

# Public Participation and Sustainable Development On-Line Module

Welcome to the Public Participation and Sustainable Development Online Module. This module addresses the different ways in which citizens can be engaged in public issues, and is organized according to the following central themes:

- **General introduction to public participation**  
*What do we understand about Public Participation? Why is it important? Which institutions are necessary for public participation?*
- **Access to decision making processes**  
*How can we participate in decision-making? What effects does citizen participation have?*
- **Access to public information**  
*What is public information? Why is it important? How can we access this information?*
- **Access to justice**  
*How do we defend our collective rights? What mechanisms do we count on in order to access justice?*

The Public Participation and Sustainable Development Module gives a conceptual framework about public participation and provides access to resources such as case studies, bibliography, related sites, regulations, research documents, etc. We would appreciate you sending us [suggestions](#) about other resources related to public participation that could enrich the module's content.

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# INTRODUCTION

The challenge of a development pattern striving to harmonize economics with social and environmental needs requires active citizen participation in public issues. Public participation in decisions about development is fundamental to achieving lasting and possible solutions.

Modern democratic life requires an active role from the population and needs participation from members of the community. It should no longer be the case that those who are governed act only to elect and then, whatever the outcome, are governed without there existing opportunities to interact with their representatives. It is time to add the idea of participation to the concept of representative democracy.

Participation transforms the democratic system, energizing it, by creating a permanent connection between the governed and those who govern. The joint venture permits more reasoned decisions (being these the product of a higher consensus), enables a better understanding of the problems that preoccupy a society, and allows the two parties to work cooperatively towards possible solutions.

Public participation allows government actions to become transparent, effectively avoiding corrupt behaviors. It also clarifies responsibilities and facilitates the eventual application of sanctions, in case of reproachable conducts.

In order to build a participatory democracy, it is necessary to provide citizens with an institutional framework that will allow for effective participation in public issues.

Numerous international documents have expressed the importance of public participation and the need to institutionalize it to move towards sustainable development. It is important to mention Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development signed by more than 100 heads of State worldwide, in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, establishing that:

*"Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided".*

This principle in the Rio Declaration outlines some basic components that must be present in all participatory democracies. Therefore, to participate in an effective way, people must have:

- **Access to decision making**
- **Access to public information**
- **Access to justice**

# ACCESS TO DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Public participation consists of different mechanisms for civic action within a democratic system.

Citizens can participate in the following ways:

- before authorities make decisions, by: giving advice, participating in consultations, and promoting projects.
- after decisions are made, by acting in the execution of such decisions or by controlling their execution.

## I.- WHY PARTICIPATE?

Government practice does not solely involve decision-making. Public participation before and after decision-making is fundamental to improving the quality of decisions made and to improve compliance.

Above all, it's important that authorities are not only well-informed on technical issues before making decisions, but also on citizens' needs. With participation prior to decision-making, authorities can better reflect public opinion when making their decisions.

After decision-making, the public can participate by controlling the means for enforcement and in the joint management of the decision. Without this participation, the decision will likely lead to failure.

## II.- WHAT EFFECTS DOES PARTICIPATION HAVE?

While participation results in social, cultural and other effects, we will refer only to the legal effects of public participation. Please see Table 1 for an outline of the different types of public participation and their legal consequences.

Table 1

<b>Participation with binding effect</b>	Referendum Plebiscite Recall	The public decides
<b>Participation without binding effect</b>	Public consultation Public hearings in the decision-making process	Complements government decisions

There are some forms of public participation that do not require decision-makers to regard public opinion; in other words, where public participation is not legally binding. For example, if we advise government authorities on the viability of building a bridge in our municipality, the position adopted, being favourable or unfavourable, would not invalidate the government's decision to the contrary. The government can listen to public arguments that will help them reach a better decision, but they are not legally bound by public opinion.

In other forms of public participation, authorities are obligated to make a decision based on public opinion. These mechanisms for participation, which include referendums and plebiscites, have a binding effect and are referred to as semi-direct forms of democracy due to the fact that decisions are made directly by the citizens.

Democracy is indirect when people decide exclusively through their representatives in governmental bodies; while a direct democracy is when all the citizens are assembled to decide. This kind of democracy existed in some cities of ancient Greece.

### III. HOW CAN WE PARTICIPATE?

There are different forms and institutional mechanisms of participation. Each mechanism has its particular characteristics, its strengths and weaknesses. It is difficult to state whether certain forms of participation are better than others; in general, viability and efficiency of any form or mechanism depends on the political, social, economic and cultural context where it is developed.

In this module we will briefly discuss and give examples of some participation mechanisms, namely: **public hearings, participatory budget processes and referendums.**

#### *What is a public hearing?*

A public hearing is a formal meeting between citizens and government authorities in order to discuss a particular subject, such as a bill, a municipal by-law or any other type of decision to be made by the government. These meetings are carried out during the decision-making process; in general public hearings occur at both the legislative and executive levels.

The objective of the public hearing is to promote and facilitate communication between government authorities and the public so that information, opinions or objections expressed by the public are taken into account by the authorities at the decision-making moment, thereby strengthening the decision.

From a legal perspective, public hearings are not binding; comments and remarks expressed by the public do not force authorities to act a specific way. In some cases, however, authorities are obligated to justify their decisions and provide an explanation if they did not follow public opinion.

#### **What advantages do public hearings have?**

Public hearings have many advantages for both citizens and government authorities. Listed below are some examples:

##### *For Citizens:*

- The opportunity to share their opinion, criticize and influence public decisions
- The opportunity to learn other citizens' perspectives that take into account environmental, social and/or economic considerations.
- The freedom of speech and to be heard
- The opportunity to reach consensus

##### *For Decision-Makers:*

- The opportunity to communicate with a variety of social actors.
- The opportunity to strengthen the quality of their decisions by having them more clearly reflect the claims and aspirations of the addressees.
- The opportunity to access more information
- The opportunity to achieve and demonstrate more transparency in the decision-making process.

### ***What is a referendum?***

A referendum is a widespread kind of semi-direct form of democracy. Citizens vote in favour of or against a proposal to establish a new norm or to modify or revoke an existing one.

This kind of public participation has a binding effect: government authorities must accept and implement citizens' decisions. It is important to distinguish this kind of participation from others that are not binding, such as public hearings.

Countries that use referendums establish the legal criteria, forms and topics that can be involved in this kind of participation on a case-by-case basis.

There are several Central and Eastern European countries (e.g. Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) where public participation in environmental decision-making is based on the constitutional right to launch a referendum or legislative initiative. Local referendums on environmental issues have been held rather often in Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

### ***Public Participation in Municipal Budgets (Presupuesto Participativo)***

A participatory budget is a new and revolutionary public participation and public accountability instrument whereby people have the opportunity to participate in the elaboration and control of the State budget (thus far only used at the Municipal level). In a neutral space, authorities and the public meet to reach an agreement on how to transfer public priorities into public policy agendas. A participatory budget provides citizens with a mechanism for controlling or influencing the government's use of public resources.

In looking at the participatory budget experience in Porto Alegre, Brazil that started in 1989, it is possible to identify some common criteria needed in the implementation of this public participation tool:

- Citizen participation must be guaranteed, without needing to belong to any particular organization or association.
- The methodology must adapt to legal norms and social behaviors of each particular region. On the one hand, this implies the need for a legal body to establish who will be the political representatives at the consultation, when the meetings will take place, the consultation process, etc. On the other hand, however, the proceeding must be kept informal and flexible enough so that each community or region can adapt its own system that can also be modified over time.

- The participation process must be open and deal with broad-based issues, from the way the state spends financial resources to different forms of financing expenditures (such as through privatization or by accruing public debt).
- Public participation must also include management control and accountability.
- In principle, opinions given in the participatory budget process are not binding; however if the decision made by the state differs from the one stated by the public, grounds for the decision must be justified.

#### **IV. DO WE HAVE TO ORGANIZE TO PARTICIPATE?**

The need to organize depends on the type of public participation. In the case of an individual proceeding, rather than an organization, previous preparation or training is obviously needed. Individual participation in public issues can occur when somebody files a petition against the state, proposes a project or questions decisions.

Conversely, collective participation requires a system, and a system implies a form of organization. In modern democracies, one of the forms of addressing participation is through associations created in order to pursue certain goals. Most people are familiar with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These are non-governmental entities dealing with public interest issues.

#### **Non governmental organizations: a new space for participation**

NGOs have emerged as valuable global players in defense of certain issues such as the environment, consumer rights and human rights. Their different types of activities have become valuable arenas for public participation. NGOs allow people to organize around fundamental issues, empower citizens and generate solidarity when facing government authorities. Historically this political role was reserved for businesses, churches and unions.

At present NGOs provide an outlet for those who “do not have voice”; in other words marginalized members of society who do not belong to powerful associations nor occupy high-ranking positions. Many people join NGOs to take action and organize around a common issue.

# ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION

## I. WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

The effectiveness of public participation is directly related to the information available. Lack of information or misinformation substantially affects the quality of public participation.

The existence of tools for public participation and citizen control are not enough. Citizens need access to information in order to choose the most viable mechanism to deal with the problem at hand.

**Due to this, most modern democracies have institutionalized mechanisms related to specific ways to access information.**

Let's look at some conceptual clarifications:

\* Free access to information is not equivalent to the "publication of the acts of government". The first concept is a right by which any person can access the information wanted, and the second one is the duty of the State to let the public know its decisions: bills, laws, rules, resolutions, etc.

\* Free access to information allows any person access to the documentation of public records, meeting minutes, correspondence, technical reports, scientific surveys or any other documentation financed by public budgets. It also comprises information about policies, programs, plans and projects; information about various decision-making petitions, opportunities to make oral or written comments, and public and technical organizations' opinions.

**The theoretical ground to freely access information is based on the nature of it being public. It deals with relevant information regarding life and decisions affecting the community as a whole.**

Generally, this right draws on access to information administered by the State. Access to information involves the right to select documentation from the moment of its existence as part of a record. That is to say, it lets any person select the aimed document without any previous justification. A requisition is enough to receive the information.

Some restrictions on the right to freely access information:

- This right does not include preliminary drafts of documents.
- This right is limited by the protection of other rights or collective values: privacy protection, commercial and industrial confidentiality, national defense, international negotiation, etc.
- In the case of a legal process, the restrictions on public access to information are determined in order to guarantee due process.
- Generally, the legislation that institutionalizes and regulates access to information establishes a detailed regime of exceptions.

## II. HOW TO ACCESS INFORMATION?

Regarding environmental issues, society's access to information is the basis for participation and public management success. Therefore, it should be guaranteed that citizens and public administrators have access to the same environmental information.

Some specifications:

- Free access to environmental information is not the same as the State's duty to generate and offer environmental information. While the former is just an exercise of the right to access the documentation administered by the State that is relevant for the environment, the latter is a duty that deals with the generation of environmental information and must also be public.
- The State's duty to generate and offer environmental information is restricted to specific documents and public information operative systems.

Thus, for example, this duty is the basis for:

- The preparation of "periodic reports about the environmental condition". They are periodic diagnoses, to be read easily, about the environmental condition: the quality of air, groundwater and surface water; noise pollution; collection, treatment and disposal of household and industrial wastes; green spaces, fauna and flora, etc.

Such reports then form the basis of environmental information used by the State structure in its strategic planning functions and to define priorities for public action, the private or public research system, the education system and for the actions of any societal organization.

The advantage of preparing this kind of environmental report lies in the eventual development of an "environmental record" that will improve our understanding of the way in which problems have been identified, the initiatives that have been addressed to solve them, and concrete results achieved or not. These reports can be prepared at the local, provincial or state, and national government levels.

The creation and operation of an environmental database, being publicly accessible, is another way to achieve the fulfillment of the government's environmental information duty. These databases may be useful to keep a large variety information, such as:

- Environmental resources
- Environmental research
- Environmental regulations (proposed and actual)
- Environmental claims
- Environmental laws
- Public organizations with environmental jurisdiction

The possibility of creating and operating environmental information databases depends entirely on the available budgets of the different State bodies.

Lastly, it must be pointed out that the State's duty to give "environmental information" is supplemented by the following specific documents:

- Information generated by environmental impact assessments resulting from different projects (eg. information from environmental impact assessments carried out for the construction of highways, airports and hydroelectric dams, etc.).
- Information that might emerge from environmental audits of different kinds of firms (for example, mining companies, industrial companies, public service companies, etc.).

### III. WHAT ASPECTS DOES THIS RIGHT EMBRACE?

In order to effectively administer and guarantee the Right to Access Information, the following governmental services and resources are required:

- An institutional system
- A financial system
- An educational system

#### **An Institutional System**

In general, the State carries out an information program for the public from "Information offices" in each of the districts with environmental jurisdiction. These offices are in charge of court records, and in offering free access to the same records at the request of the public.

Information offices of environmental bodies must allow all citizens access to the record files.

A system of public access to environmental information may mean the possibility of obtaining, among others, the following:

- Authorization forms related to the building or expansion of factory plants, public buildings, railways, highways, dams, use of land plan exceptions, etc.
- State reports and expert testimonies;
- Independent technicians' opinions;
- Opinions about public claims;
- Internal memos and decisions;
- Other public body opinions;
- Correspondence;
- Meeting minutes;
- Any documents financed by the State.

#### **A Financial System**

A regime with free access to environmental information requires two types of financing:

- Financial resources allocated from government departments with environmental jurisdiction; and
- Administrative fees collected from users. Generally, users pay for things like photocopying.

### **An Educational System**

Educational resources for both staff and users facilitate the Access to Information process. Administrative staff are trained on the philosophy and modus operandi of the information offices; and Practical Guides to Access Environmental Information (Manuales Prácticos del Ciudadano para el Acceso a la Información Ambiental) are useful to the ordinary citizen. These manuals allow everyone to understand how the system functions, the operative and computerized way to use the information centre, and the administrative fees and the cost of the photocopies.

Mass media can also play an important educational role. Therefore it is crucial for them to be able to access public information easily and in a timely manner.

## **IV. SOME PRECEDENTS**

The right to access public information has very distant precedents. It first manifested as a freedom of the press issue in the Swedish Royal Ordinance of 1766 where access to public documents was considered. Likewise, the Universal Declaration of Man and Citizen's Rights of 1789 expressed in Article 11 that freedom of expression and opinion are the most precious rights of mankind (sic).

The first act regarding access to information was approved by the United States in 1966. This is known as the "Freedom of Information Act", whereby any governmental agency must reply to any information request about records, reports, files, etc. within a limited time. Each body must keep and index public interest information dealing with enacted or adopted provisions, publishing it quarterly. In the 70's, France, Canada and Italy issued similar acts/regulations.

Greek (1975), Portuguese (1976) and Spanish (1978) Constitutions were the first to incorporate the right to freedom of information into their texts. This right was recognized in the American Convention on Human Rights (Pacto de San Jose de Costa Rica) within Clause 3, "Freedom of thought and expression", written as: "All persons have the right to freedom of thought and expression. This right involves the freedom of searching, receiving and disseminating information and ideas of any nature..."

In the European Union, a guideline ruling access to environmental information for the group of member countries was issued in 1990. Since its enactment the member states have issued their own laws. For example, Germany has developed the Environmental Liability Law that deals with the right to access information both from the State and private organizations. There also exist specific regulations in France, Belgium and The Netherlands, among other European countries.

# ACCESS TO JUSTICE

## I. WHAT IS ACCESS TO JUSTICE?

Recognizing the right to a clean and healthy environment, and the development of legislation to protect the environment requires methods or mechanisms to effectively carry out the legislation on the part of the State and its citizens.

Access to justice is one of the ways citizens can enforce environmental legislation.

In this way, individuals can bring forward legal actions or go through administrative proceedings to defend their right against environmental degradation.

## II. LEGAL STANDING

One of the problems with access to justice in the environmental realm is the question of who has legal standing. Legal standing is the ability of a person to show a sufficient legal interest in a matter to allow him or her to bring a case to court.

When defending individual rights, such as the right to life, to dignity, to liberty, property, etc., the individual must prove that their value or good (life, dignity, liberty, property, etc.) is being threatened or damaged. In this sense, the individual is considered to have just and sufficient cause for defending their right.

In the case of defending third generation rights (such as the right to a healthy environment, the right to peace, the right to non-discrimination, etc.) it is necessary to revise the traditional criteria of legal recourse, namely those granted to individual rights.

Without redefining these legal rights, a judge, for example, who is faced with a citizen's demand to preserve a native forest, might reject the case, because the citizen can not demonstrate an exclusive and immediate individual interest that brings just cause to save the forest.

These third generation rights are characterized, in some respects, by their collective nature. Thus, in the case of environmental rights, people do not hold individual, immediate or exclusive interests in the environment; the relationship of people with respect to the "environment" that they wish to protect, is one of co-ownership. This signifies that individuals only have a portion of the environmental right, non-exclusive and identical to the rights and interests of other members of the community. These are known as collective rights.

Given this collective nature, access to justice is complicated in environmental matters.

## III. DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF LEGAL STANDING

In response to this legal dilemma in environmental law, various judicial mechanisms have been implemented.

### *i) Public Interest Action (Acción Popular)*

A public interest action is a type of judicial action that grants legal standing to all State residents in defence of certain collective rights or interests, such as the protection of the environment, the protection of national heritage, etc. In this way, the need to prove personal and direct interests in the good is exempted from the claim to legal protection.

Legislations from different countries demonstrate diverse methods of public interest action for the legal protection of the rights of the common good. Following is a list of examples:

- The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Brazil (1988) Art.5, inc.LXXIII
- The Constitution of the Republic of Costa Rica (1994) Art.50
- The Political Constitution of Portugal (1976) Art.66, inc.3
- The Code of Environmental and Natural Resources of Peru (1990) Art.III
- The Constitution of the State of Illinois, U.S. (1970) Art.XI; inc.2

### ***ii) Legal standing of government agencies***

Traditionally, the State has assumed the role to defend and protect the general interests of society through government officers, such as the long-established Attorney General and more recently the Ombudsman.

Currently legislation in different countries has amplified the scope of power and responsibilities of these sectors for the protection of the collective good, such as the right to a healthy environment, consumer rights, etc.

### ***iii) Legal Standing of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)***

A number of states recognize the right to legal action by non-governmental organizations or associations whose objectives are to protect and conserve the environment. In some cases, the legislation differs with respect to formal requests demanded by NGOs to act as authorized claimants. For example, Italy and Denmark only grant legal standing to a limited number of organizations, defined specifically in a legislative act; whereas in Peru, the legislation has a much broader definition, conceding legal standing to NGOs whose general objectives are to protect the environment (Cfr.Art.140. Environmental and Natural Resources Code of Peru).

Argentina, Spain, Brazil, Germany and others are among states that recognize legal standing in favour of organizations that defend collective rights.

As mentioned briefly above, these judicial mechanisms used to defend the environment differ from country to country. Below we will highlight a few country-specific mechanisms and outline how various countries have defined legal standing for individuals and NGOs with regards to the right to a clean and healthy environment.

#### **a) Argentina:**

The Constitution of Argentina recognizes a legal action known as a "recurso de amparo colectivo", for the protection of the environment and other collective rights. It allows a judge to respond quickly either with an injunction or with a call for action when rights of individuals or groups are threatened, wounded or violated.

Essentially, the affected, non-governmental organizations and the Ombudsman can file a case before any court to seek protection from violations of constitutionally recognized rights, which includes the right to a clean and healthy environment.

**b) Austria:**

In Austria, if the public authorities fail to implement laws or act incorrectly, individuals can bring cases before civil, criminal, and constitutional courts only when their individual rights are affected. Legal standing for NGOs is granted only before civil courts and arbitration courts.

**c) Denmark:**

In Denmark, anybody with a substantial individual interest can appeal to a court. Many environmental cases are brought before Danish courts as criminal cases. The first time an environmental NGO was found to have a right to bring a case to court without being obliged to invoke its members' economic interest as being affected was in 1994, when the Danish Ornithological Society took legal action against the Ministry of Transport.

**d) Germany:**

The German system allows every citizen to appeal for the right to access to environmental information before the courts. General environmental issues can be brought before courts only when a breach of the law occurs and if an individual's right is affected. Legal standing is granted under certain conditions to some nature protection associations.

**e) Greece:**

The Greek system grants legal standing before civil courts to individuals and NGOs if proof of legal interest is submitted. In criminal courts, only individuals have legal standing. When a public official fails to act properly, indemnities can be claimed before a civil court and before a criminal court.

**f) Ireland:**

In Ireland, a very limited number of environmental cases are taken to court. Many of them refer to planning issues. The main type of action taken in the High Court relating to environmental and information cases is judicial review of a decision of a public authority. Only affected individuals and NGOs are allowed to go before the Constitutional Court.

**g) Netherlands:**

In the Netherlands, there is no opportunity for NGOs to actively participate in criminal cases. The duration of an appeal to the courts is approximately two years. Public authority violation of the law is difficult to pursue, and action in civil courts is the best way to proceed in such cases.

**h) Norway:**

Norway grants individuals and NGOs legal standing. Affected individuals or NGOs can bring legal action against the Government.

**i) Portugal:**

Legal standing in civil courts is granted in the Portuguese system to all individuals. Only affected individuals have legal standing before criminal courts. All NGOs are allowed to go before civil and criminal courts. Neither individuals nor NGOs have legal standing before the Constitutional Court on environmental issues.

**j) Spain:**

Legal standing is granted in Spain to interested and affected individuals before civil and

arbitration courts. Individual citizens and NGOs can take legal action before criminal courts to prevent possible harm to the environment. When civil servants fail to comply with legal provisions or to implement applicable legal provisions, damages can be sought before courts. Civil and even penal charges can be brought.

**k) Switzerland:**

In Switzerland, NGOs that have at least 10 years' legal existence are granted legal standing to challenge all projects subject to the EIA procedure in court. Otherwise, only affected individuals have legal standing before civil, criminal, and constitutional courts. The Federal Law relating to the Protection of the Environment and the Federal Law relating to the Protection of Nature and Countryside allow interested NGOs to go before the Constitutional Court.

**l) United Kingdom:**

In the United Kingdom, when a public authority fails to enforce a law, a citizen may challenge the public authority in the courts or prosecute in most cases where it is alleged that a crime has been committed. Similar remedies are available when the authority itself is the wrongdoer. Legal standing is granted to individuals and NGOs who have a sufficient interest in civil courts, and, except where legislation provides otherwise, to all individuals and NGOs in criminal courts.

*The above list of the legal standing of individuals and NGOs in various Western European countries was taken from [www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/issues/public-participation/ece46.htm](http://www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/issues/public-participation/ece46.htm)*

## RESOURCES

- **Legislation**  
Access to relevant local, national and international legislation regarding public participation (in full text).
- **Documents/Research Papers**  
Includes research papers, case studies, publications and articles on public participation.
- **Links to public participation web sites and related organizations**  
Web sites and organizations that are dedicated in various ways to public participation in sustainable development.
- **Bibliography**  
A list of publications available from the organizations who created this module on Public Participation and Sustainable Development.

### Legislation

*Note: Below are links to what are considered to be the most important legislation with regard to public participation. To access other laws and legislation about the topic, please visit **Ecolegis**, the environmental legal data-base of [Latin America and the Caribbean](#) and [Central and Eastern Europe](#).*

#### International Agreements

##### **The Aarhus Convention**

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (**Aarhus Convention**) was adopted at the fourth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Aarhus, Denmark, on 25 June 1998. Thirty-nine countries and the European Community have since signed it.

[www.unece.org/env/pp/](http://www.unece.org/env/pp/)

##### **Agenda 21**

Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and major groups in every area in which humans impact on the environment.

[www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21.htm)

##### **American Convention of Human Rights. San Jose Agreement of Costa Rica.**

Signed in San José, Costa Rica, November 22, 1969, at the Interamerican Conference on Human Rights.

[www.oas.org/cidh/básicos/basicos3.htm](http://www.oas.org/cidh/básicos/basicos3.htm)

##### **American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man.**

Sanctioned at the Ninth International Conference of American States in Bogotá, Colombia, 1948.

[www.cidh.oas.org/Básicos/Basic Documents/enbas2.htm](http://www.cidh.oas.org/Básicos/Basic Documents/enbas2.htm)

### **Dublin Declaration on Access to Environmental Information**

Signed by the UNEP Infoterra representatives meeting in Dublin, Ireland, from September 11-14, 2000.

[www.unep.org/infoterra/infoterra2000/report1.htm](http://www.unep.org/infoterra/infoterra2000/report1.htm)

### **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) 16 of December 1966.

[www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a\\_ccpr.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm)

### **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) 16 of December 1966.

[www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a\\_ceschr.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ceschr.htm)

### **ISP: Inter-American Strategy for the Promotion of Public Participation in Decision Making for Sustainable Development**

A strategy developed by the OEA/UDSMA and adopted by the Interamerican Counsel for Integrated Development, in Resolution CIDI/RES 98 (V-0/00), April 20, 2000.

[www.ispnet.org/Documents/INDICE.html](http://www.ispnet.org/Documents/INDICE.html)

### **Resolution on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice In Environmental Matters**

Official Aarhus Conference Document

[www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/issues/public-participation/inforesolution43-add1-rev.htm](http://www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/issues/public-participation/inforesolution43-add1-rev.htm)

### **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

Declaration approved and sanctioned at the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948.

[www.un.org/spanish/aboutun/hrights.htm](http://www.un.org/spanish/aboutun/hrights.htm)

## **Local Legislation**

### **Argentina: Ley 303/99: Ley de Información Ambiental/Environmental Information Law**

[www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/3347.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/3347.html)

### **Argentina: Ley 6/98: Audiencias Públicas/Public Inquiry Law**

[www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/2905.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/2905.html)

### **Argentina: Ley 229/99: Audiencias Públicas - Modificación/Ammendment to the Public Inquiry Law**

[www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/3404.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/3404.html)

### **Argentina: Ley 123/98: Ley de Evaluación del Impacto Ambiental/Environmental Impact Assessment Law**

[www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/2980.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/2980.html)

### **Argentina: Ley 104/98: Acceso a la Información/Access to Information**

[www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/2984.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/2984.html)

**Argentina: Ley 3/98: Defensoría del Pueblo - Creación/Ombudsman - Creation**

[www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/3403.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/3403.html)

**Argentina: Ley 3.764/92: Libre acceso a las fuentes de información y publicidad de los actos de gobierno/Free Access to Government Information and Publications.**

[www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/2920.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/2920.html)

**Argentina: Resolución 255/94: Información que deber en suministrar las impresas inscriptas en la ley de Inversiones Mineras/Information to be submitted by businesses outlined in the Law of Mining Investments.**

[www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/1640.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/bd/ecolegis/tc/1640.html)

**Bolivia: Ley 1551: Ley de Participación Popular/Public Participation Law**

[www.congreso.gov.bo/7leyes/leyes/LEYN1551.html](http://www.congreso.gov.bo/7leyes/leyes/LEYN1551.html)

**Costa Rica: legislation regarding public participation.**

[www.participacion-ciudadana.or.cr/legislacion/index.html](http://www.participacion-ciudadana.or.cr/legislacion/index.html)

## Documents/Research Papers

### **Aarhus Conference background documents:**

*Progress in the Implementation of the ECE Guidelines on Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making*

[www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/issues/public-participation/ece46.htm](http://www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/issues/public-participation/ece46.htm)

*Sofia Initiative: Environmental Impact Assessment Summary Report for the Fourth Ministerial Conference "Environment For Europe"*

[www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/issues/public-participation/summary.htm](http://www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/issues/public-participation/summary.htm)

*Sofia Initiative: Environmental Impact Assessment Policy Recommendations on the Use of Strategic Environmental Assessment in Central and Eastern Europe and in Newly Independent States*

[www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/issues/public-participation/impact.htm](http://www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/issues/public-participation/impact.htm)

### **Access to Public Information**

#### **(Acceso a la Información Pública)**

A paper written for the "Asociación Marplatense de Estudios Ambientales Integrales (AMEAI)".

[www.statics.com.ar/statics/usuarios/ameai/articulos/art02.html](http://www.statics.com.ar/statics/usuarios/ameai/articulos/art02.html)

### **Access to Public Information, the Environment and Sustainable Development**

#### **(Acceso a la Información Pública, el Medio Ambiente y el Desarrollo Sustentable)**

Manual written by FARN, 1997.

[www.farn.org.ar/docs/p01/publicaciones1\\_f.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/docs/p01/publicaciones1_f.html)

### **Doors to Democracy Series**

Series of REC publications:

- *Current Trends and Practices in Public Participation in Environmental Decisionmaking*

*in Central and Eastern Europe*

[www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPDoors/CEE/cover.html](http://www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPDoors/CEE/cover.html)

*in the Newly Independent States*

[www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPDoors/NIS/cover.html](http://www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPDoors/NIS/cover.html)

*in Western Europe*

[www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPDoors/WEST/cover.html](http://www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPDoors/WEST/cover.html)

*- A Pan-European Assessment of Current Trends and Practices in Public Participation in Environmental Matters*

[www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPDoors/EUROPE/cover.html](http://www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPDoors/EUROPE/cover.html)

### **International Association For Public Participation (IAP2) - Practitioner's Tools**

These materials manual are copyrighted by IAP2. With proper attribution to IAP2, they encourage their widespread use to improve public participation programs.

[www.iap2.org/practools.html](http://www.iap2.org/practools.html)

### **Land Use Planning: Civic Participation**

Published by the Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development, a project of the U.S. Dept. of Energy. Contains links to other documents and case studies.

[www.sustainable.doe.gov/landuse/civic.shtml](http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/landuse/civic.shtml)

### **Local Participation and Environmental Management. (La Participación Vecinal y la Gestión del Medio Ambiente)**

Manual created by FARN, 1995.

[www.farn.org.ar/docs/p02/publicaciones2\\_f.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/docs/p02/publicaciones2_f.html)

### **Manual on Public Participation in Environment Decision-Making**

REC's publication deals with the current practices and future possibilities for public participation in Central and Eastern Europe.

[www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPManual/cover.html](http://www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPManual/cover.html)

### **Municipal Energy: Education and Public Participation**

Publication by the Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development, a project of the United States Energy Department. Contains case studies.

[www.sustainable.doe.gov/municipal/education.shtml](http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/municipal/education.shtml)

### **New Tools for Civic Action in Defense of Environmental Rights.**

A Manual created for the "Poder Ciudadano" foundation.

[www.farn.org.ar/docs/p10/publicaciones10\\_f.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/docs/p10/publicaciones10_f.html)

### **The People's Communication Charter**

The first draft of the People's Communication Charter was written by media specialists and activists in preparation for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1998.

[www.pccharter.net/charteres.html](http://www.pccharter.net/charteres.html)

### **Public Audiences in the Municipalities of Patagonia (Audiencias Públicas en los Municipios Patagónicos)**

A paper written by FARN for the Public Audience Program in the Municipality of Patagonia.

[www.farn.org.ar/docs/p14/p14\\_f.html](http://www.farn.org.ar/docs/p14/p14_f.html)

### **Public Participation Documentation Center**

The Public Participation Issue Group is one of the six Issue Groups of the European ECO Forum (former NGO working group for Environment for Europe). Their activities are closely connected to the "Campaign to Improve conditions for Public Participation and Realise Adequate Rights to Know

in Europe", which is managed by the European Environmental Bureau, Friends of the Earth and SNM. In October 1996, the Steering Committee from Western and Eastern Europe were elected and mandated to facilitate NGO involvement in the preparatory process for the Aarhus conference.  
[www.ljudmila.org/retina/eco-forum/ppdoc.htm](http://www.ljudmila.org/retina/eco-forum/ppdoc.htm)

**Report of the Secretary General of the OAS on the Implementation of Sustainable Development Measures at the Summit in Bolivia.**

The objective of the paper was to report on the experiences of different countries in the region where local governments and civil society collaborated to address various environmental problems within the institutional frameworks and environmental policies of the respective countries.  
[www.oas.org/usde/publications/Unit/oea61s/begin.htm](http://www.oas.org/usde/publications/Unit/oea61s/begin.htm)

**Role of Local Governments and Public Participation in Environmental Management.**

Final Report of the Inter-American Seminar Barquisimeto, Venezuela, June 11-13, 1996  
[www.oas.org/usde/publications/Unit/oea58b/begin.htm](http://www.oas.org/usde/publications/Unit/oea58b/begin.htm)

**Status of Public Participation Practices in Environmental Decisionmaking in Central and Eastern Europe**

REC publication: Case Studies of Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, FYR Macedonia, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia.  
[www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPstatus/cover.html](http://www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPstatus/cover.html)

**Strengthening Decision-Making for Sustainable Development**

ESRC Global Environmental Change Programme's Report of a Workshop held at Eynsham Hall, Oxford.  
[www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/gec/pubs/reps/decision.htm](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/gec/pubs/reps/decision.htm)

**Towards an ECE Convention on Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decisionmaking**

At the Third Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", held in Sofia, Bulgaria, in October 1995, Environment Ministers from all over Europe, the US, Canada and the Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union made two important decisions related to access to environmental information and public participation.  
[www.ljudmila.org/retina/eco-forum/jeremy.htm](http://www.ljudmila.org/retina/eco-forum/jeremy.htm)

**Transparency and Responsiveness: Building a Participatory Process for Activities Jointly Implemented Under the Climate Change Convention (1997)**

An Environmental Law Institute's research report.  
[www.eli.org/publications/pubs/rr97transparentclimatechange.htm](http://www.eli.org/publications/pubs/rr97transparentclimatechange.htm)

**World Bank Participation Sourcebook**

The World Bank Participation Sourcebook follows the definition of participation adopted by the Bank's Learning Group on Participatory Development: Participation is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them. The Sourcebook is primarily intended for readers who have already decided to use participatory approaches in their professional work.  
[www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sbhome.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sbhome.htm)

## Public Participation Sites and Links to Related Organizations

### **Centre For Deliberative Polling**

The Centre for Deliberative Polling, housed in the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin, is devoted to research about democracy and public opinion obtained through Deliberative Polling™. Deliberative Polling is a technique which combines deliberation in small group discussions with scientific random sampling to provide public consultation for public policy and for electoral issues.

[www.la.utexas.edu/research/delpol/](http://www.la.utexas.edu/research/delpol/)

### **Cities for a More Sustainable Future: Library (Biblioteca Ciudades para un Futuro más Sostenible)**

The N°3 Newsletter of the Library focuses on Public Participation.

[habitat.aq.upm.es/boletin/n3/lista.html](http://habitat.aq.upm.es/boletin/n3/lista.html)

### **CIVICUS - International Alliance of Civil Society Organizations**

CIVICUS is an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world.

[www.civicus.org/](http://www.civicus.org/)

### **CIVICUS in Latin America**

[www.funredes.org/civicus](http://www.funredes.org/civicus)

### **Civil Society of the Americas against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) (Alcacivil. Sociedad Civil de las Américas frente al ALCA)**

This site was created by the "Corporación Participa y la Alianza Chilena por un Comercio Justo y Responsable (ACJR)", with the objective of providing civil society organizations with information about the FTAA and its processes, and to encourage public participation.

[www.alcacivil.org/index.cgi](http://www.alcacivil.org/index.cgi)

### **Eldis - The gateway to development information**

Includes a research section on public participation, practical manuals, bibliographic resources and links.

[nt1.ids.ac.uk/eldis/pru/pru.htm](http://nt1.ids.ac.uk/eldis/pru/pru.htm)

### **FAO: People's Participation**

People's Participation is a section of Sustainable Development Dimensions, a service of the Sustainable Development Department (SD) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

[www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/sustdev/PPdirect/PPhomepg.htm](http://www.fao.org/waicent/faoinfo/sustdev/PPdirect/PPhomepg.htm)

### **Hackney Building Exploratory Interactive!**

This website from the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA) of University College London, UK is a demonstration project to explore the use of Internet based visualisation to aid the design process of urban morphology. The aim of their work is to allow the public to have the chance to roam through a virtual world, and understand how the research process is developed and used to design better cities through online public participation.

[www.casa.ucl.ac.uk/hackney/startabout.htm](http://www.casa.ucl.ac.uk/hackney/startabout.htm)

### **INFOTERRA - Global Environmental Information Network**

INFOTERRA is UNEP's global environmental information exchange network operating in 177 countries worldwide. Their mandate is to facilitate access to environmental information by reducing

bureaucratic, linguistic and technological barriers to information access. The website also includes several papers on public participation to environmental decision-making.

[www.unep.org/infoterra](http://www.unep.org/infoterra)

#### **International Association For Public Participation (IAP2)**

IAP2 is an association of members who seek to promote and improve the practice of public participation in relation to individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that effect the public interest in nations throughout the world.

[www.iap2.org/](http://www.iap2.org/)

#### **Institute for Public Policy Research: Public Involvement Programme (PIP)**

This is a collaborative project developing new ways of involving the public in decision making. The PIP website contains a comprehensive list of tools to involve the public and methodologies to employ them.

[www.pip.org.uk](http://www.pip.org.uk)

#### **Land and Resource Management Planning Public Participation Module**

One of a series of training modules for participants of Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) processes in British Columbia. The British Columbia Government's LRMPs are strategic land use planning processes under the Forest Practices Code.

[www.luco.gov.bc.ca/lrmp/pubpart/pp-mo-2.htm](http://www.luco.gov.bc.ca/lrmp/pubpart/pp-mo-2.htm)

#### **Leeds University School of Geography: Village-based "Planning For Real"**

An experimental on-line planning tool utilising geographical information systems (GIS) technology to enable the local population of Slaithwaite, West Yorkshire, UK to participate in raising and discussing planning issues by placing flags with written comments on to particular locations on a map. The results were then included in the planning process through appropriate policy documents and plan formulation mechanisms.

[www.ccg.leeds.ac.uk/slaithwaite/](http://www.ccg.leeds.ac.uk/slaithwaite/)

#### **Leeds University School of Geography: WOODS – Woodland Online Decision System**

This site allows users to draw a map of where they would like a new wooded area in a Yorkshire Dales National Park. The use of a virtual decision-making environment for the Park's Planning Authority identified several issues relating to woodland policies.

[www.ccg.leeds.ac.uk/dales/](http://www.ccg.leeds.ac.uk/dales/)

#### **Modernising Government**

This website details the UK government's response to enabling participation for the provision of public services.

[www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/moderngov/](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/moderngov/)

#### **OEA-ISP: Inter-American Strategy for the Promotion of Public Participation in Decision Making for Sustainable Development**

The ISP is a direct response to the mandate of the Heads of States and Governments of the hemisphere, as contained in the December 1996 Bolivia Summit on Sustainable Development, which states that: "In order to support the specific initiatives on public participation contained in the Plan of Action, entrust the OAS with assigning priority to the formulation of an inter-american strategy for the promotion of public participation in decision-making for sustainable development."

[www.ispnet.org/](http://www.ispnet.org/)

### **Official Aarhus Conference Web Site**

The Aarhus Conference is the 4th Pan-European Conference of Environment Ministers. The Conference, which is hosted by the Danish Government, forms part of the "Environment for Europe" process.

[www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/](http://www.mem.dk/aarhus-conference/)

### **On-Line Digital Democracy Group**

University of Leeds' pioneering site developing web-based Geographical Information Systems for Public Participation in environmental decision making.

[www.ccg.leeds.ac.uk/democracy/](http://www.ccg.leeds.ac.uk/democracy/)

### **Open Spatial Decision Making on the Internet**

These pages contain a simple demonstration of a GIS-based Spatial Decision Support System for siting radioactive waste disposal facilities in Britain and a discussion of how the Internet could be used to improve public consultation and participation in spatial decisions of national importance.

[www.ccg.leeds.ac.uk/mce/mce-home.htm](http://www.ccg.leeds.ac.uk/mce/mce-home.htm)

### **Pact**

Aims to implement participatory development approaches at the community level that promote economic, social and environmental justice.

[www.pactworld.org/corp.html](http://www.pactworld.org/corp.html)

### **Parks Canada Development Review Process**

The Development Review Process has been implemented in three of Canada's National Parks to provide opportunities for public participation in Park management and environmental assessments.

[www.worldweb.com/ParksCanada-DevReview/public.htm](http://www.worldweb.com/ParksCanada-DevReview/public.htm)

### **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection: Public Participation Center**

Center for information about proposed Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection regulations, policies and other proposals open for public comment as well as final published documents.

[www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/subject/pub\\_par\\_cen.html](http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/subject/pub_par_cen.html)

### **Resource Centre For Participatory Learning And Action**

The IIED Resource Centre is a unique service for those seeking practical information and support on all aspects of research on participatory methodologies with a particular focus on their application and integration into institutional structures.

[www.iied.org/resource/index.html](http://www.iied.org/resource/index.html)

### **SD Gateway: Public Participation Section**

The articles in this section provide examples and outline the characteristics of successful public participation initiatives.

[www.sdgateway.net/topics/241.htm](http://www.sdgateway.net/topics/241.htm)

### **Stockholm Environmental Institute: GIS for Participation - GIS-P**

GIS for Participation (GIS-P) are a set of new techniques that aim to enhance effective communication and understanding, facilitate greater stakeholder involvement in decision-making, and monitor the impacts of management plan and policies on the resource base and livelihood strategies.

[www.york.ac.uk/inst/sei/gis/GIS-P.html](http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/sei/gis/GIS-P.html)

**Third World Institute  
(El Instituto del Tercer Mundo)**

The Third World Institute (IteM) carries out information, communication and educational activities at national and international levels related to the environment and development. ITeM is a civil society organization that encourages public participation in global decision-making processes.  
[www.item.org.uy](http://www.item.org.uy)

**ULYSSES - *Urban Lifestyles, Sustainability and Integrated Environmental Assessment***

ULYSSES is an European research project on public participation in Integrated Assessment, that aims at embedding such models in a social discourse and to integrate also recommendations by citizens into assessments. The goal is to make decision support methods more relevant for application in democratic contexts.

[www.zit.tu-darmstadt.de/ulysses/](http://www.zit.tu-darmstadt.de/ulysses/)

<b>Bibliography</b>
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**I. PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT REC**

*You can access the following REC publications at:*

[www.rec.org/REC/Publications/List.html#PP](http://www.rec.org/REC/Publications/List.html#PP)

- *Manual on Public Participation in Environmental Decisionmaking: Current Practice and Future Possibilities in Central and Eastern Europe*  
Edited by Magdolna Tóth Nagy, Margaret Bowman, Jiri Dusik, Jerzy Jendroska, Stephen Stec, Karel van der Zwiep y János Zlinszky  
REC, Budapest, 1994

*Manual on Public Participation: Series of Local Language Manuals*  
Available in 10 languages of the EEC.  
REC, 1994

*Manual on Public Participation: Baltic Supplement*  
REC, Budapest, 1995

- *Public participation in the Central and Eastern European Region:*  
An interview with Magdolna Toth Nagy  
The Bulletin, Otoño 1994
- *Awakening Participation*  
*Building Capacity for Public Participation in Environmental Decisionmaking*  
Participant Workbook  
REC, Szentendre, December 1996

Similar training module is available for Albania and Bulgaria in English and in local language. Specific module was developed in Hungarian.

- *Structure strengthens participation module*  
Insight, summer 1997

- *Public participation - Giving the power to the people*  
Cover Story of the summer 1995 issue of The Bulletin
- *Status of Public Participation Practices in Environmental Decisionmaking in Central and Eastern Europe*  
Case Studies of Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, FYR Macedonia, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia  
Budapest, September 1995
- *Advising Citizens*  
Grants for Public Participation Advisory Services  
Budapest, September 1996
- *Manual on Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making*  
*Beyond Boundaries: The International Dimensions of Public Participation for the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe*  
Budapest, September 1996  
(Includes case studies from 13 EEC countries)
- *Spinach before dessert*  
*Public Participation Training Initiative provides sustenance for democratic decisionmaking*  
The Bulletin, Spring 1996
- *Doors to Democracy*  
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REC, June 1998
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REC, June 1998
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REC, June 1998
  - *Current Trends and Practices in Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making in the Newly Independent States*  
REC, June 1998

(The series was published by the REC and prepared in cooperation with the European Environmental Bureau and Ecopravo-Lviv, Ukraine)
- *Healthy Decisions*  
*Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environment and Health Matters*  
REC and WHO, June 1999
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UN, 2000  
(Prepared and published in cooperation with REC, UN, DANCEE)

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Regional overview and country assessments of current status of PRTR Systems, PRTR Systems under development and other reporting systems in CEE  
REC, July 2000
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- *Advising Citizens*  
Grants for Public Participation Advisory Services  
Budapest, September 1996  
(with examples of case studies)
- *Good Practice Handbook on Public Participation*  
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(Includes cases of public participation at the local level from EEC, NIS countries)
- *Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environment and Health Matters*  
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A background document for the London Conference of Environment and Health Ministers  
(Includes case studies of good practice of public involvement in the development of National and Local Environmental and health Action Plans)

## II.- PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT FARN

*For more information about these publications, please contact Patricia Aizersztejn at [biblio@farn.org.ar](mailto:biblio@farn.org.ar)*

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### III.- PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT SEI

*For more information about these publications, please contact Howard Cambridge at [hmc4@york.ac.uk](mailto:hmc4@york.ac.uk)*

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## CONTACTS

### **Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (FARN)**

FARN (The Environment and Natural Resources Foundation) was established in 1985 as a non-governmental, non-partisan, non-profit organization whose mission is to promote sustainable development policies, laws and institutional arrangements. Its target audience is decision-makers in the public and private sectors. Through various programs and projects, FARN promotes and encourages the use of the new constitutional tools that allow for public participation in defense of environmental rights.

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### **International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)**

IISD's mission is to champion innovation, enabling societies to live sustainably. IISD aims to advance policy recommendations on international trade and investment, economic instruments, climate change, natural resource management, and measurements and indicators to make development sustainable. IISD also covers and reports on international negotiations and brokers knowledge gained through collaborative projects with global partners.

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### **The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)**

The REC is a non-partisan, non-advocacy, not-for-profit organization. The REC helps solve environmental problems in Central and Eastern Europe. It encourages co-operation among non-governmental organizations, governments, businesses and other environmental stakeholders by supporting the free exchange of information and by promoting public participation in decision-making.

The REC's Public Participation Program is involved in project activities resulting in policy analysis, surveys, publications, training materials, workshops and capacity building events concerning the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and best practices of public participation

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### **Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)**

SEI is an independent, international policy research institute specializing in sustainable development and environmental issues. SEI conducts a comprehensive research, consulting and training program that focuses on the links between ecological, social and economic systems at global, regional, national and local levels. It works out of four centres and has a network of associates in some 25 countries.

Public participation, in the context of the work of the Stockholm Environment Institute, usually means non-scientific involvement in the assessment of environmental problems. The aims of SEI are that there should be full and meaningful participation in the environment and development assessment and decision making processes by the scientific community, the policy community and by the public - in other words by all members which make up the whole community.

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