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Subject: Innovative practices to be considered by the Ministerial Consultations of the eighth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF), Jeju, Republic of Korea, 29 – 31 March 2004

1) Waste water projects in neighboring countries such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia which were co-financed by Austria

Description of Initiative

In total 42 projects exist, in which Austria provided co-funding for waste water projects in neighboring countries, which are situated upstream common river basins. Most projects have already been finished successfully. They concerned the construction of sewers and/or treatment plants, including new constructions, re-development of old plants and systems, upgrading and enlargement of plants in cities and communities of the afore-mentioned states.

As regards partners involved, the projects were or are carried out by partners in the countries themselves.

The approach was innovative in so far as these projects started short after the break down of the communist regime in the concerned countries. At that time, the financial resources for investments in the environmental sector were rather limited in these countries due to other priorities. With this initiative Austria succeeded in encouraging investments in local infrastructures, being both beneficial to the local communities as well as to the wider environment.

Remark: In principal co-funding of waste water treatment facilities is not particularly innovative, in this context it should to be considered, whether and why projects aiming at achieving the MD goals have to be innovative. Projects and initiatives should help achieving the MD goals in the most efficient way, whether the method is innovative or conservative should not be criteria.

The projects address the environmental issues of the MD goals and WSSD targets as financial support for waste water treatment facilities directly tackles environmental issues in relation to water and sanitation and water, health and poverty; however, as the projects tackle point sources of pollution situated in transboundary river basins, the ecosystem approach in IWRM is addressed as well.

Mainstreaming / Sustainability.

The projects have been incorporated in a sustainable national development planning as the operation and maintenance of the plants is covered by the countries themselves. In the meanwhile the countries have made substantial progress in the field of waste water treatment by themselves, but also with the help of EU funding.

The financial support of the concerned projects came from the “Austrian Environment Fund”.

Replicating the Initiative.

The applicability of the projects is given as most of them were already successfully carried out, and the countries made further substantial progress.

2) Water and sanitation projects of the Austrian Development Co-operation (ADC)

Description of Initiative

ADC carries out mainly regional projects in the field of drinking water supply, access to appropriate sanitation facilities, improvement of water quality in relation to health care, etc. The Austrian projects focus on improving the situation of least developed countries in a sustainable way, with temporary help from outside. The activities provide an initial financial and organizational assistance for the planning and implementation of the programmes. The actual operation of the facilities always is entrusted to the local population.

Examples:

- Triennial Water supply and sanitation project in the province Sofala/Mosambique.
- Improvement of decentralized water supply in rural areas, namely in 14 villages in the Palujunoj Valley in Guatemala.
- Water supply and sanitation programmes for small towns and rural growth centres in south west Uganda.
- Water supply and sanitation projects run by the non-governmental Kenya Water and Health Organisation (KWAHO) in Kenya.
- Energy project of the Basocchu hydropower station; a big single project in Bhutan.
- Small-scale hydropower plant at Namche Bazar in Nepal, environmental friendly energy supply to remote regions.
- Planning of the installation of an early warning system in areas which are at permanent risk of flooding in Bhutan.

Partners: ADC and partners in the countries themselves.

The projects are innovative as they focus on a sustainable support in least developed countries. They focus on improving the situation for women and children, and include training, capacity building and network building.

They address the environmental issues of the MD goals and WSSD targets as they directly address water and sanitation and the water, health and poverty aspects due to their focus on providing water supply, sanitation facilities, energy supply etc.

Mainstreaming/Sustainability

The support from outside is restricted to the initial and implementation phase; neither technical nor financial help should be necessary after the initial phase. The projects include training, capacity building and network building. For these reasons they ensure a sustainable incorporation into national planning.

The financial sources for the Austrian aid to developing countries ensure the viability of the projects.

Replicating the Initiative.

The initiatives have already been applied successfully in a certain countries and will therefore also be applicable in further countries.

More detailed information see brochure “Blue Austria” (www.wasser2003.at)