



Negotiated Environmental Agreements in Promoting Material Efficiency (MEf) in industry – challenges and opportunities in Finland

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Findings of a pre-feasibility study

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Background

- Waste Prevention (WPr) goals in the National Waste Plan since 1998 – modest outcome
- synergy with the National SCP programme
- from WPr to MEf discourse
- establishment of a national unit for promoting MEf in MOTIVA (Finnish Agency for energy efficiency)
- analogy with the "praised" Finnish Energy Efficiency Agreement –system (EEf)

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Research questions

- commitment of key stakeholders?
- how to make a MEf-agreement more efficient than former EEf agreements?
- suitable indicators for Mef/WPr ?
- how to merge Waste Prevention goals with a MEf agreement?

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MEf-agreement as policy instrument 1

- not effective as a stand-alone policy instrument
- MEf-agreement can be used as a platform for dialog for continuous improvement
- ambition level must be pushed up with BAT-approach in environmental permits, benchmarking, public disclosure and (possibly) economic instruments

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MEf-agreement as policy instrument 2

- win-win opportunities abound!
- linkages with ecolabelling, EPR and green procurement, R&D financing (sources for targets and incentive)
- the MEf agreement and MEf audits can follow the general model of EEf agreements -> opportunity for broad acceptance and fast track progress

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MEf indicators 1

- MEf indicators should be tailored based on volume+impact in each industrial sector
- specific waste generation (of landfill waste) should be included as indicator for each sector
- waste recycling targets may be tailored for specific industrial sectors
- value added per Direct Material Consumption

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MEf indicators 2

- not only quantitative targets!
- upstream rugsacks must be incorporated starting with selected imported inputs with major impacts
- downstream MEf indicators can be included in some cases (eg. recyclability, extended service life)
- reporting of indicators coordinated with statistical and permit reporting procedures; also CSR reporting

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Analogy and synergy with EEf

- wide support for close linkage between EEf and MEf agreement systems
- energy intensity of material inputs as a common building block
- develop as independent modules
- existing EcoStart-model for SMEs covers both energy and material efficiency

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Stakeholder commitment

- practically unanimous acceptance for idea
- support from industrial establishment
- environmental administration: instrument of least resistance; linkages with BAT & Green Procurement, Resource Policy
- Min of Industry: linkage with EMS
- commitment in financing not clear
- MOTIVA: several years needed to develop the auditing tools for company level

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Conclusions

- Mef agreements as a fast forward opportunity for promoting WPr
- Mef agreements serving as platforms for dialogue for setting sector specific targets in areas without norm regulation
- wide acceptance in the Finnish society, however financing is not secured
- lack of consensus on indicators, auditing tools, international "calibration" as bottlenecks

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