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SPIN Newsletter #8 - January 2012

SPIN STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR DECISION MAKERS: Boosting sustainable innovations in small and medium-sized enterprises in the Baltic Sea Region

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SPIN Transnational Forum

On 22 November 2011 SPIN held its final conference in connection with the POLEKO trade fair in Poznan. The SPIN Transnational Forum included three dedicated sessions to present results of the SPIN project, innovation examples and policy initiatives of the partner countries. Participants came from all countries from the Baltic Sea Region including Russia and Norway.

The first session "Innovations in the bioenergy sector: Innovative approaches for sustainability in business" was organized jointly by SPIN and the Bioenergy Promotion project. Presentations included examples from Poland and Germany for how demand-driven innovations for bioenergy production and use can be introduced, e.g. for micro biogas grids to link biogas production facilities with regional heat and power demand and regional approaches for efficient biomass value chains.

In the second session "Towards Green Economy: Policies for sustainable innovations" the focus was on policy initiatives to support sustainable innovations. Polish initiatives to support sustainable innovation and a Norwegian scheme to support sustainable construction were presented.

The session also highlighted the importance of SMEs in the context of sustainable development and the impact of eco-innovation on the German job market. The SPIN project presented its Strategic Actions for decision makers.

Finally, the third session on "Resource Efficiency in SMEs: Policies, instruments and innovations" started with an overview on resource efficiency policies in Europe. The second talk given by Janka Clauder (from the German Ministry of Environment) provided a closer view on the upcoming German programme for resource efficiency and the Finnish Material Efficiency Centre was presented. SPIN partners from Denmark and Sweden highlighted innovations from SMEs in the surface treatment sector to increase resource efficiency in their production.

SPIN would like to thank all speakers for their interesting talks and the participants for the active discussion. The

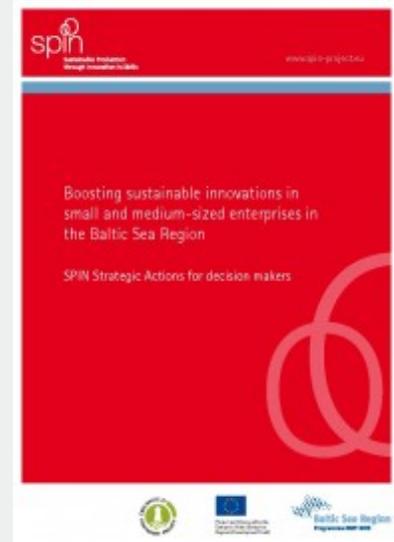


programme and all presentations of the SPIN Transnational Forum are available for download at:

www.spin-project.eu

Summary of the SPIN Strategic Actions for decision makers

The SPIN Strategic Actions recommend a coherent approach for the whole Baltic Sea Region (BSR) to support the development and application of sustainable innovations by SMEs. The aim is to improve the framework conditions both for SMEs in demand of sustainable innovations but also for SMEs which are suppliers of such innovations. Target groups addressed by the Strategic Actions are policy makers on EU, national and regional level but also public authorities, financing institutions, business networks and associations.



The 14 SPIN Strategic Actions are focused on the following three activity areas which were found to be very relevant to improve the framework conditions for sustainable innovations in SMEs:

- Increasing awareness and competences of SMEs

Increasing awareness and competences of SMEs is the first step to increase demand for sustainable innovations and to help SMEs in applying them. SMEs should be more aware of their potential for sustainability, what they can do, how they can be involved and supported and how to measure the success of sustainable innovations. SPIN therefore recommends actions to increase the internal and external know-how available for SMEs to support the application of sustainable innovations.

1. Help SMEs to help themselves: Promotion of tools for integration of sustainability in SMEs' operations
2. Train the disseminators and train the SMEs: Multiply competence for implementation of sustainable innovations
3. Information and innovation services for SMEs: Linking SMEs with external competences
4. Demonstration and dissemination of best practice projects: Tell the success story of sustainable innovation
5. Sustainability from the start: Integrate sustainability in secondary and higher education

- Access to finance for sustainable innovations

Lack of finance is one major barrier to implementation of sustainable innovations in SMEs. Better access to finance is needed particularly in early innovation phases to create ideas and initiate innovation processes in SMEs. However, also for growing SMEs which are potential suppliers of sustainable innovations it is difficult to finance first reference projects for scaling-up their innovative ideas. SPIN recommends adjusting existing public support schemes to the needs of SMEs and a better coordination of public support to increase leverage of private capital.

6. Financial support to initiate innovation processes in SMEs: Sustainable transnational innovation vouchers
7. Improve SMEs' access to private capital for sustainable innovations: Public support for private investments
8. Improve SMEs' access to public support schemes: Clear information, transparent structures, slim and quick procedures

- Support market transformation and the uptake of sustainable innovations

Sustainable innovations which are available in the BSR have not yet fully exploited their market potential because of insufficient links between supply and demand side and other market barriers. The demand side should be supported to increase public and private demand for sustainable innovations. Information flows and networks between suppliers and users of sustainable innovations should be strengthened to support matchmaking between supply and demand. Involvement of consumers and society will further increase the pull for sustainable innovations.

9. Legislation to push SMEs towards sustainable production: Implementing a targeted, stable and reliable legal framework
10. Supply Chain Management: Increase transnational business cooperation for sustainable production
11. Integration of retailers and end-users: Initiatives to support private sustainable consumption
12. Standards, norms and labelling to support transnational cooperation: Promotion of harmonized market conditions for sustainable innovations
13. Sustainable Public Innovation Procurement: Public sector taking the lead in implementing sustainable innovations
14. Policy dialogue with industry and society: Develop a common roadmap towards sustainable production and consumption

The full report includes a detailed description of the 14 recommended Strategic Actions and working examples from the SPIN partner countries. Additionally, specific examples from four selected industry sectors are included on how to implement the SPIN Strategic Actions:

- Biogas
- Decentralized water treatment
- Sustainable construction
- Surface treatment and resource efficiency

The full report of the SPIN Strategic Actions for decision makers is available for download at:

http://www.spin-project.eu/index.php?cmd=download&subcmd=downloads/SPINStrategic_Actionsfinal.pdf

SPIN partners support the dissemination of the recommendations and their national implementation in the SPIN partner countries.

SPIN: Privat Profits - Public Benefits!



The SPIN project aims at enhancing “Sustainable Production through Innovation in SMEs”. SPIN is a business project and not a research project. It runs for 3 years (until January 2012) and is supported by the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) Programme 2007-2013 of the European Union. SPIN brings together some of the most important institutions for eco-innovations in the Baltic Sea Region and is supported by numerous national governments, sector associations, research bodies and transnational NGOs.

Why ?

Our understanding of innovation is based on the definition of the former Finnish Prime Minister Esko Aho who stated: “Quite often, when people talk about innovation they mean research and development. But innovation is broader than that: research is transforming money into knowledge, while innovation is transforming knowledge into money and well-being. Innovation is about producing, not only economic prosperity, but also wellbeing in society”

We want to focus on identifying and promoting innovations throughout the BSR, which lead to sustainable production in SMEs. In other words: These innovations help to reduce economic, environmental and social costs while maintaining or even increasing production levels.

How?

SPIN is based on the simple but normally successful business equation of matching supply and demand. SPIN taps on innovations throughout the BSR, which lead to sustainable production in SMEs. It supports SMEs who have developed sustainable solutions to reach out to a larger market. At the same time it gives enterprises the technical and managerial solutions they need to make their production process more sustainable and to comply with the legislative requirements from the EU. In order to support this matchmaking process SPIN offers SMES:

- The SPIN database (freely accessible on www.spin-project.eu)
- The SPIN Industry Workshops (find all the dates on www.spin-project.eu)
- The SPIN Tool Box (soon on www.spin-project.eu)

National Contact Points:

- » [Denmark](#)
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Project part-financed by the European Union
(European Regional Development Fund)