

## In the interview Ann Dierckx, project manager, and Giovanna Zamburlini, project assistant explain how new indicators could have a mobilizing effect on the industry



The chemical industry is committed to contributing to a sustainable use of water. In the context of its flagship initiatives, Cefic has launched a project called 'Water Management in Chemical Production Plants'.

Just like in any other aspect of daily life, water plays a very important role in the workplace. The chemical industry, as well as other industries, needs water for industrial processes such as cooling, heating, cleaning, transport and washing. The water use of the chemical industry is not that high compared to other users, but scarcity will have an impact because of increasing competition for water in these areas.

### What is the goal of this initiative?

**AD:** The chemical industry wants to be recognized and improve sustainable water management within the manufacturing process. In order to do that, we need to determine new key performance indicators (KPIs). We have chosen to use the tool "indicators" because we think that this can have a mobilizing effect on the industry. In the end, we hope that we can show our progress in this area and share best practices.

### Is it the first time you will use the water KPIs?

**AD:** We had indicators before, for example under [Responsible Care](#). But they are different ones, reporting on specific aspects, such as total volumes of use. Now we want to develop KPIs measuring the uptake of sustainable practices. We'll have indicators on quantity, but also on quality. We'll report on assessments regarding the impact on the environment. These are a few steps that companies can take regarding sustainable water management, and we want to measure it. It is foreseen that the relevant indicators become an integral part of reporting under Responsible Care and under the [Cefic Sustainability Report](#) in 2014 so that we can demonstrate our commitment to the outside world.

**GZ:** The idea is to include other aspects which are under the umbrella of the stewardship approach. We'll take into account the context in which each manufacturing plant is operating, and the impact they have on the water basin. This project has a very local component.

### You launched this initiative at the end of June 2013 in Brussels. Was the launch a success?

**GZ:** Certainly. It was the first opportunity to exchange views about the initiative with policymakers and to share good practices within the industry. We had EU representatives speaking at the event, for example MEP Richard Seeber or Peter Gammeltoft from the DG Environment. They expressed a supportive attitude towards our initiative, which will encourage other companies to join.

**AD:** I was very happy with the launch because there was a broad interest among our members. They presented very interesting cases regarding their sustainable water management (see below). They made the rather abstract-sounding idea of 'reporting on KPIs' more concrete through their presentations. It's worth mentioning that we had Fritz Barth of the European Water Partnership explaining the European Water Stewardship system. That's an approach which ultimately we want to follow.

| Member company sustainable water management case studies |



| Workshop Presentations and Press Articles |

- [Download the 25th June workshop report on "Water Management in chemical production plants"](#)
- [Download the 12th November workshop presentations](#)
- [Read the press article about the launch of the water flagship initiative](#)

### What is the timeframe of your project?

**AD:** We will need one year for the actions I've mentioned. We can't expect the whole Cefic membership to embrace the whole concept at once. The implementation will take a while. Once we come forward with the KPIs and a justification why these KPIs are the ones we should be reporting on, we will do some pilot testing to find the gaps and difficulties. Our project fits in the current agenda of the Commission as well as in the next [Cefic Sustainability Report](#).

### How do you measure sustainable water management?

**AD:** In the beginning, we will send our members questionnaires, including questions such as 'Are you making a water balance?' or 'Are you assessing if you are operating in a water-stressed area?' We'll discuss the procedure with our members. It sounds simple, but we will need to find a common language, common definitions. We'll need a discussion on methodologies, on existing tools, databases, etc.

We aim to work together with companies in workshops, to have them exchange knowledge on existing tools regarding sustainable water management. In order to roll out the project, we have a water task force, a dedicated group of experts. These experts are working in the sustainability area of their respective companies, and we invite other experts to join and support the initiative.

### How do you make sure the companies provide trustworthy information?

**GZ:** There is no reason why companies should hide anything. The goal is to develop indicators for the whole industry. As we will not report on volumetric water data or discharges, no single company would have to fear disclosure of corporate data. It's in the interest of everyone to be accurate.

**AD:** We know that several companies have already incorporated sustainable behavior, and some of those who haven't are eager to do so. They see the benefits and this project will help share these benefits.

[Download the Water management in chemical production plants Factsheet](#)

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