

Press release

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Federal Government to open up lead markets for environmental technologies

Cabinet passes “Environmental technologies master plan”

The Federal Government wants to take advantage of the great economic potential offered by environmental technologies for the benefit of the German economy. To this end, it will create stronger links between environmental and innovation policy instruments. The Government plans to engage in a more intensive dialogue with companies that operate in this sector. Following a suggestion by Federal Research Minister Dr Annette Schavan and Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel, the cabinet has now passed the “Environmental technologies master plan”.

“Environmental technologies are an outstanding example of the way in which innovations can be used to make a sustainable contribution to stabilizing our economy”, says Annette Schavan. Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel agrees: “Environmental protection technologies already have a global market value of more than €1,000 billion. This could rise to €2,200 billion by 2020. The master plan shows the outstanding opportunities that Germany already has in this market sector – and outlines exactly how policy-makers will support further development.”

Environmental technologies already make a significant contribution to reconciling nature’s needs with people’s demands. One could go even further: environmental protection offers great economic opportunities for Germany, because German companies already hold a leading position in the global market. In 2006, Germany exported €56 billion worth of environmental protection products to other countries – a global trade share of 16 percent.

With the "Environmental technologies master plan", the Federal Ministry for the Environment and the Federal Ministry of Research have taken the joint initiative to strengthen Germany's leading position even further. In accordance with the High-Tech Strategy, close links will be created between environmental and innovation policy with the aim of opening up new markets in three particularly forward-looking fields. In the first stage, the Federal Government will focus on the areas of water, raw materials and climate protection. These sectors are expected to generate especially strong growth. In addition, they are fields in which many German companies are already technological and global market leaders. Other subsectors are to be included in future, and all Federal Ministries have expressed their support for this initiative.

The core elements of the master plan are research funding, the transfer and dissemination of new technology applications, improvements in education and training, and the support of innovative small and medium-sized companies, especially in the area of international cooperation. For example, the Federal Research Ministry has earmarked over €250 million in funding for four innovation alliances in the area of climate protection. As part of its responsibility for renewable energy sources, the Federal Ministry for the Environment will provide over €100 million for research and technology development this year and in coming years. As for resource efficiency, the BMBF supports innovative technologies and processes in sectors in which large amounts of resources are used, for example in the metalworking industry. The BMU's "Resource Efficiency Network" follows this up by encouraging the dissemination of innovations.

Germany is not just strong in the area of technology, but also when it comes to the scientific basis and the application of research results. In its "Research for Sustainability" framework programme, the Federal Ministry of Research supports pioneering innovations in the field of environmental technologies, including innovative concepts for decentralized water supply and wastewater disposal, weight-optimized vehicle components based on models found in nature, and new processes for the reduction of CO₂ in the production of basic chemical materials.

***The environmental technologies master plan is available online
at www.bmbf.de and www.bmu.de***