

INTEGRATED PRODUCT POLICY - STATE IN POLAND

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Abstract: *The paper discusses the main problems of Integrated Product Policy (IPP). Author describes the need of working on the environmental protection, IPP tools and strategy in Europe and in Poland. The analysis of product by its life cycle gives the possibility of identification and elimination of the threads the most unfavourable for environment. The paper presents the state of the art in the field of IPP introduction in Poland.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of the industry and technology development strongly influenced the changes in the environment in the last hundred years. The most imported fact was the invasive and uncontrolled exploitation of the natural resources and environmental pollution, as a result of the needs of the human population and the unlimited absorbance capacity of the market. This state lasted until lately 1970. The results of the research and civilization diseases appearing made the environmental protection programs one of the key initiatives taken by European Union countries [1].

The most of the negative environmental impacts is the consequence of not optimized production processes of products and the lack of analysis of their life cycles. It happened very often, that the lack of appropriate law and financial regulation pushed the producers to the savings on the first step of the production, without taking into consideration the consequences and the indirect costs generated during the operation period and the disposal of the products. A dozen or so years ago the recycling was not popular and not considered as efficient, what made the risk of global ecological potentially possible.

Integrated Product Policy (IPP) became one of the most dynamically developing actions in European Union in last few years. The integrated activity of different social groups, producers, government organizations and others should transfer to the limitation of the environmental changes, with

their threats for humankind. The detailed actions are related to: climate changes, balance in the natural resources exploitation and waste production [1]. The extension of the European Union create possibilities to eliminate these negative phenomenon.

The main goal of this paper is the clarification of the IPP main assumptions and the circumstances of this idea creation. The special attention is paid to the activities in this area, as well as the main goals to being executed in next few years. The strategy of the IPP implementation in Poland, the programs and initiatives created, are also described.

2. THE IPP CHRONOLOGY

The studies on IPP originated in 1997. The activities made resulted from the analysis of the practices applied in the enterprises of the contemporary countries-members of the EU [5]. The analysis concerned the whole life cycle of the products, from the raw material capture, through the production, distribution, use phase to the final disposal. Their influence on environment was also measured, and the results seemed to be quite embarrassing, so the actions leading to the improvement of the actual state were undertaken.

In May 1999, in Weimar during the informal meeting of the Ministry Council of the EU, the conception of Europe's sustainable development was accepted. The main goal of this idea was the improvement of the production processes and the diminution of the negative impacts on the natural

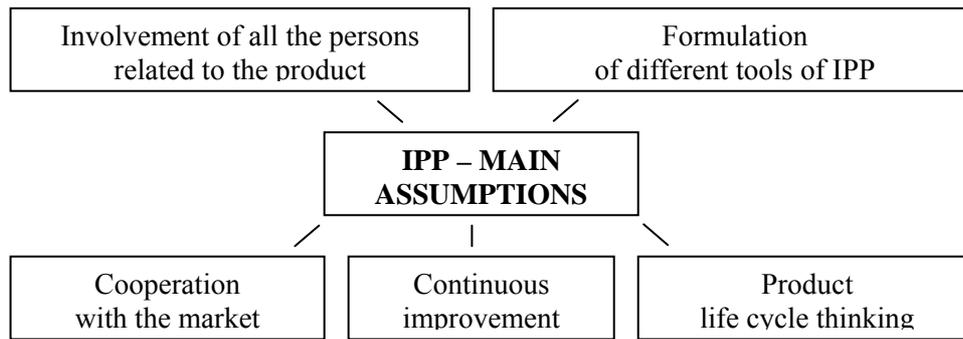


Fig. 1. The main assumptions of Integrated Product Policy (IPP)

environment, in the aspects of the processes, as well as of the products [5].

On the basis of the research, analysis and the discussions of all interested sides, February, the 7, 2001, the European Commission elaborated and published the first project, specifying the framework and the actions in order to the Integrated Product Policy definition [2].

It is worth mentioning, that all the issues related with IPP became one of the priorities in the time of the leadership of Sweden in EU. In the same time the biggest meeting as yet, of the European Round Table of Cleaner Production (ERCP) was organized. [6]. The intensive actions undertaken gave support to the elaboration of the final version of the project concerning IPP. The final document was approved in June, 18, 2003 [2], [3]. According to this document the European Commission predicts the necessary research performance in the years 2003–2007.

3. THE ROLE AND GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS OF IPP

3.1. The role of IPP

The main goals of IPP are oriented on the limitation of the negative influence of the production processes and the products themselves on natural environment. Very good solution, implemented by European Commission, is the promotion of this project in all the countries-members of the EU. Integrated approach to this topic influences the global actions, which are the only means leading to the reach of the deliberate goal. These actions should lead to find out more efficient, economical and feasible solutions of the product, also meeting the environmental requirements. In the process of the creation of new products, first and foremost in the stage of design, the main factors related with the whole life cycle, from the production, through the use phase, up to the disposal, should be considered. The main attention is focused on these areas, where the negative influence on environment can be easily limited [3].

To achieve goals of integrated product policy, it is necessary to [3]:

- lead to the reduction of the negative impact on environment, beside the rising quantity of products,
- elaborate in „elastic” way different aspects of product, in order to use it subsequently to the variety of products,
- consider the economical and environmental aspects at the same level,
- consider the international agreements and trade law,
- implement the bigger responsibility of the designers and producers for their product, which should meet the health, safety and environmental protection requirements,
- promote the idea and focus the customer’s attention on the use only of the environmental friendly products, and encourage to the participation in the related costs.

All these activities will facilitate the reach the results assumed, if the product policy elaborated is globally and responsibly implemented.

3.2. The main assumptions of IPP

IPP is based on five fundamental assumptions, which are presented in the Fig. 1 [3]:

- thinking in the categories of product’s life cycle,
- taking into consideration the cooperation with the market,
- involvement of all the persons related to the product,
- continuous improvement,
- elaboration of different tools of IPP.

All these assumption influences the manufacturing of the product, its use and disposal. All is analyzed through the limitation of its environmental impacts. The fields actively related with these processes are: industry, transport, energy, trade and agriculture. The holistic view on the product makes possible the diagnose, which phase of the life cycle causes the most harmful impacts on environment. This approach allows the formulation of the appropriate measures and prevention means,

which can reduce the unfavourable influence to the minimum. This approach can also lower the environmental, economical and social costs.

The influence of the market encourages the producers to the activities related with the competitiveness of the products made. This is also the main goal of the rewards in the system of European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), which are to focus the attention on the organization, appreciate the involvement and innovativity, as well as the pro-environmental strategy [3].

The participation of the organizations connected with the life cycle of products in the IPP programs develop their cooperation. The producers seek pro-environmental solutions in the phase of design and production, customers should recognize and choose "green" products, use them better. Government by itself should help in these actions by appropriate legislative regulations, which influence whole the market economy. It should be aided by the elaboration of the economical and legislative decrees connected with the promotion of the ecological products in the market.

Because of the great variety of products, as well as because of many institutions involved in the process of IPP creation, this project should be supported with different tools, which can be voluntary initiatives, obligatory legislative regional regulations, but also international ones. The best studies and verified and introduced instruments can help the Integrated Product Policy formation. [3].

3.3. Programs and tools helping the implementation of IPP in Poland

Poland, as EU member, is active in the field of propagation and implementation of Integrated Product Policy. Watching the involvement of different social groups and activated programs for next few years, one can consider these issues as playing important role in our country. Common effort of entrepreneurs, non-government organizations and administration was the reason of the I Program of National Ecological Policy (2003-2006), which included the realization of many initiatives gathering together the interests of many groups: social, economical, administrative etc. In the framework of this program following processes are underlined as specially important:

- improvement of effectiveness of the natural resources exploitation, better resources and waste management,
- limitation of the pression on environment, resulting from the renewable and non-renewable resources consumption,
- establishment of producers' and consumers' responsibility for the product,
- information, education in order to the formation of the pro-ecological consumers' attitude,

- elaboration and implementation of instruments, helping the active application of IPP rules in Poland.

Additional activities taken in Poland in the field of IPP are:

- Executive Program to the National Ecological Policy 2002-2010,
- National Development Plan 2004-2006,
- Sector Operational Program – the rise of enterprises' concurrency 2004-2006,
- National Plan for Waste Management,
- Poland 2025 – Long lasting strategy for stable and sustainable development,
- Many-year Program – Improvement of systems of innovativity systems in production and exploitation,
- Strategy of change of production and consumption model, connected with the realization of rules of stable, sustainable development [7],
- Polish energetic policy until 2025.

Many of these programs have transfered on practical activities undertaken by Polish producers, mainly in the area of quality management. It concerns mainly the implementation of the European EMAS system and ISO 14001 standards. The tendencies show that in future perspective these actions will expand.

Above mentioned programs are in the main part similar to the actions proposed in the Announcement of the Commission for European Council and Parliament – Integrated Product Policy COM (2003) 3002. One can distinguish four main groups of tools, supporting the actions in aid of IPP:

- legal and economical,
- supporting the holistic look on the product through the prism of life cycle,
- widening customer's knowledge about environment friendly products,
- related with the monitoring of the progress and effects.

First group of tools is strictly related with the legal and economic solutions, stimulating the entrepreneurs to the pro-environmental actions. These actions can assume different form and structure. The most expanded tools are [3]:

- taxes and subventions (tools promoting products more environment friendly by financial measures),
- standardizations and voluntary agreements (supporting common initiatives related with environmental protection),
- legislative acts (directives and procedures focusing on the environmental issues in the selected market branches).

The next very important group of tools supporting the activities in aid of IPP are the elements rising the awareness about life cycle of products. They are supposed to take into consideration all the persons being in contact with product. In this group the particular attention is paid

for the sphere of education of the society in the field of knowledge about the actual state of the environment and the promotion of the environmental protection in the global level, as well as in the national one. They focus on the threats. Three main projects, in order to widen the society awareness about the product's life cycle are:

- information about its life cycle, profits resulting for environment by initiatives undertaken and estimation of the environmental threats, caused by inappropriate product design,
- implementation and improvement of the environmental management system (ISO 14000 standards),
- implementation of the requirements concerning the product designing (norms, legislative regulations about environmental requirements).

The next group of tools, prepared in the framework of the IPP project, is the assembly of information widening customer's knowledge about environment friendly products. This information can be meant for public or private. Their main goal is after all the increasing of the customer's awareness, because the next studies about more environment friendly products depend on the customer's choice. It takes place by [3]:

- global promotion of buying ecological products and services (encouragement to buying such products, by rewarding and promoting the leading organizations for the achievements in the field of EFQM, assessment of the potential environmental pollution, program planning, collecting and publishing the information etc.),
- education and popularization of the analyses related with the product's life cycle (stimulation of the private sector to the new, more environment friendly products' creation, where the implemented environment management system can be helpful),
- ecolabelling (implementation of the system of the ecological products' labelling, what can easily distinguish them from other products).

Last of the groups of tools described makes possible the monitoring of the progress and the effects resulting from IPP implementation. Tools from this group are firstly the measures elaborated, allowing the assessment and monitoring of IPP action efficiency. Their main goal is to support and facilitate the coordination and supervision of the work progress. The most important measures are [4]:

- related with the consumers' education in the area of the possibilities of the reduction of the negative environmental impacts,
- concerning the economical analyses on the different stages of product's life cycle (holistic economical analyses allowing the continuous improvement),

- related with the efficiency of material recovering (encouraging the producers to the application of the uniform materials),
- connected with market research.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Among the reasons of IPP creation and development following phenomenon have been identified:

- strong exploitation of the natural resources,
- environmental pollution generated by industry,
- big amounts of wastes from production use phase and disposal of products.

To avoid ecological disaster, different prevention action have been undertaken. They are gathered in the IPP concept, which assume:

- global common environment friendly activities of all countries-members of the EU,
- continuous research to protect environment,
- implementation of environmental aspects to the market requirements,
- building the modern and universal tools useful in environment protection activities,
- the model solution formulation to reduce negative influence of industry on environment.

The Polish activities in the area of IPP dissemination and implementation is significant.

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