of Unit of DG ENV, recommended water stewardship approaches rather than a “one fits all” approach: “The balance between water demand and availability has reached a critical level in many areas in Europe”.



Fritz Barth, Vice-Chairman of the European Water Partnership presented the initiative of European Water Stewardship developing a standard to assess sustainable water management.



Richard Seeber, Austrian MEP from the EPP group, emphasized that water pricing should not lead to an extra cost factor but instead be revenue neutral. “The more efficient, the less to fear” was his message to operators while expressing his support for this initiative.



Arab Hoballah, UNEP Chief Sustainable Consumption and Production, stated: “The initiative is more than welcome. The European chemical Industry is known to be innovative, and UNEP will be by your side.”

Linda von dem Bussche, BASF Senior Vice President, explained the implementation of the European Water Stewardship to the BASF Tarragona plant, underlining that the standard provided additional benefits like public acceptance and investors’ confidence.

BASF, Solvay and DSM presented their water management strategy, delivering advanced results.

Workshop conclusions

The major stakeholders expressed their appreciation that the chemical industry is showing its commitment towards sustainable water management, emphasizing the important role private partners can play in further implementing the water legislation.

“ The private sector needs to be engaged in the public debate, and its role should be acknowledged by public authorities. Local solutions are the way forward. ”

Within the chemical sector exists considerable commitment and expertise to bring the initiative to the next level. There is a general consensus that water balance needs to be the basis of sustainable water management. Assessing the water context and the impact of the operations on the water quality and quantity, as well as consulting stakeholders, are recommendable next steps. The link between water and energy remains the main challenge.

Next steps for the flagship initiative

The objective is to have agreed indicators by the 1st trimester of 2014, measuring the uptake of sustainable water practices.

“ Further dedicated workshops with recommended experts are foreseen, and we will encourage companies to join the initiative. ”

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