

Plastics collection system in Costa Rica



History: PET recycling in Costa Rica (I)

- Swisscontact, active in Costa Rica in the area of special waste since 1997, took in **mid 2002** the decision to start a ***pilot project on PET recycling***.
- At that moment, the most important bottling companies (Coca Cola & Florida Bebidas) were carrying out PET recycling campaigns, mainly for ***promotion purposes***.
- Exploration mission in September 2002 by PRS.
Result: Coca Cola & Florida Bebidas, some distributors and a PET recycling company took the decision to work towards the creation of a ***organisation similar to PRS***.



History: PET recycling in Costa Rica (II)

- **Business Plan** elaborated by PRS establishes objectives & timeframe, accepted by all stakeholders.
- **Periodical meetings** came to a sudden end in February 2003, when Coca Cola Costa Rica was taken over by Coca Cola Mexico. No further participation by Coca Cola.
- In order to avoid the process to get stuck, **Swisscontact** decided to become itself a competent player by **gathering practical experience in the field of PET recycling**, with the expectation to motivate the bottling companies to join.
- Swisscontact changed for a limited period its role: **from facilitator to stakeholder.**



History: PET recycling in Costa Rica (III)

- From March 2003 onwards, the local Swisscontact team was in charge of:
 - Design & production of bins and bags
 - Design & production of awareness building material
 - Selection of schools and subscription of memorandums
 - Contract with a **dealer that pays a guaranteed price**
 - Contracts for the transport between the **collection points (=schools)** and the dealer
 - Production of training materials for participating schools



History: PET recycling in Costa Rica (IV)

- Activities pushed by Swisscontact do not improve the process towards the creation of “PRS Costa Rica” – the **opposition is growing stronger**. Coca Cola fears the new organisation to marginalize their own campaign, and the only big dealer does not want to lose its monopoly.
- End of 2003: **Swisscontact** is positioned as organisation that does **awareness building on PET recycling** in schools and sells the collected material. The participating schools benefit as they receive the lion’s share of the generated amount of money, mainly in form of computers and other teaching tools.



History: PET recycling in Costa Rica (V)

- Until middle of 2004 (1 year of activities), 24'000 students and 1'600 teachers could be reached through **600 awareness building events**.
- The raised awareness leads to an increase of the amount of collected PET by other campaigns. The **nationwide PET recycling quota** reaches approximately **33%**.
- The still involved organisations (bottlers, distributors, municipalities) decide to convert the project into a local foundation called **FundaPET**, which is launched in November 2004 and bases its activities on a business plan.



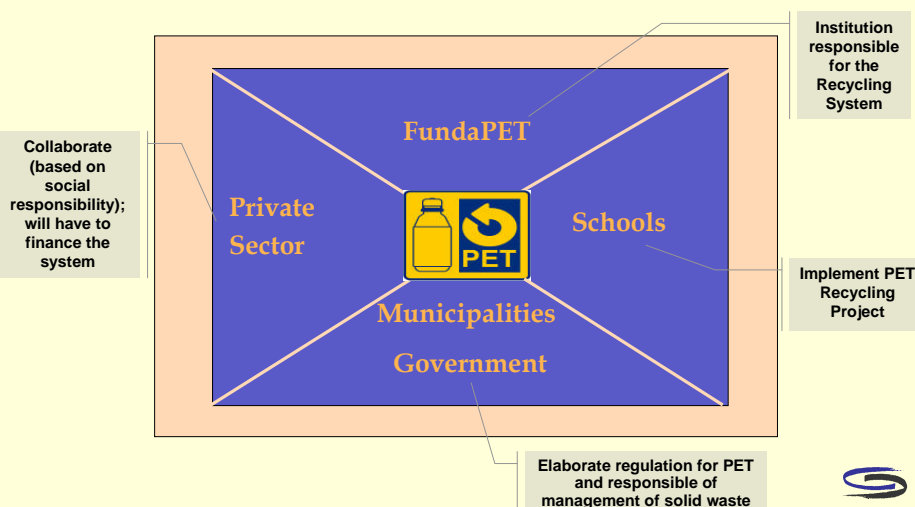
Goals of FundaPET

- Facilitate the different steps within the **value chain**, from bottle design to recycling to the use of recycled material.
- Increase the collection of PET through awareness building among the population and through establishment of a **nationwide recollection network**.
- Improve the logistics of the collection of plastic at local level, **financed by private companies and supported by the government**.

FundaPET



Roles of involved institutions



Facts & figures: from 04/2003 – 06/2007

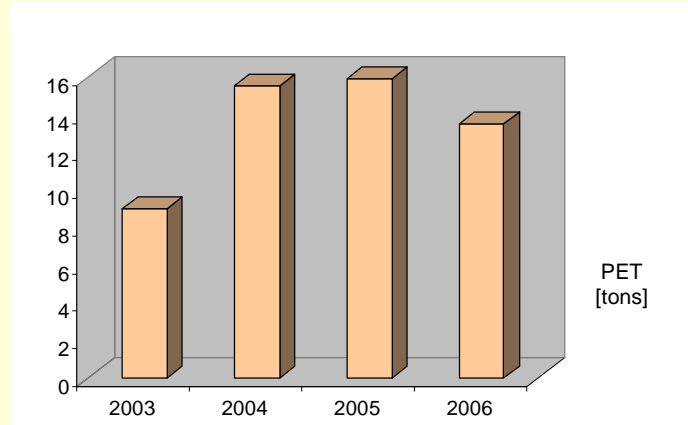
Number of institutions reached	55 institutions <i>(mainly schools)</i>
Awareness building Environmental education	1'300 speeches hold 52'800 people trained
Recollection	50'000 kg PET collected
Incentives for the schools	didactic and audio-visual materials



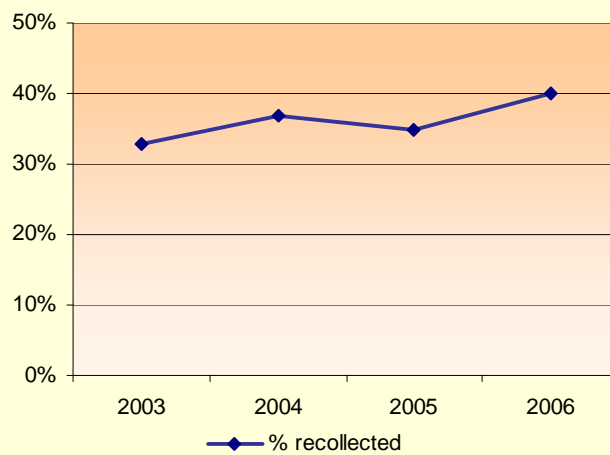
Involvement of schools



Tons of PET recollected by FundaPET



PET recycling quota in Costa Rica



FundaPET: Remaining challenges

- FundaPET is legally established since November 2004, but there are **still no permanent members** that financially contribute on a monthly basis. Nevertheless there are five bigger companies that help – by **sponsoring** certain activities (reduction of transport costs, sponsor of a specific school, etc.) – to maintain FundaPET activities.
- The recollection network served by FundaPET has to be maintained according to the (unstable) contributions raised by sponsoring. It is therefore **urgent to establish the “Sponsor Corporation”** (board of contributing members, according to Costa Rica law).



Conclusions

- With a nationwide recycling quota of 40%, the recollected amount of PET – together with the high world market prices for petrol – makes the **establishment of a PET recycling plant in Costa Rica an interesting business.**
- FundaPET, specialized in awareness building through operating small PET collection networks in schools, is the **ideal complement to such private investments.**
- Only the **threat of a “recycling law”** enforced by the central government seems to push the private sector to show responsibility for its waste, for example by becoming a contributing member of FundaPET.

