



Resource Efficiency Trainings for SMEs in Mexico

Background

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and under the International Climate Initiative (IKI), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) commissioned the VDI Center for Resource Efficiency (VDI ZRE) with the development and implementation of a three day Train-the-Trainer course on resource efficiency for SMEs in Argentina, Indonesia, and Mexico; to be followed by Train-of-Industry resource efficiency courses for SMEs.

Why trainings matter

Decoupling economic growth from resource use provides companies with opportunities to reduce operating costs and vulnerability from resource shortages and price volatilities, however, at the same time, it requires commitment and know-how. Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) often lack even basic knowledge about concepts and opportunities linked to a more efficient use of resources. Training and consultancy services focusing on resource efficiency are rarely available to them in many developing and emerging countries.

Capacity building for Mexican SMEs

In Mexico, GIZ cooperated with the *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Ordenamiento Territorial* (SMAOT, Environmental Ministry) of the State of Guanajuato in order to prepare and implement a two-step training program: In October of 2019, a trainer from VDI ZRE conducted a three-day Train-the-Trainer course with 15 participants from Guanajuato and Mexico City. Upon having completed the course, the 15 participants in turn organized and implemented resource efficiency trainings for at least five SMEs each. Between November 2019 and March 2020, more than 80 SMEs participated in these trainings.

Furthermore, in October 2020, the training for SMEs was offered at the national level. In three virtual training courses, each consisting of two sessions, almost 40 SMEs learned about potentials, concepts and easy-to-apply analysis tools for resource efficiency, as well as concrete measures for a more efficient use of resources in the production process. For this, GIZ cooperated with the *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* (MEDIO AMBIENTE, the Mexican Environmental Ministry), and the *Comisión de Estudios del Sector Privado para el Desarrollo Sustentable* (CESPEDES).



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Results

- ▶ Almost all of the participants of the three day Train-the-Trainer course reported in a joint webinar in January 2020 that they planned to either offer the Train-of-Industry course on Resource Efficiency for SMEs repeatedly and/or incorporate modules of the training into other trainings and consultancy services aimed at fostering sustainable production processes in SMEs. Through this, the offer of training and consultancy services on resource efficiency available to companies could be enhanced significantly.
- ▶ In Mexico, over 120 SMEs received trainings with easy-to-apply analysis tools, roadmaps and practice examples on how to use resources more efficiently.
- ▶ Participating companies reported that they plan to implement measures for separating and recycling waste, for measuring water, energy and material flows in relation to production rates, as well as implementing trainings for employees aimed at a more sustainable use of resources at the workplace.

Success Factors

- ▶ The program was developed in cooperation with public and private sector partners. This guaranteed that the trainings were relevant for achieving the objectives of public policies aimed at sustainable production, while, at the same time, meeting the demands and interests of private sector companies.
- ▶ As the main objective was to train SMEs, selection of participants of the Train-the-Trainer included an emphasis on their ability to successfully invite SMEs to a training and provide the means necessary to implement the training (e.g. contacts to SMEs and/or industry associations for marketing purposes, access to adequate training installations, etc.).
- ▶ During the Train-the-Trainer-course, strong emphasis was placed on how to interest SMEs in resource efficiency trainings, and how to design and implement Train-the-Industry-courses depending on the demand and interests of different types of SMEs. This included an emphasis on the economic benefits for companies linked to the implementation of resource efficiency measures.

What participants say:

- “ I learned that as small enterprises we can also contribute to reducing the use of pollutants.
- “ Often, savings and efficient use of resources are within our reach.
- “ There is a double benefit: for the environment and cost savings within the company.
- “ We will apply the underlying concept of “If you can't measure it, you can't improve it.”
- “ I learned how important it is to involve all employees.
- “ Small things that we don't even notice can generate savings and contribute to a more sustainable development.

- ▶ In Guanajuato, the Ministry of the Environment (SMAOT) offered participants of the Train-the-Trainer-course support in the organization of their first training course for SMEs.
- ▶ The trainers offered mainly free-of-charge one-day resource efficiency trainings to SMEs, given that the concept and benefits of resource efficiency are largely unknown to Mexican SMEs. This approach worked to attract participants.
- ▶ The modular structure of the Train-the-Trainer-course as well as the follow-up SME trainings ensured that resource efficiency concepts, tools, and examples can and will be included in additional training and consultancy services for SMEs even when there is not enough interest for stand-alone resource efficiency trainings.
- ▶ The virtual trainings conducted in October of 2020 enable trainers to offer resource efficiency trainings to SMEs independent of their actual location within Mexico. This lowered the cost of offering these trainings for trainers, as well as the cost of participating in them for SMEs.

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