



EWWR Good practices and case studies

1. Details of Action:

EWWR Organiser: Specialised Division FA19D Waste and Material Flow Management

Country/Region: Styria/Austria

Name of nominated project developer: *Kleinregion JEGG* (municipalities Judendorf-Straßengel, Eisbach-Rein, Gratkorn, Gratwein)

Name of nominated action: *“Change Bag – vom Kunststoff zum Echtstoff” (“Change Bag – Plastic against Canvas”)*

Place: Municipality centres

Town: Gratkorn, Gratwein, Judendorf-Straßengel

Region: Styria

Country: Styria

Website: <http://www.klimabuendnis.at/start.asp?ID=246908&b2=747&am=2>

Nominee **category**: association/NGO

Dates of action: 18 November - 26 November 2011 (ongoing project)

2. Please select the **theme(s)** highlighted in the action:

- Too Much Waste
- Better Consumption
- Better Production
- A Life for Products
- Less Waste thrown Away

3. Type of Action

- Action open to general public
- Action open to a target group
- Action based on the production of communication tools
- Other, please specify:



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4. Please give a detailed and precise description of the action

A world record party and kick-off of an unprecedented canvas bag action in Austria

The Styrian municipality Gratwein hosted the world record party on the occasion of the greatest Austrian canvas bag action "Change Bag". The number of participants exceeded all expectations and made the event the largest of its kind in Austria. Guests were also invited to visit a canvas bag exhibition displaying an impressive number of individually designed bags.

Creating sustainable awareness by public participation

"Change Bag – Vom Kunststoff zum Echtstoff" ("**Change Bag – Plastic against Canvas**") is a cross-municipal project initiated by the Styrian municipalities Judendorf, Eisbach, Gratkorn and Gratwein. The project aims at raising public awareness for waste prevention and a sustainable use of resources as well as reducing the actual consumption of single-use bags (e.g. made of plastic or paper). To achieve the latter, numerous regional companies volunteered to introduce and distribute canvas bags. Since the project responsables found the participation of target persons to be a vital part of the project, households from the region had been asked to collect spare used bags for several months. At the same time, new canvas bags were painted and embellished by kindergarten children, pupils and within other regional institutions. Surpassing the world record achieved by the municipality Wieselburg, where around 4,300 canvas bags had been collected the previous year, was the teaser for the bag collection; yet the real goal was, of course, to make as many bags as possible available to customers by distributing them to regional companies.

During the kick-off event, a new **world record** was set with **6,124** collected **canvas bags**; for one week from 18 November 2011 onwards (European Week for Waste Reduction) the bags designed for the action were on display in an exhibition. Afterwards, the bags were distributed to around 25 regional companies and offered to the public for a voluntary donation, which will be followed up by a close market study: how long does it take until all bags are "used up"? If necessary, further actions will follow to encourage the reuse of the bags for shopping.

Virtually all regional kindergartens, schools as well as institutions for the elderly or disabled participated in the action, which was promoted all over the region during numerous events. We hope that this broad public participation creates long-term and sustainable awareness and changes consumption patterns among a wide audience, last but not least developing role model character.



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5. Please describe the target audience and how the action motivated its public/target audience, as well as the number of participants

EVERYBODY can contribute

The target group comprised all inhabitants of the four municipalities Judendorf-Straßengel, Eisbach-Rein, Gratkorn and Gratwein, including regional companies. A close collaboration between municipalities, schools, kindergartens and institutions for the elderly allowed integrating most of the 18,000 inhabitants of the region. Virtually all inhabitants were informed about the action and contributed, which as many as 6,124 collected canvas bags prove.

6. Please explain why you have decided to nominate this action for a EWWR Award, following the main criteria listed here below:

- 1) visibility and communicational aspects
- 2) good practice, originality and exemplarity
- 3) quality of content and focus on waste prevention,
- 4) European reproducibility
- 5) follow-up in long-term and lasting impact



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1) Visibility and communicational aspects

Intensive public participation

Thanks to the strong integration of all inhabitants of the four municipalities, in particular of schools, kindergartens, institutions, political boards, companies and a great number of volunteers, the project is well-known and well-accepted at the municipal level.

2) Good practice, originality and exemplarity

Calling the public to collect canvas bags that have over the years accumulated in households, making them available for the project and having them designed by children, teenagers and the elderly to eventually reintroduce them to the households instead of plastic bags via regional shops is a singular concept: on the one hand it illustrates how to prevent waste and on the other hand how products can be recycled.

3) Quality of content and focus on waste prevention

Avoid waste – reuse !

The collected 6,124 canvas bags (old and new ones) are distributed for free in shops (groceries, shoe and fashion stores, drugstores and pharmacies, etc.) instead of plastic bags. Due to the fact that these bags were lovingly designed by children from the municipalities the customers will very likely have a strong emotional relation to them, which helps spreading their acceptance and use. Assuming that the bags are reused only 10 times would already imply that more than 60,000 plastic bags have been avoided.

4) European reproducibility

The “Change Bag” project can easily be implemented in any Austrian municipality, region or city, across the EU and all over the world.

5) Follow-up in long-term and lasting impact

The organisers of the “Change Bag” action expect the project to last for several years.

7. Please provide us with photos, videos, weblinks or any other material that would help to better understand the EWWR action.



